

The power of many: protecting migratory birds in the Mediterranean

Title

When a migratory bird flies over the Mediterranean, what it is looking for is perhaps a thermal to save energy when flying, or a suitably rich habitat to stop and feed at, or perhaps a safe roost for the night. What it is not looking out for are electrical power lines or illegal hunters. And what it is not even noticing are national park boundaries and international borders.

When you consider this perspective and all the threats migratory birds face, it becomes clear that a coordinated multi-national response is needed. Especially as the wonder of these birds' migration is shared by all countries along the African-Eurasian Flyway.

With the expertise of a whole international network of Partners to draw upon, BirdLife decided to organise a workshop right in the heart of this migratory flyway danger zone, Cyprus. Twenty countries met at a workshop in Nicosia last month with one common thought in mind: ***we will work together to protect migratory birds in the Mediterranean.***

A group of 26 representatives from nature NGOs in the Mediterranean (including 13 BirdLife Partners- that's over 10% of the whole Partnership) articulated their own experiences, shared insights and planned action for these birds. The workshop (21-23 May) was hosted by BirdLife Cyprus, thanks to invaluable support provided by the MAVA Foundation.

This workshop is nested within a wider initiative supported by MAVA, called Capacity Building for Flyway Conservation in the Mediterranean. This longer term initiative is establishing and strengthening a dynamic network of conservation NGOs to better protect key species, sites and habitats on the African-Eurasian flyway. Not only are these NGOs working together, but also working effectively with local people, national governments and the international community.

“The strength of the BirdLife Partnership (a network of NGOs already united under a common vision through the [BirdLife Flyways Programme](#)) lies in the potential for knowledge exchange and regional collaborative action to address these common issues,”

said BirdLife's Director of Conservation, Richard Grimmett.

By the end of the workshop, the conservation NGOs in the region were further united under common objectives to protect migratory birds in the Mediterranean. Pressing issues in individual countries like avoiding bird collision with powerlines in Portugal; regulation of hunting in Lebanon; and establishment of minimum standards for Environmental Impact Assessments in Montenegro, can now be tackled with the support of the whole region.

The Director of BirdLife Cyprus –Dr Claire Papazoglou– said:

"The strengthening of this regional network will support BirdLife Cyprus' efforts to end illegal bird killing in Cyprus".

The Capacity Building for Flyway Conservation in the Mediterranean initiative links well with other efforts to address threats to migratory birds in the Mediterranean including the Migratory Soaring Birds project funded by the GEF – UNDP (<http://migratorysoaringbirds.undp.birdlife.org/>) and the Leaving is Living communication and education campaign (www.leavingisliving.org) being jointly implemented by LIPU (BirdLife in Italy), HOS (BirdLife in Greece) and SEO/BirdLife Spain.



<http://en.mava-foundation.org>