



## Media Release

### Time for a clean water

**Brussels, 22 March 2010** – Today BirdLife International [1] celebrates the UN World Water Day [2], which this year focuses on the importance of clean water both for preserving human health and ecosystems.

“Freshwater becomes scarcer every day because of increased demand, pollution and depletion of aquifers. Already, 50% of wetlands worldwide have been destroyed or heavily altered and freshwater ecosystems are amongst the most threatened in the world” commented Boris Barov, European Conservation Manager at BirdLife International European Division.

BirdLife International works hard to preserve freshwater and wetlands habitats worldwide, not least because “At least 146 Globally Threatened Birds species depend on healthy wetlands”, concluded Mr Barov.

BirdLife is an official Partner of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention [3], which aims at conserving all wetlands, including rivers, ponds, lakes and many more, through local, national and international cooperation. The Ramsar Convention has become perhaps the most important global mechanism for BirdLife Partners in their national work. Many Partners have contributed to the designation of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) as Wetlands of International Importance in their countries, and many help to monitor these sites.

“Freshwater ecosystems play a fundamental role for biodiversity both in Europe and worldwide. This day is a perfect occasion for the European Union to repeat its commitment to push for a binding 2020 target, especially in the preparation for the Convention of Biological Diversity Meeting, which is quickly approaching” [4], added Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife International European Division

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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] More information on the World Water Day at <http://www.worldwaterday2010.info/>

[3] The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. More information at [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-mission/main/ramsar/1-36-53\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-mission/main/ramsar/1-36-53_4000_0__)

[4] 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 an official Partner of the International Year of Biodiversity.