

World Migratory Bird Day 2025 Statement

By: SSENKINDU ERIC KATEYANIRA

ssenkinduerickateyanira@acugs.org

Avian Conservation Uganda Society (ACUS) - www.acugs.org

Each year on the second Saturday of May, World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) unites people across the world in recognizing the incredible journeys of migratory birds and the shared responsibility we have in ensuring their survival. Under the 2025 theme *“Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities and Communities,”* we at the Avian Conservation Uganda Society (ACUS) proudly joined the global community to raise awareness and take action to protect these vital species and their habitats.

Migratory birds connect ecosystems, cultures, and communities. Yet, rapid urbanization and poor land-use planning continue to degrade the habitats they rely on, especially in fragile areas like Uganda’s wetlands and urban peripheries. This year’s theme is a timely reminder that our cities and communities must become safer spaces not just for people, but for birds too.

To mark WMBD 2025, ACUS ran a targeted campaign focused on **Lutembe Bay**, one of Uganda’s most critical stopover sites for migratory water-birds, particularly species that travel along the Eastern Afro-Palearctic flyway. Our efforts included a series of interconnected awareness, advocacy, and field-based actions:

1. Pre-WMBD Awareness Campaign (May 2025)

In the lead-up to May 10th, we launched a **digital campaign** across social media platforms to raise awareness, build excitement, and count down to the big day. Through daily posts, infographics, bird facts, and community reflections, we celebrated the beauty and importance of migratory birds while educating our growing online community on the threats they face.

2. Webinar – “Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities & Communities” (7 May 2025)

We hosted a free-entry webinar that brought together urban ecologists, policy advocates, youth conservation leaders, and local government representatives to explore how urban planning and community action can create safer spaces for birds and to unpack the WMBD 2025 toolkit.

3. WMBD Birding Excursion to Lutembe Bay (10 May 2025)

As a practical highlight of our celebrations, ACUS organized a birdwatching excursion to Lutembe Bay, involving bird enthusiasts, young conservationists, and members of the local community. Participants observed key migratory species, deepened their understanding of the site’s ecological importance, and experienced first-hand the value of preserving such habitats.

4. Community Sensitization at Lutembe Bay

In partnership with local leaders, we convened a **community sensitization session** for residents living near Lutembe Bay. The session focused on educating communities about the role of migratory birds in ecosystem health, the threats posed by habitat encroachment, and the mutual benefits of sustainable wetland management.

5. Development of a Policy Brief on Lutembe Bay

Recognizing the urgent conservation needs of Lutembe Bay, ACUS developed and disseminated a **policy brief** advocating for:

- Proper **gazettement** of the wetland as a protected site,
- Restoration of degraded wetland areas, and
- Implementation of sustainable and community-inclusive management practices.

This brief aims to support ongoing dialogue with government agencies, conservation stakeholders, and local authorities to ensure long-term protection of this key site.

Looking Ahead:

World Migratory Bird Day 2025 has strengthened our resolve at ACUS to continue bridging science, policy, and community action in support of migratory birds. As Uganda's cities grow and natural areas face increasing pressure, we must intentionally design and advocate for shared spaces where birds can find safe passage and people can thrive in harmony with nature.

Migratory birds bring beauty, ecological balance, and global connection. They remind us that conservation is not confined by borders. We share the skies and so must we, the responsibility to protect them.

Together, let's keep making space for birds.



Figure 1: Pre WMBD Webinar Flier



Figure 2: Social media count-down campaign flier



Figure 3: WMBD Excursion Flier to Lutembe Bay