

Sociable Lapwings embark on an Amazing Journey

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BirdLife International, RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) and leading optics manufacturer Swarovski Optik have just launched a remarkable new interactive website [The Amazing Journey](#) which charts the migration of one of the world's most threatened birds - Sociable Lapwing. The new website enables you to experience the birds' migration online and witness new discoveries as they happen. It also provides support to a large team of international scientists who are trying to prevent the species from becoming extinct. Following extensive research, nine Sociable Lapwings have been carefully fitted with tiny, state-of-the-art satellite transmitters, which will track their hazardous 5,000+ km journey from their breeding grounds in Kazakhstan to their non breeding areas in tropical Africa and other, as yet undiscovered, destinations. [The Amazing Journey](#) follows the adventures of Erzhan, Dinara, Svetlana and six other intrepid satellite-tagged lapwings as they fly south for the winter - dodging hunters with guns and falcons and the myriad other unknown threats that await them. Andreas Pittl – Head of the Nature Division at Swarovski said, “This is a hugely important and fascinating project which Swarovski Optik is proud to champion. Wildlife is threatened with extinction for many reasons so finding ways to help such a beautiful and inspiring creature as the Social Lapwing is an important conservation effort we are keen to support. We want to bring people and nature together so they can continue to enjoy brilliant, close-up views of birds like these for years to come.” Designed by online marketing experts Digital Spring, [The Amazing Journey](#) uses satellite data fed through Google map technology to keep pace with the birds. A mixture of clever, regularly updated maps and video and photo blog reports from the field will follow their progress. Relatively little is still known about the routes Sociable Lapwings take, so tracking them will provide vital information, enabling BirdLife scientists to monitor and protect the birds and unlock the mystery of their migration. Now, for the first time, those interested in birds, wildlife and conservation can sit alongside scientists, and learn about these extraordinary birds, their migration habits and their conservation. Dr. Paul Donald, the project's Principal Conservation Scientist at RSPB said, “We are using the world's smallest and latest satellite transmitter – weighing just 5 grams – to record this amazing journey. By engaging with people around the world and inviting them to see this fascinating migration happening live online we believe we can inspire them to play their part too.” As the Sociable Lapwings progress along a lengthy route through various countries they need to stop every now and again to ‘refuel’ along the way. As they do so they form big feeding flocks (which is how they get their name). Whenever they touch down, precise details of their location are picked up by satellites orbiting high overhead and sent to RSPB scientists. These locations are then passed on to conservation project partners in each of the countries the birds travel through. With detailed coordinates they can quickly locate the flocks of birds, wherever they've touched down and

take action if they are threatened in any way. The Amazing Journey website will provide regular reports from these scientists in the field keeping us up to date with all the latest news on the birds' progress. Jim Lawrence, Preventing Extinction Programme Manager at BirdLife International said, "Protecting migratory species on the brink of extinction like Sociable Lapwings can't be done without the considerable support of BirdLife Species Champions like Swarovski and RSPB. The Amazing Journey website is a new window on our world where you can see BirdLife International Partners around the globe delivering co-ordinated international conservation solutions." Main photo credit Maxim Koshkin - Conservation Project Leader ACBK