

JULY 2026

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IMPACT

A Year of Action, Impact, and Biodiversity Conservation

2025 - 2026

**At the Heart
of a Global
Migration
Route**

**“Until the
Birds Return”:
From Advocacy
to Policy**



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A Year of Impact and Achievement

This report highlights a year of institutional, scientific, and community-based work by Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE) from July 2025 to June 2026. The year strengthened NCE's role as a key partner in national environmental policy, expanding its impact from field conservation to decision-making, alongside growing regional and international partnerships.

The year saw the implementation of Egypt's first biodiversity offset project in the renewable energy sector, through the procurement of bird flight diverters for installation along 15 km of electricity transmission lines—an innovative model combining clean energy development with migratory bird protection. Galala Bird Observatory also recorded an exceptional season, with more than 425,000 soaring birds, including 117,000 in a single day, alongside specialized training programs.

In addressing unsustainable hunting, the national “Until the Birds Return” campaign culminated in a national workshop bringing together more than 50 governmental, civil society, religious, and media stakeholders, leading to the development of a National Roadmap to Combat Illegal Bird Hunting (2026–2030). The hunting ban in Lake Nasser also continued for the third consecutive year.

In partnership with the Ministry of Environment, NCE continued the Winter Waterbird Count, covering 21 sites nationwide and recording 153,975 birds across 101 species, including two rare species newly added to Egypt's official bird list for the first time in decades.

Alongside these efforts, NCE continued its work on native Egyptian plants and seed banking, strengthened international partnerships, and expanded its environmental communication and awareness activities, with more than 60 media features, as well as video series and television appearances.

This report presents the year's key achievements and reaffirms NCE's commitment to protecting nature and biodiversity and safeguarding Egypt's natural heritage at the regional and international levels.

<https://natureegypt.org/>

Migration Routes and Sustainable Energy: An Integrated Approach to Conservation

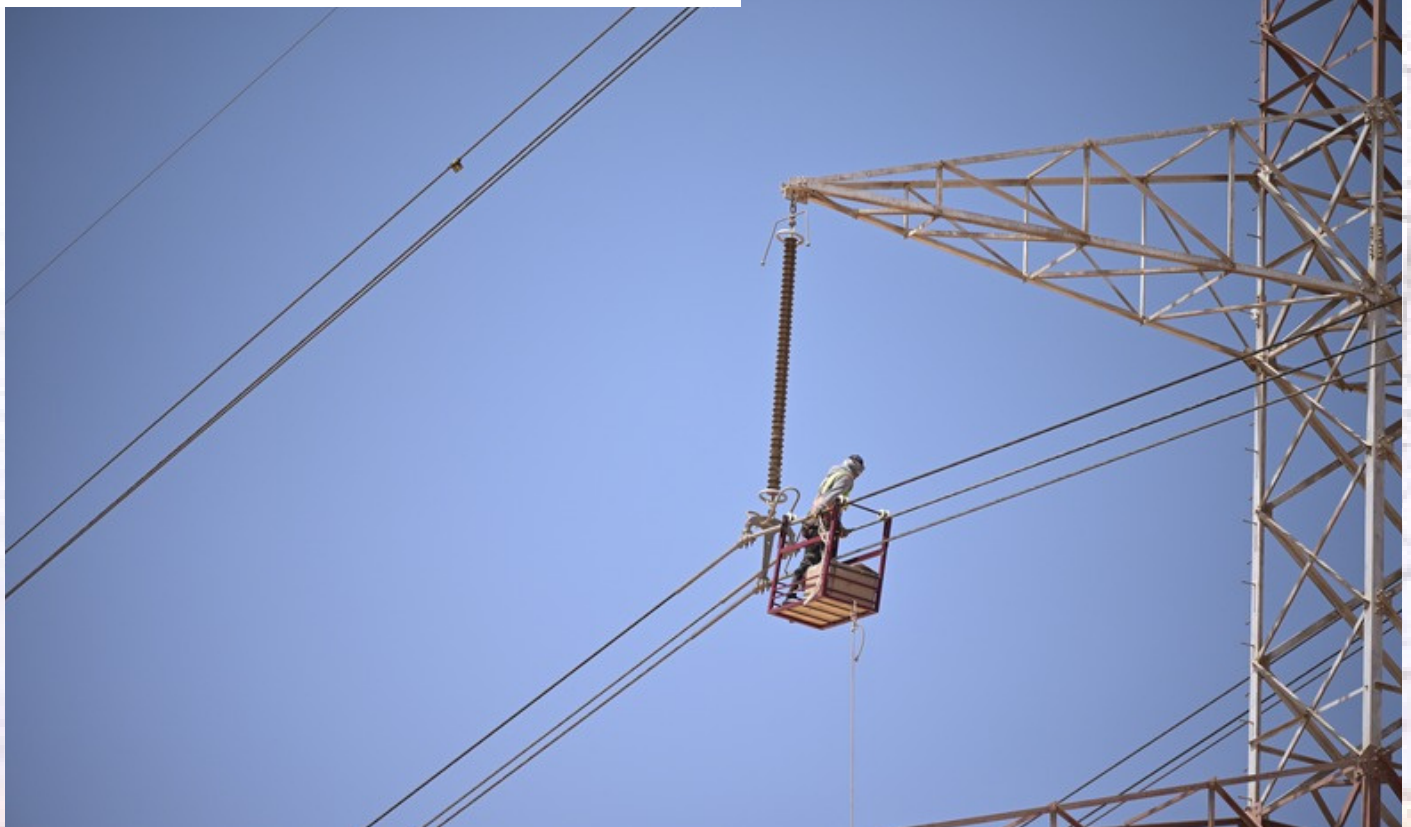
NCE continued to promote a balance between renewable energy development and biodiversity conservation by supporting international best practices to reduce the impact of energy infrastructure on migratory birds.

As part of the Amunet Wind Farm Biodiversity Offset Project, the first of its kind in Egypt, NCE continued efforts to reduce bird collision risks along electricity transmission lines located on major migration routes.

By April 2026, the first phase of installations on the Red Sea Alliance transmission line was completed, with around 4,000 bird flight diverters installed on conductors and ground wires.

NCE conducted a field visit with Amunet representatives to document the work and verify its quality and compliance with the required specifications. Preparations are underway for the second phase in coordination with the Egyptian Electricity Transmission Company (EETC).

In parallel, NCE conducted field monitoring along the El Tor–Sharm El-Sheikh transmission line to assess the effectiveness of previously installed diverters, generating scientific data to evaluate mitigation measures and inform their future improvement.



“Until the Birds Return”: From Advocacy to Policy

NCE continued its efforts to address unsustainable bird hunting, one of the major threats to migratory birds and biodiversity in Egypt, through the national “Until the Birds Return” campaign. The campaign serves as an integrated platform for awareness and advocacy, promoting compliance with environmental legislation and cooperation among government institutions, civil society, and the media to protect migratory birds.



In July 2025, NCE officially launched the campaign at the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate, bringing together journalists, experts, and civil society representatives. NCE also signed a cooperation protocol with the Environmental Journalists and Development Association to strengthen joint awareness and media efforts.

The campaign received extensive coverage, including a front-page investigative report in Al-Ahram and more than 60 media features. Its advocacy efforts supported Ministerial Decree No. 242 of 2025, which maintained the hunting ban in Lake Nasser for the third consecutive year, banned hunting in Egyptian oases, and strengthened hunting regulations. NCE also published awareness materials explaining the new regulations to hunters and the public.

Lake Nasser: A Model for Effective Conservation

The campaign highlighted the exceptional ecological importance of Lake Nasser as a key stopover along the Europe–Africa migration route, as well as the positive outcomes of ongoing protection measures. These included the first confirmed breeding record of the Village Weaver within Egypt, documented in Abu Simbel and subsequently published internationally.

NCE also organized an interactive webinar on the challenges of bird hunting in Egypt, addressing law enforcement and the role of communities in supporting conservation efforts.

TOWARDS NATIONAL GOVERNANCE OF BIRD HUNTING

In May 2026, NCE organized the national workshop “Strengthening Bird Hunting Governance in Egypt: Lessons Learned, Challenges and Prospects for Joint Action,” marking a milestone in its decade-long efforts to address illegal bird hunting.

The workshop brought together representatives from government institutions, universities, Al-Azhar and the Church, the House of Representatives and Senate, civil society, and the media, reflecting growing national consensus on the need to protect birds and biodiversity.

Working sessions addressed five key areas: legislation and regulation, awareness and behavioral change, monitoring and research, funding and partnerships, and the socio-economic dimensions of hunting.

The discussions produced practical recommendations that formed the basis for the National Roadmap to Combat Illegal Bird Hunting **(2026–2030)** and led to an agreement to establish a voluntary national working group to strengthen coordination among stakeholders.



The workshop concluded with a consensus statement recognizing illegal hunting as a national conservation priority requiring coordinated and sustained action. The outcomes provided a clear framework for future collaboration, and the National Roadmap to Combat Illegal Bird Hunting (2026–2030) was subsequently announced at a press conference held at the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate.

As part of its modern communication efforts, NCE also launched the awareness film “They Are More Than Just Birds,” highlighting illegal hunting and its impacts along migration routes. The film gained wide reach on social media, helping strengthen public awareness and media engagement around wildlife exploitation, biodiversity protection, and the need for more sustainable hunting practices.

#UntilTheBirdsReturn

GALALA BIRD OBSERVATORY: AT THE HEART OF A GLOBAL MIGRATION ROUTE



Galala Bird Observatory recorded an exceptional spring 2026 season, continuing its scientific role in monitoring soaring bird migration along one of the world's major migration routes. The monitoring team, supported by volunteers and trainees, collected valuable data on migratory bird numbers and species, alongside training and awareness activities that strengthened local capacity for bird conservation.

From **15 February to 15 April 2026**, a team of four observers conducted daily monitoring, totaling around **370** field hours and recording **425,873 soaring birds-**

representing 30 species. The results included seven globally or regionally threatened species, including **32,140** Steppe Eagles, **544** Egyptian Vultures, **216** Greater Spotted Eagles, **130** Imperial Eagles, **54** Ospreys, **28** Black-winged Kites, and one Lesser Spotted Eagle.

A notable scientific highlight was the return of the Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) for the fourth time in five years, with two individuals recorded in consecutive weeks. Classified as Near Threatened (NT) on the IUCN Red List, its repeated

presence further highlights Galala's importance as a vital migration corridor.

Alongside monitoring, NCE conducted a specialized training program in February and April 2026, combining theoretical and field-based learning in raptor identification, monitoring methods, and the use of IUCN and AviStep tools. The practical training at Galala from 3–5 April recorded more than **117,000** migratory birds in a single day, including around 24 species—the observatory's highest daily count in several years.



As part of its field conservation efforts, the observatory team, in collaboration with Galala University, also rescued a migrating Scops Owl found severely exhausted on campus. After receiving the necessary care, the bird was successfully released to continue its migration.



NATIVE EGYPTIAN PLANTS: RESTORING NATURE FROM THE ROOTS

During 2025–2026, NCE continued its program to propagate native Egyptian plants and restore natural habitats, aiming to conserve plant diversity and genetic resources while promoting nature-based solutions to biodiversity loss and climate change. The program expanded its nursery and experimental greenhouse infrastructure, alongside awareness activities and partnerships promoting the use of native plants.

In early 2026, NCE launched awareness activities highlighting the ecological and economic value of native plants, including their role in reducing water consumption, supporting biodiversity, and strengthening the environmental identity of urban and tourism projects.

In April, the program began directly engaging youth and volunteers through its first volunteer meeting, introducing

participants to plant propagation, seed collection, and environmental awareness activities.

NCE also provided native seedlings to Cairo American College for planting with students and contributed to planting activities in public spaces in Sheikh Zayed and Maadi.

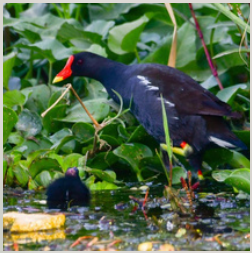
In May, the program expanded into the tourism sector by supporting an eco-tourism project in Marsa Shagara, Marsa Alam, with native seedlings, promoting desert

landscaping, water efficiency, biodiversity, and the environmental identity of tourism sites.

NCE successfully propagated around 26 native plant species, producing more than 4,500 seedlings, including the globally threatened Argun Palm (*Medemia argun*), as well as *Salvadora persica*, *Ziziphus*, *Ficus sycomorus*, *Nitraria*, *Capparis*, and eight native Egyptian acacia species.

In June 2026, NCE continued establishing the NCE Native Seed Bank, conducting field trips across southern Egypt, desert valleys, and Nile islands and collecting seeds from more than 20 native plant species for future propagation and habitat restoration.





Winter Waterbird Count

A SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT OF WATERBIRDS IN EGYPT



During 2025–2026, NCE continued implementing the Winter Waterbird Count in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment – Nature Conservation Sector, strengthening national biodiversity monitoring and building the capacity of protected-area staff. The project covered three integrated phases: technical preparation and capacity building, field monitoring, and breeding-colony surveys.

The project began with coordination meetings to define target sites, monitoring methods, data collection procedures, and quality-control mechanisms. NCE also organized specialized training on waterbird identification and monitoring at Ashtoum El-Gamil Protected Area, Port Said, from 14–17 December 2025, involving protected-area staff and young researchers and covering species and habitat identification, counting methods, threat assessment, databases, and modern field tools.

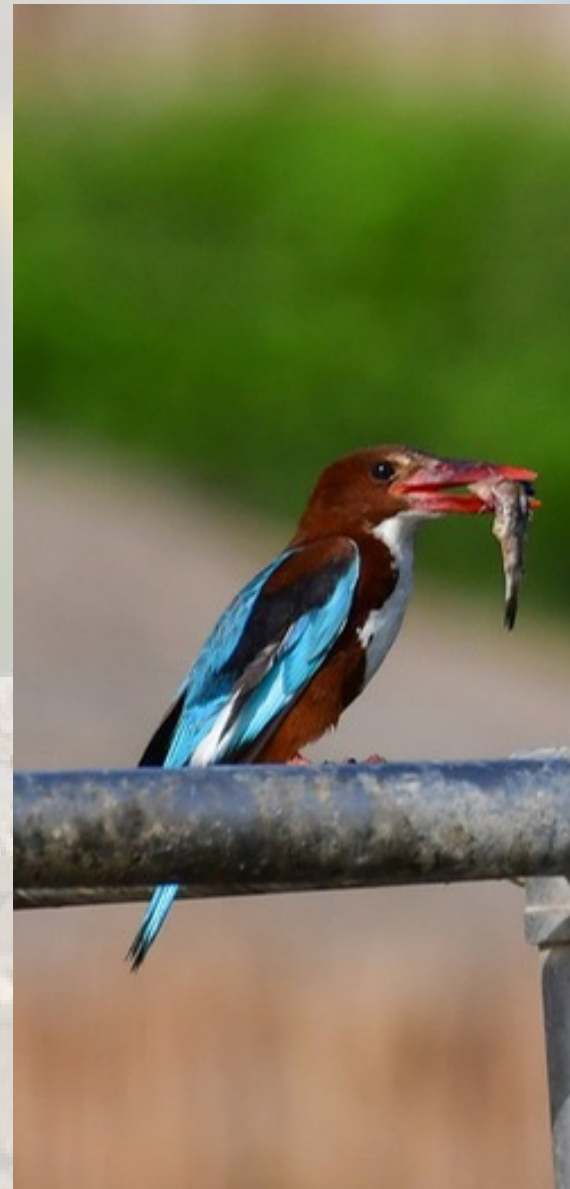
In January 2026, NCE conducted the winter count across 21 key sites, covering Egypt's major ecosystems, including the northern lakes, Nile River, oases, Lake Nasser, the Red Sea, and North and South Sinai, with participation from NCE teams, protected-area researchers, experts, young researchers, and volunteers.

The survey recorded 153,975 birds representing 101 species, providing valuable data to assess waterbird populations and habitats and support conservation decisions. NCE also promoted citizen science through the “Big Day” winter count event.

Two New Records Added to Egypt's Official Bird List

The survey led to the official addition of Little Gull and Smew to Egypt's bird list, following review and approval by the Egyptian Ornithological Records Committee (EORC), highlighting the program's scientific value and the importance of long-term monitoring.

As a continuation of the winter count, NCE began monitoring waterbird breeding colonies in May 2026, in cooperation with the Nature Conservation Sector, to assess breeding success and monitor the condition of key habitats.



Integrating Nature Conservation into National Policy

From July 2025 to June 2026, NCE strengthened its role in advancing national conservation priorities by leveraging scientific research, media, and public awareness to support biodiversity protection and influence nature-related policies and actions.

In July 2025, NCE launched the national “Until the Birds Return” campaign at the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate, in the presence of Syndicate Chairman Khaled El-Balshy, highlighting the challenges of unsustainable hunting of migratory birds and promoting national dialogue on hunting management in Egypt. The campaign integrated advocacy with research, media, and public awareness through specialized content and dialogue-based activities.



A National Roadmap for Hunting Governance

These efforts culminated in May 2026 with the national workshop “Strengthening Bird Hunting Governance in Egypt,” which led to the formation of a national working group and a proposed roadmap for hunting governance through 2030, supported by practical recommendations. The outcomes also gained interest from members of the House of Representatives, who expressed readiness to support them through the legislative process.

Supporting Enforcement and Sustainable Hunting

NCE's advocacy and media engagement supported hunting regulations, including the third consecutive year of the hunting ban in Lake Nasser and strengthened controls in environmentally sensitive areas.

In April 2026, NCE highlighted a case of illegal hunting and trade in migratory birds, prompting a rapid response from the relevant authorities and demonstrating the importance of cooperation between government and civil society in enforcing environmental legislation.

Birdwatching Tourism: Advancing Ecotourism and Local Development



NCE continued promoting ecotourism in Egypt by highlighting the economic value of biodiversity and linking nature conservation with sustainable development opportunities, particularly in areas of global importance for migratory birds and biodiversity.

In March 2026, NCE participated in a meeting chaired by Major General Dr. Ismail Kamal, Governor of South Sinai, to discuss protecting migratory and rare birds in Sharm El-Sheikh and developing birdwatching as a component of the governorate's ecotourism offer, with the

participation of local authorities, South Sinai Protected Areas, and international experts.

Dr. Khaled Elnoby, NCE CEO, presented NCE's vision for managing key bird aggregation sites and strengthening Sharm El-Sheikh's position as a global destination for ecotourism and birdwatching, benefiting from its location along a major global migration route.

The meeting also explored opportunities to develop key birding sites, creating new prospects for sustainable tourism and enhancing experiences for nature and birdwatching visitors.

Supporting National Initiatives and Environmental Awareness

In July 2026, NCE participated as an official partner in the 5th Egyptian Wildlife Photography Exhibition and Competition, organized by the Egyptian Wildlife Photographers Association, coinciding with NCE's 20th anniversary.

The exhibition celebrated Egypt's natural heritage while highlighting challenges facing wildlife through photographs documenting its ecosystems and species, helping raise awareness of biodiversity conservation and the protection of Egypt's natural resources.



Capacity Building: Investing in a New Generation for Nature Conservation



NCE continued building the capacity of environmental professionals and young people through training and educational activities supporting biodiversity monitoring and conservation.

In December 2025, NCE, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and the Nature Conservation Sector, organized specialized training on the Winter Waterbird Count at Ashtoum El-Gamil Protected Area. The training involved 25 protected-area staff and covered bird and habitat identification, monitoring and counting methods, and assessment of environmental pressures according to international standards.

In February and April 2026, NCE conducted theoretical and field training at Galala Bird Observatory, where participants experienced migration monitoring alongside the recording of more than 117,000 migratory birds in a single day.

NCE also participated in the 2nd Fayoum International Environmental Film Festival in November 2025, contributing to discussions on environmental issues in cinema and drama, as well as ecotourism and birdwatching.

In April 2026, NCE launched its first meeting for volunteers of the Native Egyptian Plants Conservation Program, engaging participants in monitoring, seed collection, field activities, and environmental awareness.



Partnerships Beyond Borders: Advancing Nature and Biodiversity Conservation

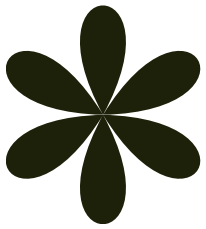
Throughout the year, NCE strengthened national and international partnerships to expand conservation efforts, exchange expertise, and enhance its institutional impact.

National Partnerships and International Engagement

NCE continued cooperation with the Environmental Journalists and Development Association to strengthen environmental media coverage and public access to scientific knowledge.. Internationally, Dr. Khaled Elnoby participated in the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi in October 2025, highlighting environmental challenges facing North African oases and calling for specialized approaches to protect these fragile ecosystems.

Joining the IPEN International Network

In November 2025, NCE joined the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN), a global network of over 600 organizations across 124 countries. NCE subsequently participated in its regional Arab meeting, addressing chemical pollution and its impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, and approaches to reducing related risks.



Environmental Communication and Public Awareness: From Knowledge to Engagement



Throughout 2025–2026, NCE used international environmental days, media, and public communication as key tools to raise awareness of nature and biodiversity and connect audiences with the importance of protecting ecosystems.



NCE participated in major international environmental observances, including World Wetlands Day, World Wildlife Day, World Migratory Bird Day, International Day for Biological Diversity, and World Environment Day. It also organized the “Big Day” birdwatching event at the Nile Islands in Maadi alongside the Winter Waterbird Count, highlighting the importance of wetlands, migratory birds, native Egyptian plants, and biodiversity.

NCE continued to expand its awareness content through webinars and visual media. These included a webinar introducing “Colorful Wings,” an educational book for children combining coloring activities with simplified information about Egyptian birds, and “From the Field to Scientific Publication,” highlighting recent bird records and the role of field monitoring and citizen science in supporting research.

During the first quarter of 2026, NCE also launched the “Nature in the City” video series, introducing audiences to urban wildlife and bringing biodiversity closer to the public.

In May, NCE intensified its media efforts to support the campaign against unsustainable hunting through the press conference announcing the National Roadmap to Combat Illegal Bird Hunting (2026–2030) and the awareness film “They Are More Than Just Birds,” highlighting illegal hunting of migratory birds and the challenges they face.

In June, NCE expanded its collaboration with media professionals, influencers, and content platforms, including a podcast discussion with actor Sabry Fawaz, collaboration with Zoo Keeper on native Egyptian plants, and specialized scientific content on the Common Myna and its potential impacts on biodiversity, featuring Dr. Sherif Baha El-Din.





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