

## Migratory Bird Day

Migratory birds are birds who migrate, or fly long distances to move from one location to another with the changing seasons. May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 is International Migratory Bird Day! A day to celebrate those hard working migratory birds and the ways that all of us can help them in their journey. There are so many different ways to celebrate birds, and this activity is here to give you some ideas and you can choose!

### Materials:

There are no required materials for this activity, but some things that you might find useful:

- Binoculars
- Bird field guide or digital bird ID app
- Toilet paper tube, Shortening, Bird seed, String, Hole punch
- Tempera paint or soap
- Visible tape
- Decals – can order online, can make with tape or paper

### Activities:

Bird migration takes place through the New York area in the spring, peaking around May 9th. So April and May are great times for bird watching. There are a many different ways to celebrate birds right now, so in this activity we've brought together a variety of options and resources to celebrate migratory birds. Take a look and choose how you want to celebrate Migratory Birds!

#### 1. Go Bird Watching!

- With so many birds in the area, and many that you'll only see pass through twice a year, it's a great time to keep a look out for birds – even if that's just out your window.
- If you're not sure how to start your bird watching adventure, there are a variety of great resources to help you get involved.
  - A great place to start is with some [bird identification tools](#) – you can get a bird field guide, or use a downloadable app such as the [Merlin Bird app](#),

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- from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (generally a great resource for all things bird), which is a great way to start identifying birds that you see.
- Consider taking part in a [Citizen Science bird project](#) – Citizen Science is a way for researchers and scientists to collect large amounts of data by involving regular people in the collection of data. You collect information about birds and share it with the project and that data can be added to the larger body of knowledge of birds – it’s a great way to participate in science, and join a larger community of birders.
    - Cornell has several citizen science projects throughout the year, check them out [here](#)
    - The two that are probably best this time of year are the [Celebrate Urban Birds](#) project, and [eBird](#), an app you can download to record all your bird sightings that gets shared with the scientific community.
  - If you want to get a better view of birds consider [making or buying a bird feeder](#) to attract migrants to your apartment or house. There are so many ways to do this, but one easy way is to take an empty toilet paper tube, coat it with shortening, and roll it in bird seed. Then hang it somewhere birds will have access and you’ll be able to see them! Some migrants also love oranges, so if you can put out some orange slices you may attract some exciting birds to your view.
    - If you don’t have somewhere outside to hang your feeder, you can consider a bird feeder that mounts to the outside of your window or hangs/sits on a window sill.
  - If you take any great photos of birds while you’re watching, share them with us @WCSEducation on Twitter and Instagram!

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2. Consider actions you can take at home to help birds. Here's a [list from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#)
  - Some examples of actions on this list are:
    - Buy shade grown or [certified bird friendly](#) coffee – this helps protect the habitats of migratory birds because coffee is grown within an existing forest rather than cutting down the forest to grow only coffee. This keeps the forest intact and provides much better and more intact habitat for birds, and all wildlife.
    - Garden with native plants – by doing this you create habitat and food sources for both resident and migratory birds, plus lots of other local wildlife too!
    - Use less plastic – this is great for all wildlife. If you want to learn more about WCS's campaign against ocean plastics, check out [Give a Sip](#), a campaign to rid NYC of the millions of disposable plastic straws that are filling our oceans and endangering wildlife.
3. **Make your windows bird safe** - A big problem for migratory birds is crashing into windows, so a great way to celebrate migratory birds is to make their journey safer by making your windows safer. This means doing things so that when birds look at your windows they see the window and not reflections of the sky and trees surrounding. There are several ways to do this, you can see some [suggestions here](#). Some that might be fun are:
  - Use tempera paint or soap to draw on the outsides of the windows
  - Use tape to make stripes/designs across your windows
  - Make decals and create a whole scene on your window with your cut out shapes
  - Plus you can also buy specific products for this if that works better for you

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- Keep in mind that for any of these ideas you want to make sure whatever pattern you make has only small gaps, so it's clear to the bird they cannot fly through the open space. Cornell states that, "vertical markings on windows need to be spaced no more than 4 inches apart and horizontal markings no more than 2 inches apart across the entire window."
4. Check out our [Guide for the Animal Planet show "The ZOO" all about migratory birds](#) for an insider peek at the some of the work WCS has done with birds and some additional activities to learn more about migratory birds.
  5. Also check out our [Nature Club video](#) on our Watch at Home Science website for more celebration of Migratory Birds!