

From Tim Tetzlaff, Director of Conservation and Communications

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20th Anniversary for the Birds

International Migratory Bird Day Celebrated at Naples Zoo on May 8

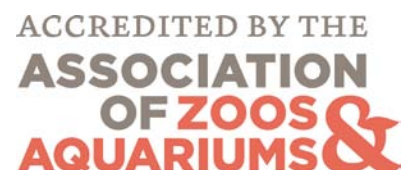
Naples, FL - It was twenty years ago that a group of biologists formed *Partners in Flight* in order to better study and conserve migratory birds. While ongoing threats continue to endanger many of the nearly 350 species of birds that annually migrate between summer and winter habitats, conservation organizations, federal and state agencies, and individuals have shown that they can make a real difference. See what's going on locally and celebrate International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) at Naples Zoo on Saturday, May 8, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The annual celebration of the incredible journeys of migratory birds will be presented by J.N. "Ding" Darling, Florida Panther, and Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuges as well as Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Big Cypress National Preserve, and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. Free materials about the world of migratory birds plus information on birding and great places to bird will be provided while supplies last. Winners of bird trivia questions prior to the 11 a.m. Planet Predator may win 2010 IMBD posters or t-shirts!

Each year, IMBD focuses on the birds that make these fantastic journeys, the habitats on which they depend, and the people who are important to the conservation of birds and their habitats along the way – that's all of us Floridians! At the Zoo, guests will have the opportunity to learn one-on-one with biologists and see live hawks and owls in the shows. The Zoo also features a National Wildlife Federation certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat where guests can learn how they can roll out the red carpet for our feathered friends. All activities included in regular Naples Zoo admission.

The IMBD theme in 2010 is "The Power of Partnerships in Bird Conservation." In honor of the 20th anniversary of the innovative public/private consortium, Partners in Flight, this year's IMBD event showcases 20 inspiring stories of successful bird-protecting collaborations. The revival of the endangered Whooping Crane is just one encouraging example. Despite dwindling to a population of only 15 in the 1940s, there are nearly 400 Whooping Cranes today. Thanks to the courage and imagination of a nine-agency coalition, the International Whooping Crane Recovery Team, the eastern flock is growing. Operation Migration, a founding partner, sponsors an extraordinary guided migration each year, using ultra light aircraft to lead captive-hatched and raised cranes on their southerly voyage from Wisconsin to Florida.



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Another of the 20 notable success stories focuses on the resurgence of the Peregrine Falcon. Extinction of the Peregrine Falcon was nearly certain when the impact of DDT insecticide thinned U.S. populations from 4,000 individuals to less than 50 pairs in 1975. The Peregrine Fund took action, joined by a band of volunteers, biologists and falconers who nurtured over 5,100 young falcons in captivity before releasing them. When the Peregrine Falcon was taken off the endangered species list in 1999, 3,300 adults had returned to the skies.

Launched in 1993 by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, International Migratory Bird Day is now coordinated by Environment for the Americas, based in Boulder, Colorado. IMBD is the largest-known bird conservation and education event of its kind in the Western Hemisphere.

Over 450 colorful and informative festivals, events and programs attract over half a million participants in Canada, the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America and South America. Hosted by a variety of venues, from bird stores to gardens, museums, nature centers, bird observatories, schools, zoos, state and national parks and refuges, the celebration sparks awareness of the critical needs of migrating bird populations and fosters an energized culture of environmental stewardship.

While 20 years of effective and successful conservation partnership is certainly worth celebrating, it is only the beginning. Efforts must strengthen and continue as new partners are welcomed into the coalition of those who care about the future of birds in this swiftly-changing world.

Naples Zoo is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Daily presentations include Alligator Bay Feeding, Meet the Keeper Series, Snake Sunbathing 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. On Sundays, the Tropical Plant Trek offers guests a guided tour in the historic botanical garden. And one of the zoo's most popular activities is the Primate Expedition Cruise where guests embark on a guided cruise through islands inhabited by 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. (\$19.95 adults age 13+ / \$11.95 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.org.** Visitors enjoy healthy meals at *Wynn's at the Zoo* and shop for wild gifts at tame prices in The ZOO Gift Shop. Naples Zoo welcomes guests daily from 9:00 to 5:00 with the last ticket sold at 4:00 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.org or call (239) 262-5409.

Red Shouldered Hawk image for immediate download at www.napleszoo.org/press

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