

**MESSAGE FROM AHMED DJOGLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION
ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF
WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2010
8-9 May 2010**

The observance of World Migratory Bird Day is an excellent example of close and fruitful cooperation among biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Started in 2006 by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), this important initiative offers a prime opportunity to raise awareness about the need to conserve migratory birds as part of global biodiversity.

Particularly well-chosen is this year's theme of Globally Threatened Migratory Birds, with its focus on the thirty-one migratory bird species that are classified as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List. During the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, highlighting species that may soon disappear forever is an integral part of communicating the urgent need for action to preserve our rich and irreplaceable natural heritage: the diversity of species and ecosystems across the planet that we depend on so greatly for our health and wellbeing.

By focusing on "migratory birds in crisis" during the International Year of Biodiversity, World Migratory Bird Day 2010 also serves to highlight the role played by birds as biodiversity indicators, enabling us to see clearly and highlight the negative effects our current way of life is having on the planet and its biodiversity. As one of the best-researched taxa, birds are vital indicators of the state of biodiversity and the biological health of the ecosystems they inhabit. If a bird species becomes threatened with extinction, it is often a clear sign that the conditions of its habitats have changed and that other species that depend on those habitats may also be affected.

Moreover, the conservation of migratory bird species yields broader conservation benefits. Migratory birds rely on several different habitats to survive – often across several continents. They need different areas to breed, rest, feed, and raise their young. The conservation of migratory birds depends to a large extent the conservation of their habitats, therefore benefitting other species that share these habitats.

The important status of migratory birds means that they must play a large role on the conservation agenda throughout 2010 and beyond. The coming months offer several opportunities to advance these efforts on the international stage. This September in New York the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly will discuss the importance of biodiversity for the first time ever. Subsequently, at the Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, Japan, our 193 Parties will finalize the CBD 2011-2020 strategic plan, which is expected to include a 2020 biodiversity target and a 2050 biodiversity vision, along with concrete means of implementation and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

The conservation of migratory bird species and their use as biodiversity indicators needs to be prioritized throughout this process. Indeed, there is no better way to build on this year's celebration of World Migratory Bird Day and the excellent work done to date by CMS and AEWA.
