

# Delivering an effective and collaborative new migratory bird conservation initiative in the Mediterranean Basin

## Title

*Capacity Building for Flyway Conservation in the Mediterranean* is an important new BirdLife project with support from the MAVA Foundation for Nature. The project aims to achieve long term outcomes for the conservation on the Africa-Eurasia flyway for migratory birds in the Mediterranean Basin, through establishing a strong, committed and dynamic network of NGOs in the region.

The Mediterranean Basin lies at the heart of the Africa-Eurasia Migration Flyway, with hundreds of millions of migratory birds passing twice-yearly. However, many key stop-over and non-breeding sites are seriously threatened, hunting and trapping are widely out of control, and there is an emerging collision and electrocution threat for soaring birds from the expansion of power infrastructure (wind and solar energy and transmission lines). Furthermore, lack of political and public support for conservation and a strong hunting and trapping culture in some countries further compound the situation in the region.

## Capacity development

The project's main focus is the **strengthening of a group of eight national NGOs** working effectively to protect key species, sites and habitats along the Africa-Eurasia Flyway. Participating countries and organisations include: Turkey (Doga Dernegi), Lebanon (Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon), Cyprus (BirdLife Cyprus), Malta (BirdLife Malta), Macedonia (Macedonian Ecological Society), Montenegro (Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro), Morocco (Groupe de Recherche pour la Protection des Oiseaux au Maroc) and Tunisia (Les Amis des Oiseaux). Hazell Shokellu Thompson, Director for Partnership, Capacity and Communities at BirdLife International said:

In particular, the initiative aims to establish self-sustaining organisations with enhanced capacity for flyway conservation in these countries. The initiative will also support participating NGOs to work with Local Conservation Groups, building

local capacity to lead conservation initiatives at key sites.?

## **Reducing threats to migratory birds in the Mediterranean Basin**

Another objective of the initiative is to **support participating NGOs in the implementation of conservation activities for the reduction of threats to migratory birds in the region.** Towards this objective, BirdLife is providing support to participating NGOs for the implementation of national level flyway conservation activities, focusing on reducing illegal killing and hunting, engagement with the energy sector on reducing the effects of infrastructure on migratory birds and conservation of specific key sites stop-over sites for these species.

The project will work with the energy sector to (BSPB)

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[http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/bird\\_wind\\_turbine\\_collision-224x300.jpg](http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/bird_wind_turbine_collision-224x300.jpg)

## **Strengthened regional collaboration and coordinated action**

Finally, the project will consolidate its achievements through **enhancing knowledge exchange for flyway conservation across the Mediterranean region and encouraging coordination of conservation action** at the regional level. Indeed, successful flyway conservation will require all participating organisations to work together to undertake conservation action, advocacy and campaigning initiatives. Coordination of conservation action is crucial for the protection of migratory birds and BirdLife, largely through its global **Flyways Programme**, is in a unique position as an extensive global network to address these flyway level conservation issues through empowering and building the capacity of national NGOs.

?The threats to our migratory birds present a truly shared challenge that calls for real collective and collaborative action. Cyprus is one of the smallest countries in this shared project, and we are looking forward to working with close-by and not-so-close-by neighbours to tackle these problems, for the sake of what is, after all, a shared heritage of migratory birds?,

said Martin Hellicar, Campaigns Manager for BirdLife Cyprus.

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## **The MAVA Foundation**

BirdLife would like to thank the MAVA Foundation for its invaluable support towards the project. Created in 1994, the Foundation's mission is to engage in strong partnerships to conserve biodiversity for future generations, working with build strong conservation communities. With the support from the Foundation for this initiative, it is hoped that migratory birds and their key habitats in the Mediterranean will be better protected through a strong, effective, sustainable conservation programme led by a committed and coordinated network of national NGOs.

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