



## PRESS RELEASE

### World Migratory Bird Day on 8 May Set to Inspire a Global Chorus for Birds and Nature

**Bonn, 7 May 2021** – On Saturday, 8 May people all over the world will be celebrating [World Migratory Bird Day](#), a global campaign which aims to raise awareness of migratory birds and the need for international cooperation to conserve them.

This year's theme "**Sing, Fly, Soar – Like A Bird!**" focuses on the phenomena of "bird song" and "bird flight" as a way to inspire and connect people of all ages around the globe in their shared desire to protect and celebrate migratory birds. The day also serves as a reminder that migratory birds are in serious decline and need international action to ensure their survival.

On their journeys across the planet, birds face numerous threats such as habitat loss and illegal hunting as well as other threats such as poisoning, and collision with man-made objects such as glass-covered buildings and powerlines. Climate change is another major threat to migratory birds adding extra pressure on birds by adversely affecting the habitats they need for breeding, resting, and feeding.

"Migratory birds are world travellers. For generations they have connected people, countries, and ecosystems. But they also have a front row seat to what we at UNEP call the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Climate change is changing and disturbing the migratory patterns of birds," says Inger Andersen, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme.

"The destruction of the natural world threatens these amazing animals, including pollinators, critical for food security and well-being. And pollution whether in waterbodies, land, or air, is proving toxic for migratory birds. On World Migratory Bird Day, I call on us to re-double our commitment to addressing the triple planetary crisis and securing the future of bird song for all," says Andersen.

Hundreds of special events are scheduled in countries along all major bird flyways to mark the day. An impressive line-up of free online programming on a range of topics related to migratory birds, their

migration, and international efforts to conserve them are also being offered by some of the leading bird conservation and nature education organisations in the world.

“World Migratory Bird Day is an opportunity for people everywhere to celebrate and learn about birds, and to reconnect with nature by actively listening to and watching birds wherever they are,” said Amy Fraenkel, Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS ). “World Migratory Bird Day 2021 is a celebration of birds, and it is also a reminder of the importance of working together, across borders, to protect migratory birds and nature,” she added.

“As the world turned silent due to the repeated lock downs, it was as if the birds suddenly became louder. Yet in fact, the opposite is probably true and maybe we just started to listen closer. But one thing is very clear. Birds and their song have been a real source of comfort and joy for many people around the world in this difficult time,” says Jacques Trouvilliez, Executive Secretary of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). “Yet we must not forget that birds and in particular migratory birds the world over are constantly under threat and that tackling these will require both investment in nature as well as close cooperation between countries,” says Trouvilliez.

CMS and AEWA are the only intergovernmental treaties of the United Nations that work for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats, bringing countries together to try to address the many threats to their survival.

Approximately 2000 of the world’s 11,000 bird species migrate, some covering enormous distances, like the Artic Tern and the Bar-tailed Godwit, which flies distances up to 11,680 kilometres non-stop between Alaska and New Zealand.

The flyways of migratory birds span multiple countries and include the main routes the birds follow, generally in a north-south and south-north direction twice each year, as they seek the best opportunities for breeding, resting and refuelling along the way.

“Birds are a universal language. They connect us. Every single one of us has a story of our personal experience with birds to share. In these challenging times birds are a reminder of how connected we are as they travel the world,” says Sara Wolman, Visual Media Specialist at the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the artist behind the artwork of this year’s World Migratory Bird Day campaign.

The artwork being used for the global campaign depicts a small selection of the migratory birds which travel along three of the major flyway systems found in the world: The Americas Flyway, the African-Eurasian Flyway and the East-Asian Australasian Flyway.

“World Migratory Bird Day champions bird conservation across the flyways,” says Susan Bonfield, Executive Director, Environment for the Americas (EFTA) which organizes World Migratory Bird Day in the Americas, bringing people and communities together in celebration of migratory birds from Canada to Argentina and the Caribbean. “Our programs are helping to unify our voices for migratory birds and serve as a call to action to protect them. In this difficult and unusual year, birds have brought us renewed joy in nature and have fostered a shared passion for these long-distance travellers that is echoed across the world.”

## **Note to Editors**

World Migratory Bird Day is organized by a collaborative partnership among two UN treaties - the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals ([CMS](#)) and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement ([AEWA](#)) -and the non-profit organization, Environment for the Americas

([EFTA](#)). The 2021 campaign is also being actively supported by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership ([EAAFP](#)) Secretariat and a growing number of other dedicated organisations.

**Website:**

[www.worldmigratorybirdday.org](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Pack: <https://bit.ly/3cFWF5H>

@WMBD

#WorldMigratoryBirdDay

#WMBD2021

#SingFlySoar #LikeABird #ForNature

**SELECTED GLOBAL EVENTS**

**BirdDayLive**

Through the online platform [BirdDayLive](#), a full day of online activities for schools, youth and families is being planned from 7 – 8 May 2021 in the Americas. The website will also be featuring a series of online webinars on topics relating to bird conservation, including a series of mini-workshops to explore how birds sing, fly and soar.

**BirdLife Live Webinars**

This year, BirdLife International will use World Migratory Bird Day to highlight the vital role that environmental education plays in migratory bird conservation worldwide. For the May edition of World Migratory Bird Day 2021, BirdLife International is hosting a [series of engaging live webinars](#) to help people around the world understand what bird migration is about. BirdLife is also actively engaged in the Global Big Day and will be sharing information and quizzes through social media to help people around the world learn about what they can do to help migrating birds.

**Global Big Day**

To celebrate World Migratory Bird Day 2021, thousands of birdwatchers will be recording their bird sightings along all the major flyways of the world by joining [Global Big Day](#) on 8 May. This high-profile global citizen science event founded by Tim Appleton, brings the world's birders together to record sightings via the [eBird](#) app, and could again set a new world record for the greatest number of birds recorded on a single day.

**Virtual Choir**

For the first time, a [World Migratory Bird Day Virtual Choir](#) has been organized by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership and the Bowerbird Collective, inviting people around the world to record themselves singing "like a bird" along a newly created song (with no lyrics so anyone can get involved). The video featuring the global song submissions will be launched on 8 May and will be available on the [EAAFP website](#).

**Dawn Chorus Project**

Initiated during the "pandemic silence" in 2020, the Citizen Science and Arts Project [DAWN CHORUS](#) is inviting people around the world to record and share their local morning bird song to make a contribution to global biodiversity research. Re-launched with a new mobile app on 1 May 2021, the project is inviting people around the world to listen to, record and upload the bird song in their immediate environment in the early morning hours of the day. The app will soon include an integrated "new media art feature" which will add an artistic dimension to the recorded bird song and further enhance the personal nature experience of participants.

## **QUOTES**

### **Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity**

“Both birds and humans have a vested interest in the well-being of our one and only Earth. Much like the COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the need for global cooperation and collaboration, it is important that we all unite in a common, global effort to protect birds and the habitats they need to survive. After all, by protecting them, we protect ourselves. Later this year, the world will adopt the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The framework aims to bring about a transformation in society’s relationship with biodiversity, and ensure that, by 2050, we achieve the shared vision of living in harmony with nature.”  
[\[Full Statement\]](#)

### **Patricia Zurita, Chief Executive of BirdLife International**

“This year perhaps more than any other, the silences imposed by lockdowns and confinement have ironically made us more aware of birds. As we humans made less noise, birds’ own singing has been easier to hear. Singing, flying and soaring, birds are now in the midst of one of their semi-annual magnificent migratory seasons as millions of them around the globe head north along one of their global flyways to breed. The BirdLife family in nearly every nation will be counting, taking photographs, and raising conservation funding and awareness during the events of this spring’s World Migratory Bird Day and Global Big Day. We look forward to celebrating together, knowing that the pandemic reinforces the warnings that birds convey to us about the risks and effects of our gluttonous and unsustainable consumption of nature. As a flock, we must reverse course if we are to survive. We know that together we can make it happen.”

### **Doug Watkins, Chief Executive of EAAFP**

“This year’s theme of World Migratory Bird Day “Sing, Fly, Soar – Like a bird!” brings us back to why we are collaborating to conserve migratory birds. The East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership is committed to working together with our 39 Partners and other collaborators to conserve the migratory waterbirds and their habitats. As birds continue to sing, fly and soar along their flyways, they continue to remind us of our connection to the planet, the environment, wildlife, and each other.”

### **Beccy Speight, Chief Executive of the RSPB**

“World Migratory Bird Days remind us that our local swifts and martins, our warblers and wheatears, our terns, turtle doves, nightjars and nightingales are not just ‘our’ birds, but birds of the world, without borders, who can offer the same watching pleasure across not just countries but continents, linked into their vast flyways.

And as we hear their songs and watch their mastery of the air, it is also a timely reminder of the help these birds need. As well as enjoying them, we need to use the feelings of hope they bring to inspire us to action on their behalf.” [\[Full Statement\]](#)

### **Tim Appleton, Founder of Global Birding and Birdfair UK**

“It’s less than a year since I launched Global Birding and yet it has captured the hearts and inspired folks across the planet to join a community who care about and love birds. This Saturday (8 May) will see over 130 Global Birding Teams from more than 70 countries enjoying their local environments and birds. Perhaps more than 7000 bird species will be seen and recorded via the eBird app on the day. But more importantly more and more people are loving nature, are enjoying the wetlands and forests and other habitats by taking part in this global birding and citizen science event on World Migratory Bird Day.”

### **Stephen Garnett, CMS COP Appointed Counsellor for Birds and Professor of Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods, Charles Darwin University**

“Airports stand idle, even trains travel intermittently, once flurried human movement is now masked and hesitant. But not so for the migrants of the natural world. Unaware of human geographies, birds continue their migrations as they have for millennia. While they have no alternative – their lives tied to movement by ecology and evolution – they can provide inspiration for humanity. ‘Travel well!’ we say to skeins of

passing geese, 'Take our souls to lands far away and may the people there nurture and admire you so you return safely.' But such freedom, like all freedom, is fragile. Migrant animals are finding it harder to connect the undegraded spaces between human development. Only through the cooperation among peoples along migratory pathways will migrants continue to carry our dreams. Let World Migratory Bird Day continue to inspire both conservation and cooperation to look after the birds we share."

## **ABOUT**

### **World Migratory Bird Day**

World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated on two peak days each year (the second Saturdays of May and October) to highlight the need for international collaboration to ensure the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats globally. Registered events to mark World Migratory Bird Day 2021 will include bird festivals, education programmes, media events, quizzes, competitions and film screenings.

[www.worldmigratorybirdday.org](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)

### **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)**

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an intergovernmental UN treaty concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale. Since the Convention's entry into force in 1979, its membership has grown steadily to include 132 Parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

[www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int) @bonnconvention

### **African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)**

The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is an intergovernmental treaty dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds that migrate along the African-Eurasian Flyway. The Agreement covers 255 species of bird ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle. The treaty covers 119 Range States from Europe, Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia and Canada. 81 countries and the European Union have become a Contracting Party to the agreement.

[www.unep-aewa.org](http://www.unep-aewa.org) @UNEP\_AEWA

### **Environment for the Americas (EFTA)**

EFTA is a Colorado-based non-profit organization that provides bilingual educational materials and information about birds and bird conservation to raise awareness of migratory birds and to promote actions that protect migratory birds throughout the Americas. <https://www.environmentamericas.org/>

### **For more information please contact:**

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