



World Migratory Bird Day 2013 highlights importance of site networks for migratory birds

Title

This weekend 11-12 May **World Migratory Bird Day** 2013 is being celebrated in over 65 countries, including events held by BirdLife Partners around the world from Paraguay to Lebanon to China.

"I fully support the global campaign to raise awareness about the threats to migratory birds from habitat destruction, overexploitation, pollution and climate change," said **United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**. "I call for greater international efforts to restore and preserve migratory birds and the network of sites they need to survive as an important part of the environment on which we all depend."

"Very often migrant birds are under huge pressure at the exact points where they are most vulnerable," said **Dr Marco Lambertini**, Chief Executive, BirdLife International.

"Birds battling to reach the sea-shore descend into a limitless line of nets. Tiny falcons funnel through forests to be trapped in their thousands. Exhausted shorebirds find that the mudflats where they once refueled are now a sea of concrete, or circle wearily because their roosting sites have vanished."

The Yellow Sea of north-east Asia is a very important area for migratory shorebirds and is of particular concern to BirdLife International. The rates of decline in the region are among the highest of any ecological system in the world. At least 24 waterbird species using the East Asian-Australasian Flyway are heading towards extinction. The decline is mainly caused by the fast pace of coastal land reclamation occurring in this densely populated region, particularly around key coastal staging areas in the Yellow Sea. As much as 50% has been lost in the past 25 years due to human activities.

Another migratory bird hotspot is the capital of Paraguay, Asuncion and also faces increasing pressure.

"Sadly, the bay currently faces major environmental changes, which might severely alter

habitat suitability for migratory birds which will affect their survival along the migration route network," said **Dr Alberto Yanosky** Guyra Paraguay CEO (BirdLife in Paraguay).

"Guyra Paraguay is working in both conservation projects and educational campaigns in order to raise awareness on the importance of the conservation of sites appropriate for birds, including celebrating World Migratory Bird Day. My hope is that we can create a true network across the Americas for migratory birds."

Similar to a human transport system of harbors, airports and roads, these migratory birds depend on international networks of natural sites for food, safety, breeding and moulting?as well as for stopover areas which act as refueling stations between breeding and non-breeding areas.

One of the main goals of BirdLife's Important Bird Areas Programme is to identify and conserve a network of sites for migratory species.

WMBD Press Release