

PRESS RELEASE

World Migratory Bird Day on 8 October Highlights Light Pollution as a Growing Threat to Migratory Birds

Dim the Lights for Birds at Night

Bonn, 7 October 2022 - Light pollution and its impact on migratory birds is the focus of World Migratory Bird Day 2022 which will be celebrated around the world on 8 October.

World Migratory Bird Day is an annual campaign aimed at raising awareness of migratory birds and the need for international cooperation to conserve them. Activities to mark the day will be held globally throughout the day under the theme “*Dim the Lights for Birds at Night*”.

Light pollution is a significant and growing threat to wildlife including many species of migratory birds. Every year, light pollution contributes to the death of millions of birds. It alters the natural patterns of light and dark in ecosystems. It can change birds’ migration patterns, foraging behaviours, vocal communication, and increase predation.

Attracted by artificial light at night, particularly when there is low cloud, fog, rain or when flying at lower altitudes, migrating birds become disorientated and may end up circling in illuminated areas. Depleted energy reserves put them at risk of exhaustion, predation, and fatal collision with buildings.

Traditionally observed on the second Saturday of May and October, the two dates of World Migratory Bird Day reflect the cyclical nature of bird migration and the different peak migration periods in the northern and southern hemispheres. The focus in October is on promoting best practices and calling upon key actors to take steps to address light pollution.

Executive Secretary Amy Fraenkel of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) said: “Many governments, cities, businesses, and communities around the world are already taking steps to effectively reduce light pollution. However, much more needs to be done. I therefore invite all governments and other actors to take action to address light pollution.”

A set of globally applicable guidelines are being developed under CMS that will help various actors address the growing problem of light pollution. These will be relevant for all migratory species and will include guidance and concrete measures that different stakeholders can take to address light pollution. These new guidelines will be presented to CMS Parties for adoption at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2023 and build on [existing guidelines](#) that include six general management principles to reduce light pollution.

CMS has also been working closely with ICLEI and its Cities with Nature arm to capture efforts already being done by cities around the world to address light pollution. Cities are being encouraged to use the new [Cities With Nature Action Platform](#) to report on the activities being conducted to address light

pollution. CMS and ICLEI will also be launching a designated Cities With Nature City Guide and a community of practice around the topic of light pollution, which will include best-practice advice and expertise specifically tailored for cities on the topic.

Executive Secretary Jacques Trouvilliez of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) said: “As we have to reduce our fossil fuel consumption to fight against climate change, saving energy in many countries will imply reducing lights not only along streets but also in many buildings. This will undoubtedly reduce light pollution and benefit migratory birds. Climate change and biodiversity conservation are again closely linked and it is important to highlight the many positive effects that saving energy will bring.”

Light pollution is increasing around the globe. More than 80 per cent of the world's population is currently estimated to live under a “lit sky”, a figure closer to 99 per cent in Europe and North America. The amount of artificial light on the Earth’s surface is increasing by at least 2 per cent each year and could be much greater.

In some cities, particularly in North America, initiatives such as “Lights Out” programmes and bird-friendly building guidelines aim to protect migrating birds from light pollution by encouraging building owners and managers to turn off any unnecessary lighting during migration periods.

Susan Bonfield, Director, Environment for the Americas, said: “Migratory birds are making their final journeys this year, returning to non-breeding sites around the world. Now, and every day, we need to ensure their safe passage at night by working together to reduce light pollution. Through World Migratory Bird Day, we raise our voices together to protect our shared birds and ask everyone who can to dim their lights for birds at night!”



World Migratory Bird Day 2022 – Animated Video

Description: Follow a small migratory songbird as it is lured into the dangers of the city by intense lights. The threats it faces are common for migrating birds trying to navigate urban environments. The 2-minute animation has been made available by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and can be used in any

promotional activities related to World Migratory Bird Day 2022. All language versions of the animation can be downloaded via this [download folder](https://bit.ly/3w68a0g): <https://bit.ly/3w68a0g>

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Notes to Editors

About World Migratory Bird Day

World Migratory Bird Day, celebrated in both May and October each year, is organized by a collaborative partnership among two UN wildlife treaties – the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals ([CMS](#)) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds ([AEWA](#)) – and the non-profit organization, Environment for the Americas ([EFTA](#)). The 2022 campaign is also being actively supported by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership ([EAAFP](#)) Secretariat, BirdLife International and a growing number of other dedicated organizations. World Migratory Bird Day highlights the importance of international cooperation for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.

Two Expert Webinars on Light Pollution

The WMBD partners organized two Global World Migratory Bird Day Webinars on the topic of Light Pollution in the run-up to the second peak day on 8 October, which featured some of the world's most renowned experts and policy makers on the topic of light pollution. The [first webinar](#) held on 6 October aimed at providing a global overview of the impact of light pollution on migratory birds, while the [second webinar](#) held on 7 October focused on showcasing solutions and policies to tackle light pollution. Recordings of both events are being made available on this [webpage](#).

Events around the World

For the peak day in October, hundreds of registered events will take place many different countries to mark World Migratory Bird Day 2022 and will include bird festivals, education programmes, media events, bird watching trips, presentations, film screenings and a benefit concert to raise funds for international nature conservation. These events are hosted by governments, parks, schools, libraries, and numerous other groups and range from bird walks to educational workshops and festivals. Some events are offered virtually.

In the Americas, many events are taking place on the ground and virtually. Visit the [global event map](#) to find an event near you. Join Environment for the Americas (EFTA) virtually on 27 October and meet [Paul Bogard](#), author of *The End of Night*, as we continue our exploration of the importance of dark skies to migratory birds. World Migratory Bird Day is being celebrated across Latin America, with a record 63 events registered across Mexico alone thanks to the good cooperation with the Urban Birds Program. A total of 16 countries in the Caribbean received educational materials to celebrate WMBD in October with a total of 34 organizations and individuals registering events across the region. Educators in Cuba are planning events that include games for children, art activities and photography. In Puerto Rico, there will be an event on a farm with almost no light pollution, where participants will be stargazing with telescopes, camping and bird-watching early in the morning. WMBD is also being increasingly celebrated across Central and South America, with hundreds of events registered, including bird-watching field trips, participation in the Panama Bird Festival and several activities with Astronomical Associations, educational talks for children and training courses for environmental leaders. This year alone, we are seeing hundreds of events registered in countries such as Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela.

In Brazil, a special WMBD training has been given to 34 educators and educational materials are also being made available in Portuguese for the first time.

The **East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)** established a special [WMBD Small Grant Fund](#) to provide financial support to EAAFP Partners and collaborators to raise awareness on the need of conserving migratory waterbirds and the value of their habitats in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. For the October peak day of World Migratory Bird Day, a total of nine projects from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Hong Kong will be organized by youth groups, Local NGOs and government agencies. The government of New Zealand will launch an online open access tool for people to explore how seabirds encounter light pollution in the open ocean. A groundbreaking new study using acoustic surveys to understand bird migration at night in central Beijing will also give insight into impacts of light pollution on migratory birds. The Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in Singapore will hold a joint webinar with its Sister Site, the Shanghai Chongming Dongtan Nature Reserve in China to mark WMBD. Lastly, the winners of the 2022 “Year of the Terns” Photo Contest will be revealed by EAAFP on World Migratory Bird Day. The EAAFP also published a [special newsletter to mark World Migratory Bird Day 2022](#).

Why celebrate World Migratory Bird Day on two days?

Traditionally observed on the second Saturday of May and October, the two celebrations of World Migratory Bird Day are a way to reflect the cyclical nature of bird migration as well as the fact that there are varying peak migration periods in the northern and southern hemispheres. The two-day observance of World Migratory Bird Day also gives more people the chance to celebrate and contemplate migratory birds during peak migration times in different parts of the world.

www.worldmigratorybirdday.org

About the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

An environmental treaty of the United Nations, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats. This unique treaty brings governments and wildlife experts together to address the conservation needs of terrestrial, aquatic, and avian migratory species and their habitats around the world. Since the Convention's entry into force in 1979, its membership has grown steadily to include 133 Parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

[@bonnconvention](http://www.cms.int)

About the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)

The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is an intergovernmental treaty dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds that migrate along the African-Eurasian Flyway. The Agreement covers 255 species of bird ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle. The treaty covers 119 range States from Europe, parts of Asia and Canada, the Middle East and Africa. As of today, AEWA currently has 83 Parties, 44 from Eurasia (including the European Union) and 39 from Africa.

[@UNEP_AEWA](http://www.unep-aewa.org)

Environment for the Americas (EFTA)

EFTA is a Colorado-based non-profit organization that provides bilingual educational materials and information about birds and bird conservation to raise awareness of migratory birds and to promote actions that protect migratory birds throughout the Americas.

<https://www.environmentamericas.org/>

Related links:

[World Migratory Bird Day - @WMBD](#)

[Resources Page](#)

[Social Media Trello Board](#)

[Global Event Map | World Migratory Bird Day](#)

CMS COP13 Resolutions and Decisions on Addressing Light Pollution:

[Resolution 13.5 - Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife](#)

[Annex of Resolution 13.5 - National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds](#)

[Decisions 13.138 to 13.139 - Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife](#)

For more information and expert interviews, please contact:

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