



## Media Release

### Happy Birthday Earth!

**Brussels, 22 April 2010** – BirdLife International [1] celebrates today the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Earth Day [2].

“In this important day, we all have to remember how human activities have damaged biodiversity, driving species to extinction and triggering the collapse of entire ecosystems” commented Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife International European Division. “This last 40 years have seen an awakening of consciences among people across the world, and EU environmental legislation is an example of concrete action being actually taken”, continued Mr Brunner.

This special date marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970. Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson, then a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, proposed the first nationwide environmental protest "to shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda".

“Now is the time to turn away from the path leading to ecological collapse. The European Union has to get its act together, agree an ambitious 2020 biodiversity targets and then massively scale up action in order to meet it. After the failing of the Climate COP in Copenhagen last December, the EU has to wallop the table and take the lead in the Biodiversity COP-CBD in Nagoya next October”. [3]

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**Notes for the editor**

[1] BirdLife International is a global Partnership of nature conservation organisations working in more than 100 countries and territories. BirdLife is the leading authority on the status of birds, their habitats and the problems affecting them, and is working on a wide range of environmental issues. BirdLife has 42 Partners in Europe, and is represented in all 27 Member States.

For more information about the work of the BirdLife European Division:

<http://europe.birdlife.org>

[2] The International Earth Day started as an environment movement demanding a healthy and sustainable environment in response to the pollution caused by industrial development in USA in the 1960s. The first nation-wide rally was held on 22 April 1970, with 20 million Americans taking to the streets and parks. The protests had a dramatic influence on public policy and led to the creation of the US Environment Protection Agency, and to the passage of many important environmental acts, including the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species acts. In 1990, the Earth Day became a global event with 200 million people from 141 nations participating in thousands of activities. Such international concern for the environment has helped raise environmental issues on the world stage, and has led some governments to create agencies for environmental protection.

[3] The 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10) and the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP 5) will be held in Nagoya, Aichi, from 11 to 29 October 2010. More information at <http://www.cop10.jp/aichi-nagoya/english/cop/cop.html>

BirdLife International is the official Partner of the International Year of Biodiversity.

