

Prominent hunters from Middle East and Africa sign declaration on responsible hunting

Title

Hunters from Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Yemen and Ethiopia have signed a Regional Declaration on Responsible Hunting [1], at a ceremony organised by the BirdLife International and [UNDP/GEF Migratory Soaring Birds \(MSB\) project](#) in coordination with the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon ([SPNL](#)), BirdLife in Lebanon.

Under the Patronage of H.E. Mr. Nazem El Khoury, Lebanese Minister of Environment, the ceremony celebrated the adoption of the “Code of Best Practices for Hunters and Hunting Groups for Responsible Hunting and the Full Protection of Migratory Soaring Birds”.

The ceremony was held on the 5th of December 2013 at the Coral Beach Hotel, Beirut, Lebanon. Guests included responsible hunters from the region, and observers from the Lebanese Higher Hunting Council, BirdLife International and BirdLife Partners from attending countries, the Lebanese Ministry of Environment, the European Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation (FACE), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The ceremony was part of a larger scheme that the MSB project discussed back in October 2011, during the MSB first regional hunting workshop in Beirut, when BirdLife Partners reviewed hunting practices in the region against the background of European experience. In Europe, BirdLife has signed a similar agreement with FACE.

Dr. Saleem Hamadeh, representative of H.E. Mr. Nazem El Khoury Lebanese Minister of Environment, presented the accomplishments of the Ministry of Environment in terms of birds conservation and the issuance of the necessary decrees for the implementation of the new hunting law. He reminded that migratory birds are protected under international laws and conventions. Finally he stated that “to achieve complete protection of migratory soaring birds we need regional collaboration for the organisation of responsible hunting”.

Signatories of the Responsible Hunting Declaration have committed to adopt the Code of Best Practices for Hunters and Hunting Groups for Responsible Hunting and the Full Protection of Migratory Soaring Birds as the founding principle of their hunting activities, and to implement measures to conserve migratory soaring birds and their habitats.

Many of the hunters present have expressed their aspiration to create national responsible hunting groups and societies with the Code of Best Practices for Responsible Hunting as their core value.

Mr. Osama Al Nouri, Regional MSB project coordinator, declared: “The MSB project aims to revive the hunter’s traditional sustainable hunting practices that do not threaten migratory soaring birds along the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway within the scope of the Code of Conduct, to establish national and regional mature responsible hunting groups that are working closely with BirdLife partners as allies against indiscriminate practices, and ensure firm government buy-in through effective regulations and efficient implementation of national laws”.

Participating BirdLife Partners were:

- The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon ([SPNL](#)), BirdLife Lebanon
- The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature ([RSCN](#)), BirdLife Jordan
- Palestine Wildlife Society ([PWLS](#)), BirdLife Palestine
- Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society ([EWNHS](#)), BirdLife Ethiopia
- The Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife ([SSCW](#)), BirdLife Syria
- Nature Conservation Egypt ([NCE](#)), BirdLife Egypt
- Foundation for Endangered Wildlife in Yemen (FEW)

For more information on the Code of Best Practices for Responsible Hunting kindly visit the MSB project website: www.migratorysoaringbirds.undp.birdlife.org or contact the BirdLife’s Regional Flyway Facility at rff@birdlife.org

[1] Signatories to the Responsible Hunting Declaration are:

- WILLING to work towards the revival of the region’s tradition heritage in hunting and to improve their role in hunting control and management systems, and promote the concept of responsible hunting principles and MSB protection within their surroundings and contacts within their territories along the Rift Valley / Red Sea Flyway;
- RESOLVING to enhance local and regional coordination and collaboration and to increase protection of Migratory Soaring Birds from threats arising from hunting; take necessary actions toward strict abstaining from Migratory Soaring Birds hunting (trapping, shooting, active taking and persecution) within their territories along the Rift Valley / Red Sea Flyway, most importantly at bottleneck sites during peak migration seasons;
- ACCEPTING the adoption of the Code of Best Practices regarding responsible hunting of game species and protection of MSBs, and encouraging other fellow hunters in their

- clubs and associations to adopt it through dialogue and to join this declaration;
- **ACCEPTING** to be a MSB envoy and role model to be followed by other fellow hunters in the area in order to pass the message to the broader community of hunters, including those who are not aware of the MSBs plight, considering themselves as leaders of change;
- **ENCOURAGING** other parties concerned with MSBs to reduce threats induced by hunting and increase their efforts to the protection of MSBs along the flyway; and
- **WILLING** to catalyze the formation of responsible hunting groups that will adopt the Code of Best Practices.