

Experts join forces for profitable and bird friendly agriculture development

Title

Agriculture is one of the most productive sectors in the Rift Valley / Red Sea flyway region, serving as the economic backbone of many countries who are still struggling to catapult themselves from poverty and achieve food security for their rising populations.

However, agriculture also poses serious threats to migratory soaring birds, notably agrochemical poisoning due to improper usage of pesticides, poison and veterinary drugs. Reaching an adequate balance between a profitable and a safe agriculture is key to answering the economic needs of countries while safeguarding their rich biodiversity.

Several experts from Africa and the Middle East recently attended a workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to discuss this crucial issue. The 'Agro-chemical Poisoning and Conservation of Migratory Soaring Birds along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway' workshop was organised by the [BirdLife UNDP-GEF Migratory Soaring Birds \(MSB\) project](#), in collaboration with the [Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society](#) (EWNHS ? BirdLife Partner).

Representatives of Ministries of Agriculture, private agriculture companies, international organisations and BirdLife Partners from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Yemen as well as international experts debated for three days the best approaches on agriculture in the context of environmental sustainability and the international duties agreed to be performed by every nation with regard to biodiversity protection.

One of the major outputs of the workshop was an enhanced regional guidance to minimise biodiversity loss from agriculture chemicals with a special focus on migratory soaring birds. The guidance includes both non-legislative and legislative recommendations involving communities, industry, non-governmental organisations, and governments to limit impacts of agricultural chemicals on migratory soaring birds. The guidance will soon be available on the MSB project website. The workshop also provided opportunities to share information and experiences on minimising the use of agrochemicals to achieve sustainable food production.

The Migratory Soaring Birds project aims to integrate the conservation of migratory soaring birds in the strategies and activities of the threatening sectors namely the agriculture, energy, hunting, tourism and waste management sectors. The project is implemented by BirdLife with the support of the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP) and is funded by the [Global Environment Facility](#)

(GEF).