



*International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), held annually on the second Saturday in May, is an invitation to celebrate and support migratory bird conservation.*

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# Coffee Birds

## *Species Depicted in the IMBD 2001 Artwork*

The art created for International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) 2001 depicts a traditional coffee plantation in Guatemala, where coffee shrubs are grown under a canopy of native trees. The three featured birds are just an example of the variety of migratory and resident bird species that can be found on these forested farmlands.

The three species, Wilson's Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Slate-throated Redstart, are all *wood-warblers*, a group of songbirds with petite forms, bright colors, and active ways. These "butterflies" of the bird world are a favorite of birdwatchers, who also admire their often impressive feats of migration.

There are 115 species of wood warblers in the Americas, and about half of them migrate north in the spring to breed in the United States and Canada.

### **Shared Characteristics of Wood Warblers**

*Appearance* Plumage colors and patterns differ in the male and female of most species—though both sexes are brightly marked—and vary somewhat with age and time of year.

*Migration* The urge to migrate is inborn, but influenced by weather, day length, and social behaviors. Departure dates for migration vary with species and destination. Within a species, males typically travel earlier than females, and older birds earlier than younger birds. Warblers primarily migrate at night, requiring daylight to seek out food.

*Habitat* Most warblers live in forests, woodlands and dense brush. During migration, however, warblers stop to rest just about anywhere, including along roadsides, in parks and gardens, even on boats and offshore-oil platforms.



*While this drawing is whimsical, these warblers really are attracted to the habitat provided on traditional plantations of coffee.*

*Feeding* In both breeding and wintering habitats, warblers forage in the vegetation, gathering insects and spiders from branches and leaves.

*Calls/Songs* Both sexes make short, simple call notes, but only the adult males produce the longer, more complex songs of squeaky notes and shrill whistles, usually while in a stiff, vertical pose from a prominent perch.

*Breeding* Territorial in breeding season, with pairs driving other birds of the same species away from the vicinity of the nesting site. Females build a cupped nest of fine plant material and incubate the eggs. Usually only one clutch of three to five eggs is laid per season.

*Conservation Status* Status varies; populations of some wood warbler species are currently secure, many are declining, a few are endangered, and for others, data are inconclusive. What's certain is that numerous threats confront all warblers. The primary threat to warblers—and all wild birds—is loss or degradation of natural habitat due to human activities.

## Three Featured Species



**Black-throated Green Warbler**  
*Dendroica virens*

*Migration* Begins departing the tropics in March, and is gone from Guatemala by the first week in May.

*Wintering habitat* Humid to semi-humid evergreen, semi-deciduous, and pine-oak forests and forest-edges. Often in mixed-species flocks, usually in the company of other species rather than its own kind.

*Breeding habitat* Decided preference for second-growth pine forests. It can be found in white pine woods, open stands of pitch pine, overgrown pastures with red cedar, and open mixed woods where cedars, hemlocks and spruces predominate.

*Feeding* Forages in the mid to upper-levels of the vegetation.

*Fun Fact* Males are known to be persistent singers, and are more often heard than seen.



**Wilson's Warbler**  
*Wilsonia pusilla*

*Migration* Starts from the tropics February to May, with those breeding in Western North America undertaking migration earlier than those breeding in the Northeast.

*Wintering habitat* Humid to semi-arid forests and forest-edges, hedges, overgrown fields, or pastures. Sometimes traveling in mixed flocks, this bird is generally a loner.

*Breeding habitat* Involves dense ground cover, low shrubs, and relatively wet situations, such as moist sphagnum bogs or willow and alder thickets on mountain slopes.

*Feeding* Forages at low to mid-levels of vegetation. Also captures insects on the wing.

*Fun Fact* An alert, restless bird, with a tendency of jerking its tail up and down, or waving it side to side.



**Slate-throated Redstart**  
*Myioborus miniatus*

*Migration* Does not migrate from Latin America; it is a year-round resident of Mexico, Central America and northern South America.

*Habitat* Usually found in the mountains, descending to lower elevations in winter. Preferred natural habitat is humid evergreen and pine-evergreen forest, as well as semi-humid pine-oak and oak woodlands in the winter, but will use forest-edges or altered habitat. It joins mixed species flocks in the winter, or in southern populations, may pair year-round.

*Feeding* Forages in the lower levels of the vegetation; known for probing clusters of dead leaves. Also feeds in the air and on the ground.

*Fun Fact* The subspecies found in northern Guatemala has bright red underparts; underparts are orange-red ranging to yellow in the subspecies found farther south.

