



**BE OUR  
CHAMPION!**

## Landbird conservation

*Working together  
for a common  
treasure*

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### Understanding the Challenge

Migratory birds are the record-breakers for long-distance migration in the animal kingdom. Small species such as the Barn Swallow are capable of covering over 10,000km on their annual journeys. Through their migration, birds often provide a vital ecological connection between continents, as in the case of African-Eurasian migrants which breed throughout Europe and spend the northern winter south of the Sahara. Before embarking on their long and arduous flights, these birds accumulate considerable amounts of fat. There is, however, a limit to the amount of energy reserves they can store prior to departure which constrains the overall distance they can fly without refueling. The increasing habitat deterioration which affects the availability and quality of food, at both breeding and wintering grounds as well as at stop-over sites, poses major challenges to the success of species' migration. Population declines of migratory landbirds are primarily caused by changes in land use patterns related to rapidly growing human populations. This causes increasing demands for water, food, land and other resources. Together with climate-related environmental change, these pressures on the environment result in complex modifications to landscapes, habitats and, sites, as well as to populations of the species they support.

### Moving from Decision to Action

In 2011, member states to the Convention called for the conservation of these species through a flyway approach, taking into consideration the birds' requirements throughout their range including the link to land use. In response to this request, an Action Plan for the conservation of African-Eurasian migrant landbirds and their habitats was developed through wide consultations and approved by Parties to CMS in 2014. This Plan covers over 500 migratory landbirds, of which a significant portion represents globally threatened species including the Blue Swallow and Yellow-breasted Bunting. Appropriate coordination arrangements are vital to the successful attainment of the Action Plan. To this end, an International Working Group consisting of government representatives and experts has been set up.

### Championing the Solution!

Among many priorities of the Plan are the promotion of wildlife-friendly farming systems and the establishment of integrated land use policies involving all relevant sectors. These strategies include the development of landscape design principles to regulate large-scale and intensive forms of agriculture and the considerations of species requirements into any spatial planning process. Given the strong link between landbirds and human livelihoods, the plan also provides for working with local communities to develop incentives aimed at the sustainable management of natural resources. Predictable and long-term funding is needed to support governments and organizations joining forces within the framework of the Working Group to carry out all these actions. The attainment of the Plan is of vital significance because these species are an ecologically, economically, culturally and intrinsically important component of biodiversity, which is shared across many countries in Europe, Asia and Africa.

More information can be found at: <http://cms.int/aemlap-action-plan>



# MIGRATORY SPECIES CHAMPION PROGRAMME

## WE FLY, WE RUN, WE SWIM. HELP US KEEP MOVING

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species and its associated agreements, altogether known as CMS Family, are concerned with the protection of migratory wildlife on a global or regional scale. Such work is largely subject to the voluntary financial income that the Secretariats can generate, which is by its nature neither regular nor predictable.

The *Migratory Species Champion Programme* aims to promote initiatives developed under the CMS Family and encourage their sustainable support. The Programme has been designed to raise commitments to provide medium- and long-term resources for conservation actions so as to guarantee their timely planning and implementation.

### Who can be a Champion?

*Champions* can be Governments, companies, organizations and individuals willing to make a financial commitment of at least three years for one or more specific CMS Family initiatives. Contributions could be made annually or as one-off payments. In-kind donations also qualify provided that they comply with requirements of this programme.

Becoming a *Champion* is more than being a donor. It is rather being an advocate for migratory species delivering support for their conservation beyond funding. *Champions* become part of the solution to big problems that concern them.

### What can a Champion support?

The programme offers a portfolio of initiatives. Each initiative comprises a set of activities contributing to the implementation of a large programme targeting a species, a group of species or a cross-cutting issue.

### Why becoming a Champion?

The Programme and its results are promoted on the dedicated page: [www.migratoryspecies.org/champion](http://www.migratoryspecies.org/champion)

Furthermore, *Champions* are acknowledged with certificates that testify their support to one or more initiatives.

Different categories of *Champions* are defined to recognize different levels of contributions. The scheme of categories is as follows:

*Champion* for annual contributions from €20,000 up to €50,000 over at least a three-year period;

*Champion Plus* for annual contributions of more than €50,000 over at least a three-year period;

*Champion Extraordinaire* for continuous support.

Engaging and awarding *Champions* are rolling processes undertaken by each Secretariat.

Ad hoc donors' events are organized in the margins of the CMS Family decision-making bodies to acknowledge existing *Champions*. The certificate and the associated publicity provide *Champions* with the opportunity to promote both nationally and internationally their commitment and support for the conservation of migratory species.