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**BE OUR
CHAMPION!**

Bringing back the waterbirds of the Caspian Sea

Understanding the Challenge

The Caspian Sea region holds some of the most vulnerable waterbird populations within the African-Eurasian flyway. The region is home to the largest populations of globally threatened waterbird species such as the Lesser White-fronted Goose, the Red-breasted Goose, the White-headed Duck, the Marbled Teal and the Sociable Lapwing. Species such as the Slender-billed Curlew and the Siberian Crane are almost extinct and waterfowl species that are common elsewhere - such as the Bean and the Greater White-fronted Goose - are also declining rapidly. The situation is dire: 70% of all waterbird populations with known trends are declining in the Caspian Sea region, which faces enormous challenges. Exploration and extraction of major oil deposits as well as high pressure on water resources are both leading to the loss and degradation of wetlands and other crucial waterbird habitats. Intensive overharvest and illegal killing of waterbirds is widespread with no transboundary cooperation to tackle it.

Moving from Decision to Action

AEWA Parties recognised the importance of the Caspian Sea region - which lies at the crossroads of the African-Eurasian and the Central Asian flyways - and the challenges waterbirds face in their 2012 decision to develop a specific regional plan of action for West and Central Asia (AEWA Resolution.2). As a first step towards such a regional plan, it is suggested to focus on the implementation of key activities within the Caspian Sea range states.

Championing the Solution!

To address the dire state of the waterbird populations in the Caspian Sea region a suite of actions is proposed. Urgent activities to be implemented include building capacity for the establishment and management of an adequate monitoring system for migratory waterbirds that will provide the knowledge needed for science-based harvest and site management decisions such as population size, population growth rate and harvest rate. In addition, capacity needs to be established for site management including management of hunting as well as for sustainable harvest and population recovery management through a regional training and exchange programme with other countries. These actions will be beneficial for all waterbird populations in the region, including the threatened and vulnerable species. The implementation of these activities will require resources for training sessions and materials, and meetings as well as appropriate field equipment and regional coordination to facilitate the process.



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

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.