

State of the World's Birds 2026

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in News?

BirdLife International published its flagship quadrennial report, *State of the World's Birds (Flyways Edition) 2026*, at the Global Flyways Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Key findings of the report

- **Declining Population** - Nearly **45% (almost half)** of global migratory bird species are undergoing population declines.
- **Extinction Risk- 1 in 9 (11%)** migratory bird species are currently threatened with global extinction.
- **Degraded Habitats** - Scientific monitoring reveals that **58%** of 1,099 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) critical for migratory birds are in poor or very poor ecological condition.
- **Most Vulnerable Groups - Seabirds and shorebirds**, which rely heavily on coastal intertidal wetlands and marine ecosystems are faring the worst among avian groups.
- **Primary Drivers of Decline**
 - Agricultural expansion and intensification.
 - Loss and fragmentation of critical staging/stopover habitats along migration routes.
 - Illegal killing, hunting, and trapping (an estimated 13 million to 42 million birds taken annually in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East).
 - Climate change, invasive alien species, and energy infrastructure collision risks.

The Nairobi Flyways Declaration

- **Core Premise** - Formally recognizes that isolated national conservation efforts are insufficient for migratory birds.
- Survival requires synchronized, transboundary action across entire **flyways** (the continental corridors connecting breeding, stopover, and wintering grounds).
- **Multi-Sectoral Commitment**- Over 100 organizations, including national governments, international research bodies, conservation NGOs, and financial institutions, signed the declaration.
- **Integration of Development Finance**- Marks a major policy shift where multilateral development banks are explicitly integrating flyway conservation into their large-scale infrastructure and regional development lending frameworks.

MIGRATORY BIRDS IN DECLINE

Healthy
Flyways
Healthy
Planet

Almost half of migratory bird species now in decline:
State of the World's Birds



45%

of migratory
bird species
are in decline.



1 in 9
faces extinction.



THE GLOBAL FLYWAYS

Migratory birds connect ecosystems across continents —
from the Arctic to the tropics and back.

- Arctic**
(breeding grounds)
- Asia**
(major stopover
& wintering grounds)
- Africa**
(important stopover
& wintering grounds)
- Tropics**
(wintering grounds)



MAJOR THREATS



Invasive species
(e.g., rats, cats,
non-native predators)



Agricultural intensification
(habitat loss,
pesticides,
fewer insects)



Climate change
(shifting seasons,
extreme weather,
sea-level rise)



Unsustainable hunting
(illegal and
unregulated)



MOST AFFECTED



Seabirds
(e.g., albatross, petrels)



Shorebirds
(e.g., sandpipers, plovers)



**Species dependent
on marine habitats**
(e.g., terns, gulls)



**Forests and coastal
wetlands**
(e.g., warblers, herons)



2025



Slender-billed Curlew
extinction confirmed.
(IUCN)



GLOBAL RESPONSE



Nairobi Flyways Declaration

Calls for coordinated
cross-border conservation
across entire flyways.



A POSITIVE STEP

Egyptian Vulture

Coordinated multi-country action
has halted the decline of the Balkan
breeding population.

Conservation
works!



State of the World's Birds 2026 | BirdLife International | Global Flyways Summit, Nairobi



Major Financial Commitments

- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** - Plans to mobilize **\$3 billion** over the next decade under its Regional Flyway Initiative to protect at least 50 priority wetland ecosystems along the ***East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF)***.
- **Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF)**- Committing **\$3 billion to \$5 billion** by 2050 to safeguard over 30 key terrestrial and marine landscapes along the Americas flyways.
- **World Bank & BirdLife Partnership**- Pledging multi-billion-dollar frameworks targeted at protecting flyway networks spanning Africa, Europe, and Asia supporting over 2 billion migratory birds.

Reference

[Down to Earth | Almost half of migratory bird species now in decline](#)

