

PRESS RELEASE

UN Initiative to Establish a Global Atlas on Animal Migration Sets Milestone with Launch of New Bird Migration Atlas

Bonn/Ventotene 26 May 2022 – Visualizing how migratory animals connect continents, countries, sites and habitats is the result of an international scientific effort under the aegis of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), in developing the first atlas of bird migration across three continents.

CMS, an environmental UN treaty, will launch the **Eurasian-African Bird Migration Atlas** today at the Museum of Migration on the Italian island of Ventotene, as the first part of a broader initiative to develop a global atlas of animal migration.

The interactive Atlas is an online platform where data on the movements in time and space of millions of birds are mapped and analyzed in the Eurasian-African flyway. Researchers from 10 different institutions and data gathered by over 50 different organizations contributed to the Atlas, which was developed by CMS partners, the European Union for Bird Ringing (EURING) and the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior.

A major accomplishment of the Eurasian-African Bird Migration Atlas is to have collated, analyzed, and synthesized bird ringing data collected over more than 100 years on 300 species.

In addition, for over 100 of these species, the online mapping tool overlays movement patterns identified through bird ringing with tracks obtained through satellite transmitters, GPS-GSM tags or geo-locators. Together, they provide the most complete information available on the migration routes of these species.

An important visualization tool for more effective implementation of conservation measures

For CMS, whose main goal is to conserve migratory species throughout their migratory range and migration itself as a biological phenomenon, a detailed understanding of the different migratory systems and patterns across the different groups of migratory species is important to design and implement conservation strategies and actions.

The new Atlas offers new insights into migration patterns at the species and population levels and into human-related issues affecting them across their migratory paths.

CMS Executive Secretary Amy Fraenkel said: “Knowledge of how animals move and migrate over time and space is crucial for improving our understanding and conservation efforts for migratory species. The Atlas will help decision makers in planning networks of sites managed for conservation purposes.”

The information compiled in the Atlas is expected to offer an important contribution to CMS initiatives on the preservation of ecological connectivity – the unimpeded movement of species and the flow of natural processes that sustain life on Earth – and spatial planning in particular. These relate for example to possible interactions between renewable energy infrastructure and animal migration, with a special emphasis on the risk of collision of migratory birds at wind farms. Maps of seasonal movements across geographical areas can help define strategies to minimize bird mortality risks caused by these infrastructures.

The other main feature of the Atlas: four research modules that provide analyses addressing different aspects of bird migration and relationships between man and birds.

- Two modules, migratory connectivity, and long-term changes in migration patterns due for example to global climate change take a closer look at bird migration patterns, strategies, and adaptations.
- Another research module provides estimates, at the scale of EU territory, of the onset of return migration for many huntable species covered by the Birds Directive. The onset of return migration is critically important information to determine the start of the protection period in the year. The module could help reconcile discrepancies among data at a national level.
- The fourth module focuses on a large-scale and long-term analysis of patterns of intentional killing of birds. It describes the frequency and distribution of intentional killing across the whole Eurasian-African flyways and identifies areas of particularly intense legal or illegal harvesting, both in Europe and Africa.

These results are of direct interest for ongoing activities by CMS and the Bern Convention concerning the illegal killing of birds. Furthermore, this module offers insights about expanding the geographical scope of monitoring the illegal killing of birds, for example, along the East Asian-Australasian flyway.

Finally, the broadened historical and geographical perspective can support similar efforts to address the trapping and killing of animals from other taxonomic groups.

The project was made possible by the support of the Government of Italy, with a pledge to CMS granted in 2017 by the Ministry of the Ecological Transition (formerly Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea) under the Migratory Species Champion Programme.

Memorandum of Understanding between CMS and Italian Partners

On the launch of the Atlas, the CMS Secretariat will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to raise awareness of migratory species conservation and the concept of “ecological connectivity” in the context of the project regarding the restoration and re-qualification of the former Bourbon prison of Santo Stefano-Ventotene. The MOU is with various Italian partners, namely the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) which maintains an important ringing station on Ventotene, the State Nature Reserve and Marine Protected Area of Ventotene, the Municipality of Ventotene and the Special Commissioner for the Project of the Islands of Santo Stefano – Ventotene.

These islands are at the crossroad of important animal migrations and represent a “safe port” and a key node of a large network of sites and habitats as part of species’ annual movements.

All partners will mutually benefit from collaborating in environmental research and conservation. They will also support the implementation of CMS by using the two islands for education, research, and nature-based tourism.

Notes to Editors:

The Atlas is based on data maintained in the EURING Databank hosted by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), and Movebank hosted by the Max Planck Institute.

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.

www.cms.int

Resources:

- [Online access to the Atlas](#)
- [Screenshots from the online atlas](#)
- [Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean](#)
- [UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.26 \(Rev.COP13\) Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species](#)
- [Decisions 13.113 -13.115 on Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species](#)

Social Media Accounts:

<https://twitter.com/BonnConvention>

<https://www.facebook.com/bonnconvention>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/convention-migratory-species/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCna_dofleGNxBYiQ4hroYHA

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