

World Migratory Bird Day

Theme: “The importance of insects for migratory birds”

11TH MAY 2024

Did you know?

Hummingbirds are the smallest migrating bird.



image source: internet

World Migratory Bird Day is an annual global campaign aimed at raising awareness about the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. It highlights the importance of international cooperation to protect migratory bird species and their migration routes.

The day serves as a platform for various activities, including birdwatching events, educational programs, and conservation initiatives to promote the conservation of migratory birds worldwide.

Theme

The theme “*The importance of insects for migratory birds*” and the campaign Slogan 2024 “Protect insects, protect birds” focus on the importance of insects for migratory birds, and highlight concerns related to decreasing populations of insects. Insects are essential sources of energy for many migratory bird species, not only during the breeding seasons but also during their extensive journey, and greatly affect the timing, duration, and overall success of bird migration.

During their migration, birds search for insects in fields, forests, wetlands, and other places they stop. However, because of intensive farming and urban growth, things like light pollution disrupt these insect populations. This disturbance endangers birds by reducing their food sources and making it harder for them to survive and stay healthy during their journey.

Pesticides and herbicides, which are meant to safeguard crops, end up harming the insects that birds rely on for food. When there aren't enough of these nutritious insects, it makes it tough for birds to migrate and breed, which leads to weakened immune systems, reduced reproductive success, and increased mortality rates for both adult birds and their offspring.

Birds are vital contributors to ecosystem stability, fulfilling key functions in both pollination and pest management. However, the delicate balance of these roles can be disrupted by fluctuations in insect populations. A scarcity of insects can impede pollination processes & hinder effective pest control efforts by avian species. Conversely, unchecked proliferation of certain insect species, due to the absence of avian predators, can result in outbreaks that pose

significant threats to plant health and agricultural productivity. Maintaining a harmonious relationship between birds and insect populations is essential for sustaining the health and resilience of ecosystems and agricultural systems alike.

Types of migratory bird in India

1. The Winter Wings

- i. Siberian Cranes:** An endangered species, the Siberian crane is a very distinctive and endangered member of the crane family. While nests in western Siberia throughout the year, the crane undergoes a 4,000-mile journey to India every winter to escape the deathly cold and lack of food in the Siberian regions. It can be spotted mainly at two places: the Kaladeo Ghana National Park and the Bharatpur National Park.
- ii. Ruff:** The ruff are birds of the Arctic Tundra region. This bird spends their summer breeding and rearing chicks but during winter it poses a great problem due to extreme cold. The subzero temperatures cause everything from plants to flowers to insects to freeze, which drives them to move South. One of their preferred destinations is India, where they find food in abundance for the growth of their young ones.
- iii. Bluethroat:** This bird resembles a sparrow. The bluethroat bird is distinguished by the gleaming blue feathers below its neck. It is excellent at mimicking and is known to answer the calls of other birds. Bluethroat birds cannot cope with the freezing winters in Europe or Alaska. During the winter, it can be spotted in Rajasthan.

2. The Summer Soarers

- i. Blue-cheeked Bee Eater:** The blue-cheeked bee-eater is a striking bird known for its vibrant plumage, characterized by bright green feathers and distinctive blue markings on its cheeks. It is a migratory bird that visits India during the summer months, typically from around April to September, and can be spotted in certain regions of India, particularly in the northern and western parts of the country.
- ii. Comb Duck:** The comb duck also known as the knob-billed duck, is a distinctive waterfowl species recognized for its unique knob-like projection on its bill. It is primarily found in India's wetland habitats during the winter months when many migratory bird species visit the country. However, it is not a resident bird of India; it breeds in parts of Africa, Asia, and America.
- iii. Black-crowned Night Heron:** The black-crowned night heron is known to migrate to India during the summer months. It is one of the migratory bird species that visit India's wetlands and marshy areas, due to the abundant food resources available in these habitats.

Did you know?

Bar-headed Geese holds the record for the highest migration, flying over the Himalayas at altitudes surpassing 8,000 meters (26,000 feet).

