



The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) is an environmental treaty under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, which provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats. The CMS is the only global and UN-based intergovernmental organization established exclusively for the conservation and management of terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species.

UNEP's CMS supported the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), which is an independent international treaty established to coordinate efforts to conserve migrating bird species, signed by 74 countries in 1995. Countries that have joined AEWA are committed to conserve and work for habitat protection, managing human activities, research and monitoring, education and capacity-building.

Did you know that migratory birds travel hundreds and thousands of kilometers to find the best ecological conditions and habitats for feeding, breeding and raising their young?



AEWA celebrated its 20th birthday in June 2015. The Agreement currently covers 255 species of birds ecologically dependent on wetlands for at least part of their annual cycle, including many species of pelicans, storks, flamingos, swans, geese, tropic birds and even the South African penguin.

All AEWA species cross international boundaries during their migrations and require good quality habitat for breeding as well as a network of suitable sites to support their annual journeys. International cooperation across their entire migratory range, as provided by AEWA, is therefore essential for the conservation and management of migratory waterbird populations and the habitats on which they depend.

Let's make it count!

Did you know that every year in January and February there are record numbers of waterbirds across several thousand sites in 143 countries, with between 30 and 40 million waterbirds counted each year around the world?



This year will be the 50th anniversary of the International Waterbird Census (IWC), which is an essential source of information for improving existing knowledge on little-known waterbird species and wetland sites by monitoring changes in their numbers and distributions. IWC aims to promote the conservation of waterbirds and raise awareness of their importance as well as their wetland habitats.

IWC currently covers 25,000 sites in more than 100 countries with 15,000 enthusiastic volunteers – both professionals and amateurs - submitting data each year, making it one of the world's largest monitoring projects primarily dependent on “citizen science”.

Did you know that migration is a perilous journey and involves a wide range of threats, often

caused by human activities and that turning off non-essential lights in cities will help birds navigate their annual migration routes?



While there are four separate regional schemes covering major flyways under the operation of the IWC, the one relating to Africa-Eurasia is closely linked to AEWA, which was signed under the governance of UNEP, which extensively uses the waterbird data collected through the IWC along the African-Eurasian Flyway.

To celebrate this year's landmark 50th count, Wetlands International is launching a campaign "Let's make it count", with the aim of ensuring the conservation of the wetlands along the world's flyways. Wetlands host a wide variety of wildlife and perform many useful environmental functions, and have been lost at an alarming rate with almost two-thirds having disappeared since 1900.

UNRICs Related Links

- [Let's make it count!](#)
- [The Convention on Migratory Species \(CMS\)](#)
- [The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds \(AEWA\)](#)

- [AEWA Countries](#)