

Maximising the value of birds and wildlife for tourism

A guide for tourism businesses in the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway



The BirdLife International UNDP/GEF Migratory Soaring Birds Project

The Rift Valley/Red Sea hosts the migration of over 2 million birds, with Soaring Birds in huge flocks numbering tens of thousands migrating from wintering grounds in Africa to breeding grounds in Europe and Central Asia and vice versa along the second biggest Flyway in the world.

Yet this area is also subject to huge development pressures, as increased demands for energy, food supply, and tourism lead to significant changes in land use and generate the need for increased waste management. Indiscriminate hunting and illegal killing of birds is widespread. Thus, these five sectors of Agriculture, Energy, Hunting, Tourism and Waste Management can create an increasingly inhospitable environment for Migrating Soaring Birds and have the potential to affect populations of soaring birds across three continents

The Migratory Soaring Birds project aims to integrate conservation of visiting birds into these key sectors of our societies.

This is being achieved through partnerships and strategic alliances with private businesses, NGOs, governments, international organizations. We are working with these sectors in order to incorporate protection of the flyway at the heart of

the development decisions and land use changes within the region, and in the case of hunting, working with governments and sustainable hunting organizations to protect Migratory Soaring Birds from illegal killing.

The Migratory Soaring Birds project is supported by the following organisations:



The Global Environment Facility (GEF) unites 182 member governments – in partnership with international institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs), and the private sector – to address global environmental issues. GEF is the donor agency for the Migratory Soaring Birds project.

The United Nations Development Program.



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

UNDP is the United Nations' global development network, an organisation advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is the executing agency for the Migratory Soaring Birds project.



BirdLife International is a global Partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. BirdLife is the implementing agency for the Migratory Soaring Birds project.

More information about the Migratory Soaring Birds project is available from:
www.migratorysoaringbirds.undp.BirdLife.org

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Cover photograph by Lior Kislev

The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations and Development Programme (UNDP).



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Plan new and refurbish existing tourism infrastructure
in a bird-friendly way

(Further information, annex 4, page 57)

Build partnerships with credible conservation partners
to ensure that tourism actively contributes towards
the conservation of the flyway.

(Further information, annex 4, page 60)

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Revealing your hidden Jewels

Welcome by Jane Ashton, Director of Sustainability, TUI Group.

As a global player aspiring to market and brand leadership in the tourism sector, TUI feels a particular commitment to the principle of sustainability. For us, sustainability means the continuous balancing over the long-term of economic, ecological, social and cultural needs. We believe that by balancing these needs we can: safeguard our competitiveness, avoid risks, secure opportunities, promote the potential of employees, intensify cooperation with public interest groups, and sustainably improve the efficient use of natural resources.

Over the years, TUI has worked with many destinations to support the achievement of our sustainability ambitions. Increasingly, destination stakeholders tell us that their success depends not only on the quality of the tourism service that they provide, but also on the quality of the environments in which they operate. Our partners in destinations frequently ask us to help them to use the bird and wildlife in their area, not only to provide exceptional tourist experiences, but also as a mechanism

through which they can stimulate active conservation of these environments.

Projects of which we are particularly proud have included: the development of nature and cultural excursions to support conservation of the mangrove forests in Sri Lanka (in partnership with the Global Nature Fund), initiatives to protect sea turtles in Turkey, programmes to work with tourists and dive operators to support coral reef protection in Egypt and the partnership between Jaz Hotels and BirdLife in Egypt.

This handbook provides practical information to maximise the value that birds add to all tourism experiences and to support the conservation of habitats on which birds depend.

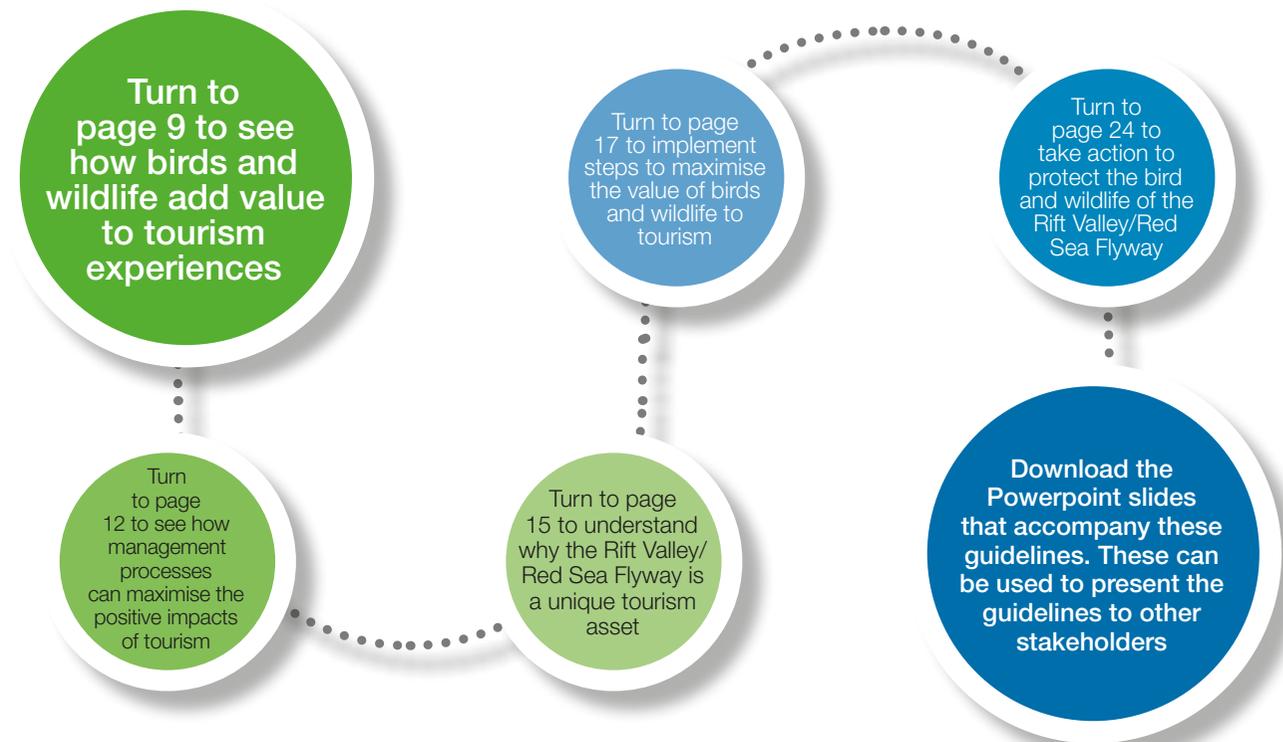
We wish you good luck in implementing the advice in the pages that follow.



This handbook has been designed for use interactively (as a .PDF) or to be printed as a conventional book. If you choose to use it interactively, you can click on references to page numbers in the text and use the contents, back and forwards tabs at the base of the screen to navigate to the elements that interest you.

“Birding plays a significant and growing part in the tourism industry, and creates direct and indirect economic benefits for many countries and communities, also amongst developing countries. Wildlife watching appeals to a wide range of people, and opportunities to participate in wildlife watching are and should increasingly be a factor in tourists’ holiday choices today”

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).



Tourism and conservation – a symbiotic relationship

Tourism hit a new record in 2014 with over 1.1 billion international tourists travelling the world in one single year. Add to this the millions of people who travelled within their home country (domestic tourists) and you begin to appreciate the scale of the global tourism industry.

It is estimated that tourism contributes more than 9 per cent to GDP globally.

Travel for tourists is facilitated by a wide range of businesses, from the international hotel, airline and tour operators that transport millions of people across the globe every year, to the tiny family run guided tours, cafés and accommodation establishments that provide unique cultural experiences to a handful of tourists a year.

These businesses all have one important attribute in common; they depend upon the quality and long-term viability of the natural environment in the destinations in which they exist. This is becoming more rather than less important to the tourism industry, and tourism businesses are becoming increasingly aware of this fact.

If well managed, tourism is one of the few industries that can play a transformative role, especially in developing countries. It can provide valuable economic development opportunities at all levels of society alongside a powerful

incentive for community cohesion and environmental protection (Christie et al, 2014). If poorly managed, tourism can damage the environments on which it depends.

“It used to be that if one area was built up, you could always move on somewhere else... but increasingly we are not in a position to escape the mess that we have created”

Martin Brackenbury, former chair of the international organisation that represents the mainstream tour operators (known as the International Federation of Tour Operators)

Well managed, tourism can be:

- An essential source of income for local people
- A mechanism to stimulate small business development
- A powerful generator of jobs
- An incentive to protect wildlife and the local environment
- A nexus for communities to come together and celebrate their respective cultures.



Palestine Sunbird (Photographer: Oliver Flower)

Birds and wildlife – adding value to tourism experiences

Birds and wildlife add value to tourism experiences. For example,

- Costa Rica and South Africa (both located on prominent migratory flyways) actively promote themselves to birdwatchers to attract high spending tourists. In 1999, the Costa Rican Tourism Institute estimated that 41% of its \$1-billion dollar tourism revenues was from tourists who came primarily for the purpose of birdwatching.
- A study of villages in Poland that have established stork nesting colonies indicated that tourists spent an average of US \$60 per visit (excluding travel costs) and US \$120 per visit (including travel costs) as a result of viewing the storks.
- A study by the RSPB in the UK estimated that each tourist spends £4.92 on a day trip and £55.96 on a visit to view birds (Molloy et al, 2011).

When people talk about bird and wildlife tourism, they are often discussing just one small part of the leisure travel market, referred to as ecotourism (see glossary for a definition of this term). However, birds and wildlife, can appeal to a much wider range of travellers (the blue circles opposite).



International Tourism

Worth an estimated US\$940 million and expected to double in value by 2030. It is estimated that international tourists spent US\$1.3 trillion in 2013 (WTTC, 2013)



Holiday and leisure tourism

The largest segment of the tourism market (circa 52% of all international tourism activity).



Birds and wildlife

An estimated 20 – 40% of all leisure tourists are thought to have an interest in some form of wildlife watching (The International Ecotourism Society 2000).



Eco Tourism

Tourists who travel with the specific intent of bird or wildlife watching. Usually these travellers have an active interest in nature conservation, 1-7% of the total international travel market depending on whose definition you use.

