

Let Your Birdwatching Take Wing

All you need to see spring's vast migrating bird population is a pair of binoculars and patience. Although you can see these groups from almost anywhere in the United States, there are plenty of resources online that can show you exact locations to spot returning fowl.

These locations often offer majestic views and comfortable seating from which you can clearly see the birds' northern summer odyssey. We hope you take advantage of all that spring has to offer when it comes to birdwatching. It's truly one of the unique characteristics of the season that only comes around once each year!



Fowl Facts

- Of the more than 650 species of North American breeding birds, more than **50% are migratory**.
- Some migratory birds **fly at night**, navigating in the dark.
- Migratory birds can remember and return to **the exact location where they were born**.
- When migrating, birds typically **travel at the same speed you do while driving**.

We'd Love to Hear from You!

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Word Search



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| Binoculars | Hummingbird |
| Guide | Warblers |
| Vest | Hooded Orioles |
| Hat | Loons |
| Pelicans | Purple Martins |



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NEWS & VIEWS



SPRING IS FOR
THE BIRDS
Peek Inside for our New Look!



SPRING IS FOR THE BIRDS!

We're all familiar with the V-shaped sights and cacophony of sound related to birds flying south for the winter. But what you may not know is how, when, or where our avian friends come back in the spring.

The fact is, birds change their locations twice a year because they're looking for the ideal places to mate and nest. When the weather drops, they're forced to relocate to areas of high or increasing resources. You can probably guess the types of resources they're looking for: more heat from the sun, more food from that heat, and safer places to raise their young. In North America, northward spring migration is spread out from February through mid-April. If you live in the southern half of the country, you'll start to see flocks leaving. Similarly, northern states will notice more and more birds appearing as the winter months start to wane.

Birdwatching isn't the only action you can take this spring. The National Wildlife Federation recommends you take steps to help migratory birds survive and thrive. It suggests you start by keeping your cat indoors as much as possible, keeping bird baths consistently clean, and eliminating the use of bird-harming pesticides. You can also create a welcoming habitat in your backyard full of a diversity of shrubs and plants. Not only will you attract migrating birds to set up camp, but they'll return the favor by keeping your environment insect-free.

Going the Distance

Not all birds migrate the same. In fact, experts have identified three patterns of bird migrations. The first type is short distance. These winged creatures move only between elevations, like from the low side of a mountain to its peak. The second type of migration pattern is medium-distance, where group members only move a few states over. Finally, there are long-distance migrations. These are the birds most people recognize. They move from breeding grounds in the United States and Canada to wintering locations in Central and South America.



Keep an Eye Out

Spring bird migrations take place much more quickly than their counterparts in the fall. But despite having to stay vigilant for these bird blitzes, it shouldn't be too hard. This is because only in the spring do the males of the species reveal bright, colorful plumage. This vibrant dress code is donned for mating rituals, but it can also be a flashing sign for eager watchers.

We recommend familiarizing yourself with the appearance and sounds of the birds that start their epic journey earliest in the season. According to *The Cornell Lab of Ornithology*, these include American White Pelicans, Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Orange-crowned Warblers, Hooded Orioles, Common Loons, Double-crested Cormorants, and Purple Martins.



Finding the Way

One of the most intriguing mysteries related to migration - defined as the periodic, large-scale movements of animal populations - is how they find the way to where they're going. For example, right now migratory birds are starting to make their way north again. How do they know when to leave, what direction in which to fly, and when they've reached their destination?

The truth is, scientists don't have all the answers. What they do know is birds use multiple senses when they navigate. Sight plays the most significant role. The position of the sun and stars gives them compass directions. They also can determine navigation by tuning into the earth's magnetic field. Experts even think they recognize landmarks during the day that act as signposts on their journey.

Migrating presents its hazards. When a trip is a few thousand miles in both directions, and it's all outside, obvious challenges rise to the surface. Primarily, of course, is the physical toll flying for long distances over the course of many days. Since birds are typically migrating from one food source to another, there's not much to eat along the way.

QLT Spotlight

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