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UN-backed events to celebrate bird migration and highlight conservation



7 May 2010 – Thousands of people in more than 40 countries across the globe will this weekend participate in United Nations-backed events organized to celebrate the beauty of bird migration and draw attention to the threat of extinction that some species of migratory birds face as a result of human activity.

Events to mark World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) on Saturday and Sunday will include bird festivals, educational programmes, presentations and bird-watching trips organized by hundreds of groups and organizations around the world.

An international photo competition on the world's most threatened birds is also part of this year's WMBD, a global initiative organized by the Secretariats of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) – two international wildlife treaties administered by the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)).

"The threat of extinction faced by individual bird species is a reflection of the larger extinction crisis threatening other species and the natural diversity that underpins all life on Earth," **said** Bert Lenten, AEWA's Executive Secretary and initiator of the World Migratory Bird Day campaign.

"By focusing on migratory birds in crisis during the International Year of Biodiversity, World Migratory Bird Day 2010 is highlighting the role played by birds as indicators, enabling us to see the negative effects our current way of life is having on the planet and its biodiversity," Mr. Lenten added.

An estimated 1,227 or 12.4 per cent of the total 9,865 extant bird species in the world are classified as globally threatened, and 192 of these are considered critically endangered.

Nineteen per cent of all known birds are considered to be migratory, of which 11 per cent are globally threatened or near threatened, and 31 are classified as critically endangered, according to BirdLife International.

“World Migratory Bird Day is an opportunity to draw international attention to migratory birds around a central theme each year. The focus on the most threatened migratory birds in 2010 acts as yet another reminder to governments that more needs to be done internationally to conserve these species across their migratory ranges,” said CMS’s Executive Secretary, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema.

The theme of this year’s WMBD is “Save migratory birds in crisis – every species counts.”

Some prominent examples of migratory birds in crisis include the slender-billed curlew, the northern bald ibis, the sociable lapwing, the waved albatross and the orange-bellied parrot – all of which are migratory and listed as critically endangered.

The birds face a range of mainly human-driven threats, of which agriculture and invasive alien species are the most important. Hunting and trapping, logging, urbanization, pollution and fisheries are also significant threats, with climate change increasingly becoming a factor.

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