



PRESS RELEASE

Celebrating World Migratory Bird Day with family birdwatching events

Nicosia, 9 May 2017

Migratory birds travel epic distances every year crossing many borders and connecting countries, cultures, and continents over their thousands-of-kilometres-long flyways. This astonishing feat is celebrated every year on 10 May by thousands of people across the globe. With over 230 migratory species passing through Cyprus every spring and autumn there's no better place to learn more about and enjoy migratory birds. To celebrate **World Migratory Bird Day** (WMBD) BirdLife Cyprus is organising two birdwatching outings for families, one at Athalassa Park and one at Oroklini Lake to introduce young and old to the wondrous world of migratory birds and birdwatching.

WMBD is a global initiative to raise awareness about the need to conserve all migratory birds. Every year it focuses on a different topic. This year's theme is "Their Future is our Future" and highlights the interdependence of people and nature, and more especially people and migratory animals - in particular birds, as they share the same planet and thus the same limited resources. Migratory animals contribute to our planet in quantifiable ways, such as pollination, medicine, pest control and tourism worth billions of euros each year – as well as immeasurable benefits in cultural and aesthetic value.

Join us either at Athalassa Park (Sunday, 21 May 2017) or Oroklini Lake (Sunday, 28 May 2017) to get to know some of the birds that have travelled thousands of kilometres either to rest here before continuing their journey further south or to make their nest and raise their young in Cyprus. Migratory species we may see include Barn Swallows, Common Swifts, Bee-eaters, Grey Herons, Little Egrets, Spur-winged Lapwings, Black-winged Stilts, Kingfishers, and many more!

During the outings, young and old will learn the ABC's of birdwatching, enrich their knowledge about the natural world and, of course, enjoy birds! Each outing has 1.5 hour duration and is aimed at children ages 7 – 12 years old and their parents/guardians. Participation is free of charge. Put on your hats and sunscreen, keep your eyes and ears open, and let nature and birds work their magic!

The outings will take place on:

Sunday, 21 May 2017, 9:30 – 11:00, Athalassa Park, Nicosia

Sunday, 28 May 2017, 9:30 – 11:00, Oroklini Lake, Larnaca

All children are required to be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is required due to limited availability. For more information and to register please contact us on 22455072 or at elena.markitani@birdlifecyprus.org.cy



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For further information please contact:

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Notes to editor:

1. **BirdLife Cyprus** is a registered non-governmental organization (NGO) that dedicates itself to the conservation of wild birds and their habitats in Cyprus. It was formed in 2003 through the merge of the two Cyprus Ornithological Societies and now has offices in Strakka, Nicosia comprised by professional staff. www.birdlifecyprus.org

2. **World Migratory Bird Day** (WMBD) was initiated in 2006 and is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. It has a global outreach and is an effective tool to help raise global awareness of the threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance, and the need for international cooperation to conserve them. <http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org>

3. The number of birds stopping over during the spring and autumn migration is impressive as literally millions pass through the island. Cyprus lies on one of the major bird migration routes across the Mediterranean. With Africa to the south, Turkey and central Europe to the north and Syria and the Middle East to the east, Cyprus is a major staging post used twice a year as birds move between Africa, Europe and Eurasia, with over 230 species occurring as regular passage migrants in varying numbers and around 30 migrant breeders who regularly or occasionally breed in Cyprus. The birds that occur regularly on passage form a large percentage of the Cyprus list that totals around 400 species.

4. For more information on **Oroklini Lake**: <http://www.orkliniproject.org>