



International Migratory Bird Day

Helping Birds Along The Way

What You Can Do

Birds face many challenges as they migrate thousands of miles each spring and fall, making long journeys which capture our imagination. Where exactly do they go? How do they find their way? Although scientists are always learning more to answer these questions, there are things we can do now to help birds successfully complete their migration. While we can't spare them the storms they may encounter, sometimes pushing them off course, we know birds need safe places to stop along the way where they can rest and refuel. These places need to have sufficient high quality habitat, with plenty of shelter, food, and water, and no or few manmade hazards. This is where we come in, to help create, protect, and maintain stopover sites for these weary travelers. Here are some ways you can contribute to their safe journey.

MAKE YOUR YARD A STOPOVER SITE

Migrating birds need shelter, food, water, and a safe haven. Make your yard a place where they can have these needs met, and you will be richly rewarded with their presence. Plant native vegetation for cover and as a source of insects, seeds and fruits, and provide fresh water. Encourage your neighbors to do the same. If feeders are put out for migrating hummingbirds, make sure the feeders are kept clean and the sugar water is changed regularly. Hummingbirds will continue their migration when they need to, so don't worry about how long to leave the feeders out. Your yard will become part of a network of sites that help support these amazing migrants as they travel between their breeding and wintering grounds. If you build it, they will come!



SHELTER

FOOD

WATER

KEEP CATS HAPPY AND BIRDS SAFE

One of the most tragic things that can happen to a wild bird after a long migratory flight is to land at what seems to be a safe spot, only to be caught by a free-roaming cat. Cats are estimated to kill 1.3 to 4 billion birds in the United States and 100 to 350 million birds a year in Canada. Keep cats indoors if possible, but if you own one that insists on being outside there are many creative options for outdoor enclosures.

PUT A LEASH ON!



LIGHTS OUT, CURTAINS DOWN

Many birds migrate at night, using natural light sources and instinct for navigation. Migrating birds are drawn to and disoriented by artificial night lighting from buildings and other infrastructure. To avoid bird collisions, encourage your community to turn lights out at night when they're not needed, and cover windows with curtains or decals to help make them more visible during the day.

TURN OFF LIGHTS



DRONES AND BIRDS DON'T MIX

Technology can help us study birds to better understand their behavior and needs, and quiet drones have been used effectively to minimize disturbance in remote monitoring of avian species. It is clear, however, that the ever-increasing use of drone technology presents a potential threat to birds. While recreational drone use is illegal in U.S. national parks and other protected areas, some open spaces where birds may stop during migration are also popular for drone hobbyists. Birds that are exhausted after a long flight may be unintentionally flushed, disrupting their ability to secure much needed rest and food. To enjoy your drone without impacting our feathered friends, find locations where birds don't concentrate during migration, always maintain a good distance from them, and be mindful of your drone's noise. If it looks like good bird habitat, avoid it!



NO DRONE ZONE

PARTICIPATE IN A MIGRATION EVENT OR COUNT

The spring and fall are exciting times to observe and celebrate birds. Hundreds of International Migratory Bird Day events are offered across the Western Hemisphere to greet birds along their journey and welcome them back. To find an event close to you or add one of your own, visit the events section at <http://www.environmentamericas.org>. Talk to your local bird club or Audubon chapter to see if there are any migration counts in your area, like the North American Migration Count. Once you've discovered your local migration sites, you might want to find out if you can volunteer to help protect or maintain these areas. There are also many exciting opportunities to visit well known stopover sites, both nationally and internationally. You'll never forget the spectacle of a spring day on the Copper River Delta, along the Gulf Coast, or at Point Pelee, or the fall congregations at Cape May or the Upper Bay of Panama. Participating in such events helps bring attention to the importance of stopover sites, those places along routes between breeding and wintering grounds that are essential for the survival of migratory birds.

