

# Wildlife Diversity News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

May 6, 2025

## May 10th 2025 is World Migratory Bird Day!

**Shared Spaces; Creating Bird-friendly Cities and Communities**

Since 1993, World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) has educated the public about the importance of migratory bird conservation. Over 100 species of birds that nest in the Midwest, and many more that fly through during migration, are considered Neotropical migrants, meaning they breed in North America and spend the winter in Mexico, Central America, South America, or the Caribbean. WMBD is a chance to celebrate our shared migratory birds across countries and continents. The WMBD theme this year, "Shared spaces; creating bird-friendly cities and communities", fits perfectly with the Wildlife Diversity Program's 2025 goal of supporting wildlife where you live. Here are five things you can do for wildlife at home, that will help support migratory birds!



*Landscaping with native plants can be beneficial to birds.*

1. **PLANT NATIVE PLANTS:** Birds rely on plants for food, directly eating the berries and seeds produced by plants as well as the insects that live on and eat the plants. Native plants, those that are historically and naturally found in Iowa, provide more nutrients and higher quality calories for birds. Incorporate native grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees in your landscaping to support birds!

Learn more about native Iowa plants for birds [here](#).

Pro Tip: Oak trees support a higher number and diversity of caterpillars than any other type of tree. Many birds feed their young a caterpillar-rich diet to help them grow, so planting just one oak can really make a difference for birds in your yard!

2. **ADD WATER:** Birds use water for drinking and bathing, two activities which keep them healthy. Consider adding a shallow bird bath (1-2 inches deep) or even a small waterway or pond to provide this resource. Perks of adding water? You may see more variety in the types of birds that visit.

3. **USE THE RIGHT LIGHTING:** 80% of North American birds migrate at night and research shows that lights can interrupt migration, and even harm or kill birds. Make your lighting more bird-friendly by using shielded lighting, turning off unnecessary lights, using only as much light as needed, using timers, dimmers, and motion sensors, and using warm colored light (3000K and below). To learn more, visit [darksky.org](https://darksky.org).

4. **REDUCE HAZARDS TO WILDLIFE:** Migrating birds face many hazards, especially when they pass through and use human-dominated spaces. Consider ways to reduce these hazards where you live. Reduce your pesticide use, especially rodenticides, which can kill birds. Keep your [cats inside](#) or on a leash so

birds don't get hurt. Reduce window collisions by making your windows visible to birds. Learn more at [stopbirdcollisions.org](http://stopbirdcollisions.org).



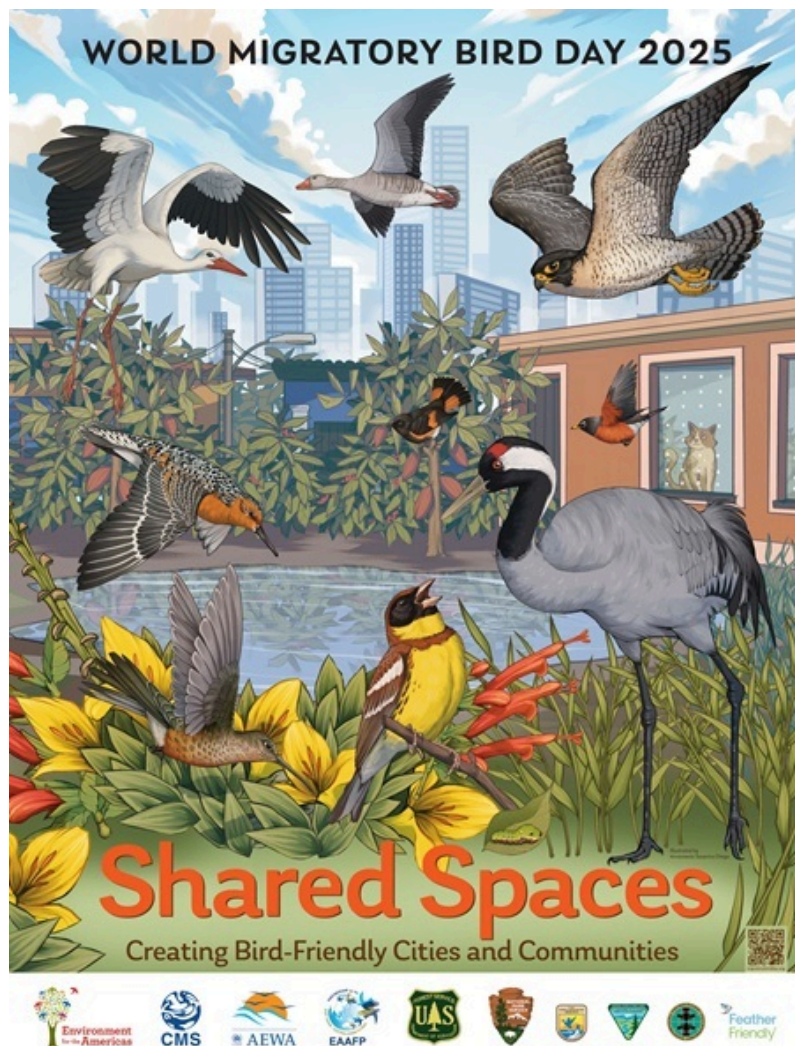
*Windows with parachute cord blinds (left) or ultraviolet tape (right) can help prevent bird window collisions.*

**5. EMBRACE WILDNESS:** Many birds rely on habitat that humans might find “messy”. Things like dead trees are necessary for cavity nesting species like woodpeckers, bluebirds, and wood ducks. Native vines, even species like poison ivy, can provide important fruit during fall migration to help birds keep up their energy reserves. Brush piles are often used for winter cover by sparrows and cardinals. Think about places in your yard that might be able to safely support this wildness that birds need.

---

If you'd like to learn more about supporting birds in your community, or even work to get your town or county certified as bird friendly, check out the Bird Friendly Iowa program [website](#). If you want to learn more about bird watching check out the Iowa DNR's [Story Map](#).

---



This year (2025), World Migratory Bird Day takes place in the U.S. and Canada on May 10<sup>th</sup> during the peak of spring migration and is celebrated on October 11<sup>th</sup> in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean during fall migration. Learn more about World Migratory Bird Day and associated events [here](#).