

From Tim Tetzlaff, Director of Conservation and Communications

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Birds Get a Boost on May 12 at Naples Zoo

Three National Wildlife Refuges Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day

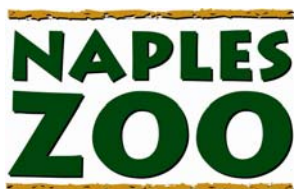
NAPLES, Fla. – Come celebrate International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) at Naples Zoo on Saturday, May 12, 2007 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. This annual celebration of the incredible journeys of migratory birds will be presented by three area National Wildlife Refuges: J.N. "Ding" Darling, Florida Panther, and Ten Thousand Islands. These local refuges will provide free materials (while supplies last) about the fascinating world of migratory birds as well as information on birding and great places to bird.

Birds have long been indicators of environmental change, sounding the alarm about the impacts of pesticides, polluted water, and the loss of contiguous forest. While IMBD continues to promote the joy of birds, it will also tackle a challenging, yet pertinent topic in 2007 - climate change. While the cause for this trend is still being debated, many of the songbird species we see and enjoy in nature are shifting their ranges and migrating earlier, often making it more difficult for them to find food such as insects, flowers, and berries when they need it.

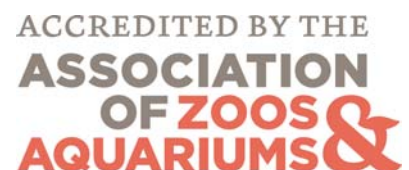
Climate change is of particular concern for birds and other wildlife when viewed in concert with other threats like habitat loss, pollution, and invasive species. It is the combination of these stresses that may prove to be the greatest challenge to wildlife conservation in the 21st century. Today, as the rate of warming increases, scientists are exploring how climate change will affect birds and how we can reduce our impact.

Songbirds play a critical role in ecosystems by eating insects, pollinating plants, and dispersing seeds. Changes in climate risk throwing ecosystems off balance along with all the natural services they provide for people. One pair of warblers, for example, will remove the defoliating caterpillars from more than 1 million leaves within the 2-3 week period that they are feeding their nestlings. Fully two-thirds of our flowering plants including many food crops depend on pollinators like birds, producing a global economic benefit estimated by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center at \$117 billion per year. Hence, the global reduction of pollinators raises alarm from an economic viewpoint alone.

In addition, the nation's 46 million birders generate over \$85 billion in overall economic impact creating over 860,000 jobs. Florida itself ranks third in the nation in economic impact from birders and wildlife viewers. In short, birds are extremely important to us all.



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At the Zoo, guests will have the opportunity to learn one-on-one with biologists and staff from the National Wildlife Refuges. Children can engage in an interactive migration game and receive an educational coloring book. Around the Zoo, guests can also learn how to make their yards more bird-friendly at the National Wildlife Federation certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat. In addition, coffee drinkers can discover the benefits of drinking shade-grown coffee. This traditional type of coffee agriculture maintains forests and bird habitat while also producing a more flavorful coffee bean. Guests can learn more in the Zoo as well as drink shade-grown coffee at the Subway Café at the Zoo. More info at www.napleszoo.com/coffee.

IMBD was created in 1993 by visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Now under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IMBD continues to focus attention on one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird -- its journey between its summer and winter homes. Today, it is celebrated in Canada, the U.S., Mexico, and Central America through bird festivals and bird walks, education programs, and Bird Day! In 2007, as many as 300,000 people will learn about climate change at IMBD events. Everyone is invited to join in this important celebration.

Naples Zoo is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization cooperating in conservation programs both in and outside the wild for endangered species. Daily presentations include Alligator Bay Feeding, Meet the Keeper Series, along with two premiere presentations: Planet Predator and Serpents: Fangs & Fiction. Both of these feature shows take place in the Safari Canyon Theater where guests see live animals from feline predators to venomous snakes along with exciting video footage. For those looking for more on the historic botanical garden, the Tropical Plant Trek offers guests a short tour led by University of Florida Master Gardeners. And one of the zoo's most popular activities is the Primate Expedition Cruise where guests embark on a guided cruise through islands of monkeys, lemurs, and apes. The all day pay-one-price ticket includes admission to both the nationally accredited zoo and historic garden along with all shows, tours, exhibits, and the boat ride. (\$18.50 adults age 13+/ \$9.95 children 3 to 12, under 3 free. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age). Annual memberships and discount tickets are also available online at www.napleszoo.com. Visitors enjoy healthy meals at the SUBWAY® Cafe and shop for wild gifts at tame prices in The ZOO Gift Shop. Naples Zoo welcomes guests daily from 9:30 to 5:30 with the last ticket sold at 4:30 and is located at 1590 Goodlette-Frank Road across from the Coastland Center mall in the heart of Naples. To learn more, click www.napleszoo.com or call (239) 262-5409.

Print Quality Image of hummingbirds available for immediate download at
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