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**BE OUR
CHAMPION!**

**Ensuring abundant
seabirds in a bountiful
Benguela**

Understanding the Challenge

The Benguela ocean current is the lifeblood of the Southern Atlantic flowing northwards for 3,000 kilometers along the Southern African coastline. At the crossroad of this cold upwelling stream and Namibia's hot desert sands, thrives a rich biodiversity. This vast area harbours the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME), which has some of the most abundant marine life concentrations in the world and a diverse seabird concentration with several breeding endemic species. The BCLME is also a vital economic resource for Angola, Namibia and South Africa with ecosystem goods and services worth an estimated US\$54.3 billion annually. But this valuable biome is vulnerable to destruction from human activities. The seabirds inhabiting rocky offshore island habitats for breeding and nearshore waters for foraging succumb to common threats. Depleted food resources due to overfishing or spatial shifts in distribution of fish stocks are major issues of concern and are exacerbated by oil spill pollution and displacement and predation by mammals and gulls at colonies.

Moving from Decision to Action

Among the many birds residing in this heaven are the African Penguin, Bank Cormorant, Cape Cormorant, Cape Gannet, African Oystercatcher, Crowned Cormorant, Damara Tern, Caspian Tern and Greater Crested Tern. These nine seabirds has been set as priority for conservation by the IUCN Red List and by their AEWA listings. AEWA promoted an innovative approach to ensure a concerted management and long-term sustainability of conservation measures for these species. This approach was translated into a Multi-Species Action Plan which was developed through extensive consultations with all stakeholders and approved by Parties to AEWA in 2015. Furthermore, an International Working Group has been set up to guide the implementation and further development of the Action Plan.

Championing the Solution!

Joint efforts are needed to implement this Plan and help stop further declines of bird populations and their breeding areas. Urgent actions target the recovery of forage fish stocks and the establishment of functional relationships linking them and seabirds. Among many priorities is the establishment of transboundary marine protected areas for fishery management and seabird conservation purposes. Consideration is also being given to precluding fishing in areas around seabird breeding colonies. Other important measures focus on the removal or relocation of existing predators at key existing seabird breeding sites. Sustainable funding is crucial to ensure that agreed measures are implemented jointly and coordinated efficiently by the Working Group. Only by safeguarding this valuable ecosystem can benefits to the economy and society be secured.

More information can be found at: www.unep-aewa.org/action_plans



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.