



# The Bottom Line

## How Healthy Bird Populations Contribute to a Healthy Economy

### International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD)



Set on the second Saturday in May, IMBD is an invitation to celebrate and support migratory bird conservation.

Habitat conservation attracts birds which, in turn, attract large throngs of birdwatchers who pump astounding amounts of money into local and state economies.

Birdwatching is a growing business. The number of people who took trips from home specifically to watch birds has skyrocketed since 1980.

#### Consider These Facts

- Sixty-three million people in the United States watch and feed wild birds each year. That is one out of every three adults!
- A 1990 survey by *Fortune* magazine showed that twice as many vacationers preferred to watch birds than play golf.
- Birdwatching is most prevalent between the ages of 30 and 70. Still, one in five adults between ages 16 and 29 say they watch birds.
- Birdwatching is one of America's favorite forms of outdoor recreation... baseball notwithstanding! In fact, far more adults (16 years of age and older) in the United States birdwatch than play baseball.

#### Bucks from Birds:

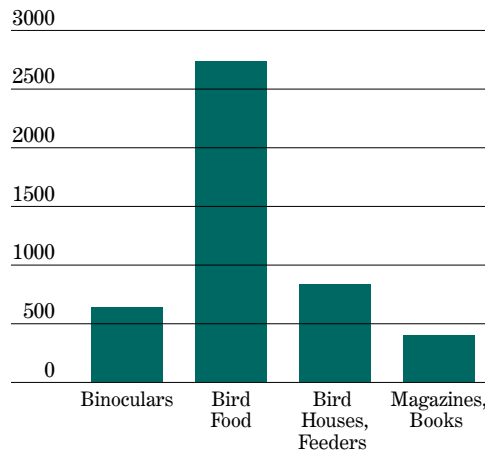
##### The Economics of Birdwatching

Bird-related recreation contributes enormous sums of money to local and state economies. Not only do Americans spend more than \$3.5 billion each year on bird seed, houses, baths, and feeders, but nearly 18 million adults take trips annually for the express purpose of watching birds. On these trips, birdwatchers purchase gasoline, food, camera film, souvenirs, and other supplies. They rent hotel rooms and cars. They eat at restaurants, and buy airline and train tickets. All told, \$29 billion is pumped into the economy each year by bird and other wildlife watchers. In 1996, when this information was collected, these figures would have placed bird-related recreation in the top 100 of the *Fortune* 500.

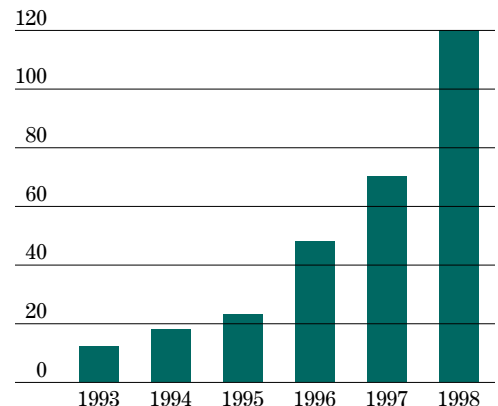
What impact does all of this have on state economies? Birdwatchers spend an average of \$100 million in each state which, in turn, directly supports more than 200,000 jobs and generates more than \$1 billion in state and federal taxes.

#### Tools of the Trade: Birdwatchers and Other Wildlife Watchers Spend Big Bucks Pursuing Their Hobby

Millions of Dollars Spent in 1996



#### Number of Birdwatching Festivals in United States Has Skyrocketed



Communities surrounding birdwatching sites benefit the most. Here are a few examples of the economic clout of birdwatchers:

■ *Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia:* Birdwatchers annually spend nearly \$10 million in the surrounding communities.

■ *Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Texas:* Each year, birders in and around the refuge pump \$14 million into the local economy.

■ *Cape May, New Jersey:* More than 100,000 birders visit this “hotspot” annually, providing a cumulative impact of nearly \$10 million.

■ *High Island, Texas:* In 1992, more than 6,000 birders visited this small town and spent \$2.5 million there while watching birds.

■ *Quivera National Wildlife Refuge, Kansas:* Nearly 18,000 birders visit this remote refuge each year and provide the small neighboring towns \$600,000 in retail sales.

■ *Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge/ Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, Ohio:* 200,000 people visit this Lake Erie marsh to watch birds each year. Result: \$5.6 million in local revenues.

■ *Platte River, Nebraska:* Each year 80,000 visitors come to watch cranes and enjoy the Crane Festival. Retail sales: \$15 million.

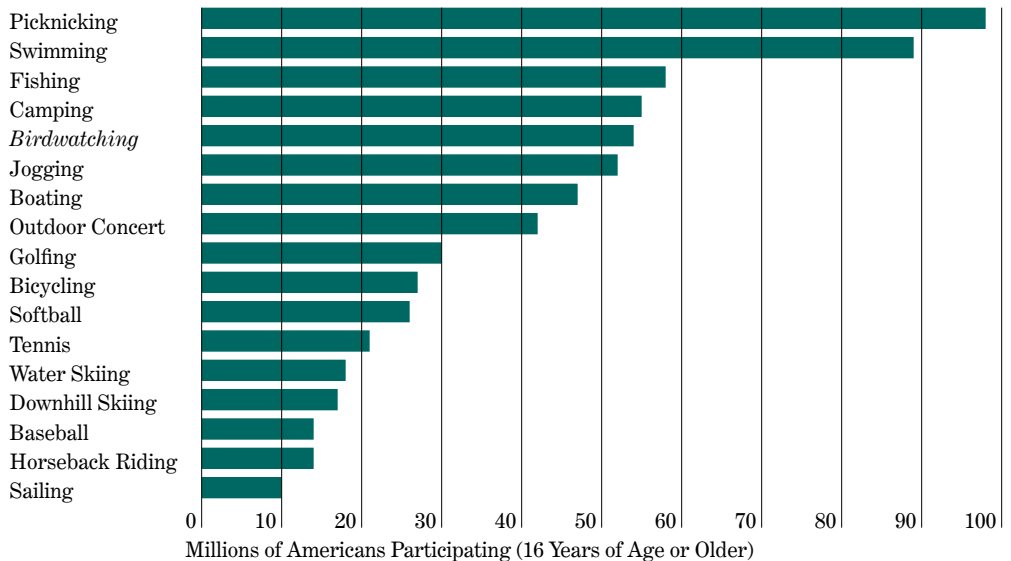
■ *Ramsey Canyon, Arizona:* The rare bird species in this area attract 30,000 birders each year, generating \$5 million in revenues.

■ *Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Pennsylvania:* 50,000 hawk watchers generate nearly \$4 million in local economic activity each year.

■ *Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Texas:* \$4 million is spent in nearby small coastal towns each year by birdwatchers visiting this migration “hotspot.”

■ *Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, New Jersey:* More than 100,000 birdwatchers spend \$4 million per year around this refuge.

## Birdwatching Is One of America's Favorite Pastimes



## Retail Sales (millions of dollars) and Jobs Generated by People Watching and Feeding Birds in Each State in 1991

State	Sales	Jobs	State	Sales	Jobs	State	Sales	Jobs
AL	53.6	1,660	LA	51.3	1,560	OH	123.1	3,130
AK	121.3	2,760	ME	64.8	2,140	OK	55.3	1,340
AZ	128.4	3,800	MD	83.0	2,332	OR	94.3	2,860
AR	54.4	1,800	MA	124.4	3,450	PA	256.4	6,040
CA	622.6	16,200	MI	267.6	7,620	RI	19.1	510
CO	179.6	5,360	MN	97.5	2,910	SC	51.6	1,720
CT	55.6	1,320	MS	34.9	1,200	SD	20.7	760
DE	11.5	250	MO	165.0	5,120	TN	76.2	2,380
FL	477.0	13,900	MT	76.3	2,590	TX	155.3	4,730
GA	49.7	1,500	NE	23.1	800	UT	57.0	1,820
HI	66.5	2,200	NV	56.5	1,290	VA	108.3	3,312
ID	33.3	1,080	NH	57.0	1,590	VT	22.7	660
IL	131.7	3,760	NJ	87.5	2,310	WA	136.3	4,010
IN	64.6	2,090	NM	80.9	2,420	WV	26.6	730
IA	30.4	990	NY	219.0	4,610	WI	224.8	7,210
KS	23.5	810	NC	92.4	3,060	WY	62.2	2,090
KY	57.5	1,840	ND	6.6	220			

For more information on the economic impacts of birds and bird watching, contact the Division of Federal Aid at 703/358 1842 or visit <http://fa.r9.fws.gov/surveys/surveys.html>.

**For more information, contact:**  
**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
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