

On World Migratory Bird Day, UN spotlights common destiny for wildlife and people

10 May 2017 – A healthy planet for migratory birds means a healthy planet for people, as they share the habitats on the Earth, the heads of two United Nations-backed environmental treaties said, marking World Migratory Bird Day.

“If we commit ourselves to sustainable development and preserve the habitats that we share with migratory birds, both wildlife and people will benefit, because their future is our future,” said the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Bradnee Chambers, in a press release.

Initiated in 2006, the [World Day](#) is celebrated each year to highlight the need for international cooperation to conserve migratory birds and their habitats for the benefit of mankind.

CMS and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AWEA) – two intergovernmental wildlife treaties administered by UN Environment Programme (UNEP) – organize the campaign in cooperation with a number of partners.

The theme this year is ‘Their Future is Our Future – A Healthy Planet for Migratory Birds and People, which is closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by UN Member States in 2015 as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

Migratory birds face an increasing number of threats while travelling huge distances. Their intercontinental flyways include key stopover sites that are essential for migratory birds to rest and refuel before continuing their journey. But land-reclamation and changes in global agricultural practices as well as poaching are causing habitat losses.

Habitat loss at stopover sites along the shores of the American Atlantic Coast have prompted a sharp 80 per cent population decline in the North American breeding populations of the Red Knot since 2000.

In the African Sahel, migratory waterbirds, such as the Garganey Duck, are hunted to ensure food security for people in the region.

“Engaging local communities to practise sustainable hunting and in conserving waterbirds and their threatened wetland habitats is a core aspect of AWEA activities in Africa,” said Executive Secretary of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AWEA) Jacques Trouvilliez.