



What Exactly Is International Migratory Bird Day?

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD)



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

Cause for Celebration

This year, several hundred thousand people will 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 a valuable resource—the nearly 350 species of migratory birds that travel between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in South and Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

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 melodic 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 Service's Office 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 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 an 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.

Moreover, IMBD can provide 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, as well as the peregrine falcon and its celebrated recovery from an endangered status.

Finally, although IMBD is officially a single-day observance, it is not limiting. Event planners are encouraged to schedule activities on the date or dates best suited to arrival of migrants in their area.

IMBD Resources

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

Growth in the number of annual IMBD events. As the word has spread, the number of IMBD celebrations has increased five-fold.

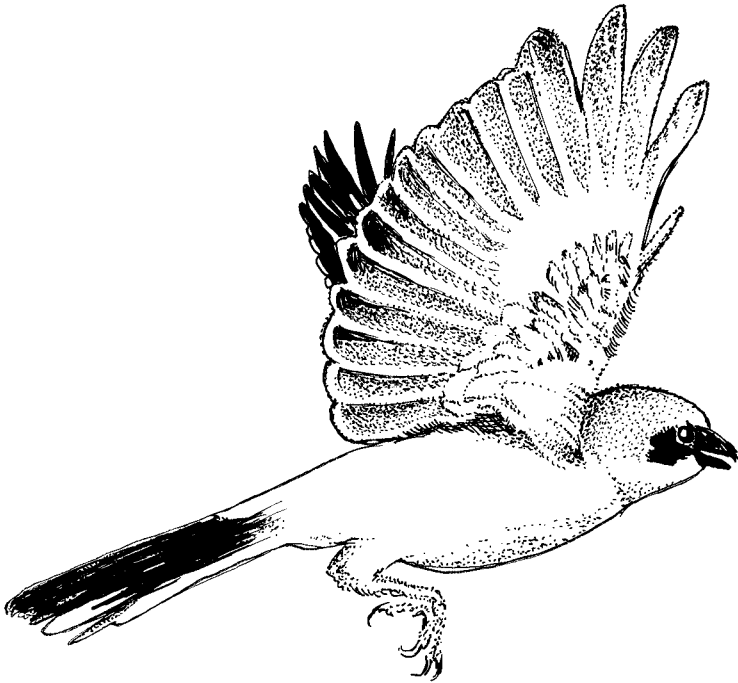
An expanding web presence. At <http://birds.fws.gov/imbd.html>, one can find general IMBD information, IMBD products, links to an Events Registry and other relevant sites.

Annual development of promotional and educational materials to help event organizers. These include posters, t-shirts, educator packets, and resource directories.

An Events Registry. An on-line database that allows users to register their events or find out about other events.

**For more information, contact:
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Office of Migratory Bird Management
IMBD Events and Information Coordinator
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From simply watching a bird, to hosting a full-scale festival, there are many ways to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day!