

# World Migratory Bird Day 2019

Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution! - 11 May and 12 October 2019

## Plastic and the harm it does to the environment

Tonnes of plastic are produced each year. But items used for a minute take 20 to 500 years to decompose. Discarded pieces find their way into ecosystems through the forces of nature and human negligence causing serious threats to migratory species around the world. Broken down into small particles by water, sunlight and wind, plastic often leads to lethal cases of ingestion. Larger pieces can entangle animals and are often mistaken for food. Chicks are constantly being found dead with stomachs full of plastic.



### Ingestion

Floating on the surface of the water, covered in algae, single-use plastics such as bags, drinking straws and bottles can easily be mistaken for prey, both by shape and by smell. Sharp plastic particles cause immediate death by piercing internal organs. Toxic chemicals coating plastics are an additional threat.

### Entanglement

Abandoned fishing gear is one of the most common causes leading to a phenomenon called 'ghost fishing'. Caught birds are either injured and pick up infections or end up drowning. Often, trapped birds are limited in their movements and easily become prey to other animals.

### What can YOU do to fight plastic pollution?

- **Reduce, reuse and recycle** - Limit your use of plastic materials and replace them with eco-friendly alternatives, use and dispose of plastics sustainably
- **Clean up** - Join clean-up activities in your area, whether at beaches or along rivers
- **Spread the word** - Support local and global action against excessive, unnecessary use and detrimental disposal of plastic

### How can you participate?

Join the global campaign and help raise awareness by organizing educational programmes, lectures, beach- and riverside clean-ups, visits to bird-watching sites, competitions, art exhibitions and other public events.

Find out more, register your event at: [www.worldmigratorybirdday.org](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)

For questions, contact us at: [contact@worldmigratorybirdday.org](mailto:contact@worldmigratorybirdday.org)

#### What is World Migratory Bird Day?

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. It highlights the threats migratory birds face, the birds' ecological importance, and the need for international cooperation to conserve wildlife.

The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and Environment for the Americas (EFTA) organize World Migratory Bird Day and this year's theme is "Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution!" Plastic discarded in the environment is a major threat to birds.