



What Exactly Is International Migratory Bird Day?

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

Cause for Celebration

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people observe International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD). They will gather in town squares, community centers, schools, parks, and refuges across the Western Hemisphere to learn more about wild birds, take action to conserve birds and their habitats, and simply have fun.

Like any day of recognition, IMBD exists to focus attention on something important and marvelous -- in this case, the journey birds undertake between their summer and winter homes. IMBD was created specifically to highlight the migration of nearly 350 species of migratory birds between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in South and Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. However, the day serves as an opportunity to celebrate all the species of birds whose annual movements enliven our lands, waters and skies.

Migratory birds are some of the most beautiful, observable, and remarkable wildlife that share our world. Many know migratory birds as symbolic harbingers of spring and melodious songsters of the woods. Migratory birds are also an important economic resource, controlling insect pests and generating billions in recreational dollars.

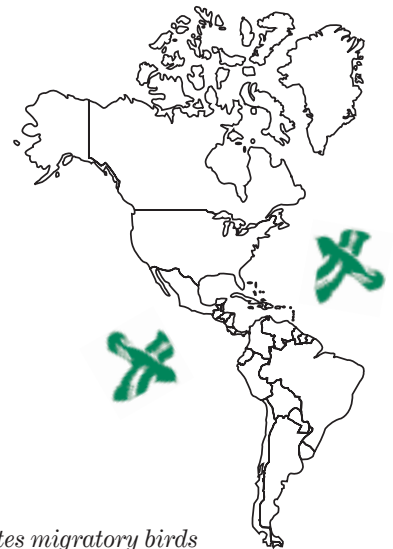
Unfortunately, research has shown that many migratory bird species are in decline, facing a growing number of threats on their migration routes and in both their summer and winter habitats. Thus, IMBD, in addition to being a day to foster appreciation, is a call to action.

A Partnership for Birds

IMBD is the hallmark outreach event for Partners in Flight (PIF)—a unique, diverse consortium of individuals and groups who share a vision of healthy bird populations. Partners in this consortium include government agencies, conservation organizations, private businesses, academic institutions, chambers of commerce, and everyday citizens.

The 1993 creation of IMBD can be credited to a PIF member, the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, and the principal responsibility for its national coordination currently rests with two other partners, the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife's Division of Migratory Bird Management.

In the decade it has existed, PIF has successfully developed research programs and management strategies to further bird conservation, in addition to promoting outreach and education via IMBD and other activities.



IMBD celebrates migratory birds such as the American Redstart that travel the Western Hemisphere.

IMBD Information
web - <http://birds.fws.gov/imbd>
phone - 703/358-2318

IMBD Materials
web - <http://www.BirdDay.org>
phone - 1-866/334-3330

January 2006

IMBD Today

The success of IMBD and other PIF programs stems from their positive, voluntary, grass-roots nature. A special day for migratory birds provides organizations, large and small, and individuals, young and old, with the impetus to take part in an enjoyable activity to support migratory birds. Activities might be a bird walk, a lecture, a class, or a festival.

For those already involved in migratory bird conservation, IMBD adds momentum to the cause, raising local activities to the level of an international movement.

In addition, IMBD provides celebrants with a focus in the form of an annual general theme. Themes have included the importance of wetland habitats, the effects homeowners have on bird conservation, the Peregrine Falcon and its celebrated recovery from an endangered status, shade-grown coffee, Important Bird Areas, and colonial bird conservation issues.

The IMBD 2006 annual theme is The Boreal Forest: Bird Nursery of the North. IMBD materials and celebrants will explore this vast wilderness, the last unspoiled forest on the planet, focusing on its special importance for birds. Educational materials will also focus on threats to the North American Boreal, including forestry, mining, and agriculture, and suggest ways that consumers can help to preserve this crucial region.



IMBD 2006 “officially” falls on May 13. However, IMBD should not be viewed as a single-day observance! Event planners are encouraged to schedule activities on the date or dates best suited to the presence of migrants in their area and the needs of their facility and audience. Every day is Bird Day.

IMBD Resources

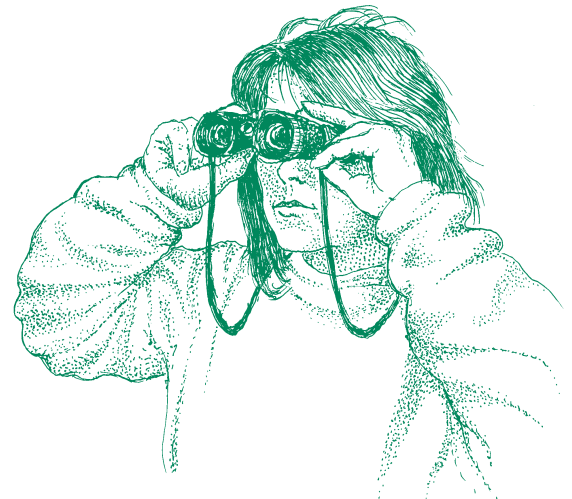
IMBD has grown from a good idea to a significant, annual occurrence. Successes include:

Growth in the number of annual IMBD events. More than 500 public events, as well as countless club, classroom, and individual events, will take place this year.

An expanding web presence. At <http://www.birdday.org> and <http://birds.fws.gov/imbd.html>, one can find general IMBD information, IMBD ideas, downloadable materials, and links to an Events Registry and other relevant sites.

Annual development of promotional and educational materials to help event organizers. These include posters, t-shirts, educator packets, and resource directories. An on-line catalog is available at <http://www.birdday.org>.

An Events Registry. An on-line database that allows users to register and advertise their event. Events are posted on a new Explorer’s Map which offers up-to-date information about festivals and more.



From simply watching a bird, to hosting a full-scale festival, there are many ways to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day!