



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY  
PROTECT BIODIVERSITY IN DRYLANDS

**22 May  
2006**



ACHIEVING THE 2010 TARGET!

**MESSAGE FROM DR. AHMED DJOHLAF,**  
**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY,**  
**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY,**  
**9 APRIL 2006**

All over the world, different cultures associate migratory birds with the renewal of life. Their arrival signals the beginning of Spring and the joys of a gentler season. Their departure in autumn closes another chapter in our lives; yet, we innately trust them to return the following year. Beyond their symbolic value, migratory birds connect countries, cultures and communities. They remind us that we all live in one world, in which the different parts, whether physically connected or not, are inextricably linked.

Migratory birds are a vital part of ecosystems. They provide food for other species, including people, and the livelihoods of many communities depend upon them. They also disperse seeds, and contribute to plant pollination and pest control. Migratory birds depend, in turn, on biodiversity for food and habitat. However, a number of migratory birds, including the Siberian Crane, the Slender-billed Curlew, the Great Bustard, as well as albatrosses and petrels are under serious threats of extinction.

Threats to migratory birds reflect threats to biodiversity at large. Indeed, the main threat to migratory birds, habitat loss, is also one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss. High-voltage power lines and wind turbines also kill birds and can result in habitat fragmentation, another driver of biodiversity loss. Over-hunting threatens some species with extinction.

Today, migratory birds face an unprecedented additional threat in the form of avian influenza. Often seen as the vectors of the virus, migratory birds are first and foremost its victims. Some responses to this, such as culling birds or draining wetlands, have been ill advised. Better responses, involving the protection of the well-being and diversity of ecosystems, species and genetic resources, can mitigate against the spread of such diseases.



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Protecting migratory birds is essential to meeting the target of achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity welcomes the launch of the first-ever World Migratory Bird Day and reiterates its full commitment to enhance its cooperation with the secretariats of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (UNEP/AEWA) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target of substantially reducing the loss of biodiversity, including migratory birds. Let us ensure that our children and theirs will always be able to mark the seasons of their lives according to the arrival and departure of migratory birds.