

The Ulcinj Declaration

An International Statement on the Protection of Migratory Birds along the Adriatic Flyway

THE ADRIATIC FLYWAY CONFERENCE

Ulcinj, Bojana-Buna Delta

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Preamble

Birds are an integral part of our natural heritage. They have enormous economical, ecological and cultural value.

World-wide more than 11% of bird species are threatened in their existence, through human actions and through global change, according to research by BirdLife International and IUCN, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Many long distance migratory birds in particular are showing serious declines in numbers. Migratory birds are also a shared heritage between nations, and a shared responsibility, whose well-being depends on national and international cooperation along their migratory routes or flyways.

During the Johannesburg summit on sustainable Development in 2002, all countries present committed themselves to halting the current rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. Halting the rate of loss of migratory birds is an obvious part of that commitment.

Only if each and every country recognises its responsibility for the well-being of migratory birds and their habitats, and only if countries work together in an open and positive manner, sharing knowledge and resources with those less fortunate than themselves, can the decline of migratory birds be halted. And can we continue to enjoy them and benefit from them.

Declaration

The following declaration, hereafter to be referred to as "The Ulcinj Declaration", was adopted by the 120 participants in the first Adriatic Flyway Conference hosted by EuroNatur in Ulcinj, Montenegro, from 14-17 April 2009. The participants represented national conservation institutes and organisations from all countries on the East Adriatic Coast and its hinterland, which is the region of the Adriatic Flyway.

Participants also represented the international Multilateral Environmental Agreements of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Migratory Species CMS, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement AEWA and the Bern Convention of the Council of Europe; the international NGOs Wetlands International and Birdlife International; and the international bird research and habitat management community from other European and North African countries.

Those present at this international conference:

RECOGNISING the importance of the Adriatic Flyway to birds that migrate between Eurasia and Africa,

RECOGNISING the declining numbers of many species that migrate along the Adriatic Flyway and the continuing threats that they face,

RECOGNISING the past, present and possible future deterioration and disappearance of the habitats these migratory species depend on, including crucial stopover sites that are critical for a successful journey to their wintering quarters and back to their breeding grounds,

AWARE OF the major commitments made by the countries on the East Adriatic coast and its hinterland to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Bern Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands,

AWARE OF the value that migratory birds have for sustainable economical, ecological and cultural development,

AWARE OF the values that migratory birds have as indicators of environmental well-being and change,

AWARE that sustainable hunting practices and bird conservation have compatible goals,

AWARE that in Europe there are more than 6 million birdwatchers, and that BirdLife Europe has more than 2 million members,

AWARE that in countries where bird watching is well developed, birdwatching generates up to twenty times as much economic activity as does bird hunting, a matter of billions of euros each year

CONCERNED for the future of migratory birds along the Adriatic Flyway and their habitats,

CONCERNED for the well-being of the people with whom these birds share the environment,

RECOMMEND THAT national governments along the East Adriatic coast and its hinterland, other European countries, the European Union, International Multilateral Environmental Agreements, international NGO's, if and where appropriate, do what is within their power to

1. adjust, where still necessary, national legislation along the East Adriatic coast and its hinterland, including land use planning legislation, so that it is in harmony with the European Union's Bird, Habitat and Water Framework Directives
2. see to the effective implementation of such legislation, and, when necessary, its enforcement
3. recognise that migratory birds and their habitats have an important role to play in sustainable economic development, including through the encouragement of birdwatching-oriented tourism
4. make the hunting of migratory birds sustainable and fully in compliance with the European Union's Bird Directive and international legal obligations;
5. eliminate illegal hunting and establish and enforce strict no-hunting areas to secure the stop-over sites for migratory birds
6. ensure that no birds hunted or trapped along the East Adriatic coast and its hinterland are imported into the European Union
7. ensure that national energy strategies include the obligation for the development of wind parks that their location is based on sensitivity maps for bird movements
8. designate as Wetlands of International Importance all those sites that meet the relevant criteria
9. complete identification as Important Bird Area of all sites that meet the criteria, and use that identification as an IBA as a starting point for legal and effective protection of those sites
10. preserve and restore wherever possible the remaining wetlands along the Adriatic Coast by promoting integrated river basin and coastal management
11. encourage cross-border cooperation for the protection of migratory birds along the Adriatic Flyway, at government as well as non-government level
12. recognise and facilitate the role of national NGOs and international NGOs in protecting migratory birds and their habitats in the East Adriatic region
13. assist in the development of national NGOs committed to bird conservation, including their organisational capacity, scientific knowledge collection and distribution, and public relations
14. where applicable urge countries to ratify the CMS and/or its relevant agreements as important instruments for the protection of migratory birds along their entire flyways, in particular the African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement AEWA and the Migratory Raptors' MoU
15. encourage environmental education in relation to migratory birds and their habitats, their value and the threats they face.
16. request the EU and possible donor countries and organisations to support the implementation of this declaration by providing financial or in kind support.

Adopted by the participants of the first Adriatic Flyway Conference, April 17, 2009, Ulcinj, Montenegro.