



Title

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Among the millions of birds migrating to Africa for autumn and winter, one can observe representatives of five species (2) impatiently awaited by participants of Spring Alive (1), a long-term educational campaign of BirdLife International. Its African edition, with the record breaking number of eleven participating countries, has just begun.

The participants of the Spring Alive campaign in Africa expect to observe the first arrivals of Barn Swallows, White Storks, Common Swifts, Cuckoos and European Bee-eaters, which in August and September leave their European and Asian breeding areas. Some of the individuals will have to cover several thousand kilometres and may encounter many dangerous situations before reaching the wintering grounds of Africa. This year, the residents of as many as eleven African countries will watch the sky in Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, RSA, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Zimbabwe and, for the first time, in Kenya, Zambia and Rwanda. *“The Spring Alive initiative provides a unique and interesting educational platform for African children, youth and bird lovers to learn more about the value and beauty of nature through its 5 flagship species. The project’s focus on outdoor activities in particular makes it very attractive to African children who have a strong feeling for nature”* – explains Callistus Akachabwon Agbaam of BirdLife International African Division. The campaign lives also online, as the observations are registered on the www.springalive.net website, where the Spring Alive participants can also follow news on bird related issues and manage invitations to Spring Alive events, watch the dynamics of birds’ flyways, as well as play interactive bird games. During this season, the young participants are encouraged not only to register their first observations of the five species but also to consider how people can make contributions to assist their feathered friends to live better and longer life. Having thought it over, children should grab pencils or paints and take part in the drawing contest “How Can I Help Birds?” (3) And illustrate these reflections. Along with the seasonal activities of Spring Alive, the preparations for the pilot edition of “Spring Twins” programme will be undertaken. The action aiming at strengthening the cooperation between Europe, Asia and Africa is due to start next year.

For Further information please Contact:

Thandiwe Chikomo Spring Alive Focal Point for Africa BirdLife International: Africa Division

Thandiwe.chikomo@birdlife.org

Callistus Agbaam Project Officer - Wildlife Clubs of Africa Callistus.agbaam@birdlife.org

Information is also available on www.springalive.net

Notes for the editor: 1) About Spring Alive Spring Alive is an international project organised by BirdLife International, a worldwide organisation for the protection of birds. The campaign is designed to promote children's interest in nature and its conservation through tracking the arrival of spring. The core component of Spring Alive is the website www.springalive.net with contributions from participants in over 40 countries in Europe and Africa. All citizens, but specifically children and families, are encouraged to observe and record the arrival of 5 migratory bird species each year: White Stork, Barn Swallow, Common Swift, Common Cuckoo and Eurasian Bee-eater. The Spring Alive project is originally from Germany. In 1987 in Bavaria, the first programme campaign was led by the German Birdlife Partner. Since then, Spring Alive unfolded both in terms of number of countries involved and observations made. At the moment the project is conducted by BirdLife Partners in over 40 countries across Europe and Africa. Funding: The whole project would not be possible without the great support of The Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for Europe and Africa (MCFEA), Spring Alive's main sponsor. The aims of the MCFEA are to encourage the appreciation and conservation of flora and fauna with an emphasis on endangered species. The campaign is also financially supported by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB; BirdLife in the UK).

2) The five spring migrating bird species are: White Stork, Barn Swallow, Common Swift, Common Cuckoo and Eurasian Bee-eater. 3) For more information on the Spring Alive drawing contest please go to www.springalive.net.

