

LOUISIANA

MIGRATORY CROSSROADS

The Right Place at the Right Time

Each autumn and spring, Louisiana's wetlands, forests, agricultural fields, and grasslands play an important role in bird migration by virtue of their geographic position along important migration pathways. The State lies at an important crossroad on the routes of North American migrant birds.



A Long List of Visitors

More than 200 species of birds regularly migrate to or through Louisiana. Numbers of birds passing into and through Louisiana each year are in the hundreds of millions. Peak numbers of birds crossing the Gulf of Mexico and making landfall in Louisiana in spring are estimated at up to 80,000 birds per day per mile of coastline.



A Strategy for Survival

Birds migrate in response to changing conditions that affect food supply. A wide variety of bird species migrate, from loons to ducks to hawks to warblers to sparrows. Some, notably certain shorebirds and terns, travel incredibly long distances from Arctic breeding grounds to South American wintering areas. Equally amazing are the Gulf of Mexico crossings completed by songbirds during spring and their autumn return trips to Central America, South America, and the West Indies.

Louisiana provides stopover habitats that migrants use in spring to replenish energy prior to the nesting season and in autumn to prepare for their southern journey.



A Perilous Journey

Migration is arduous, and factors such as inclement weather, limited food supply, and predators cause many birds to perish before they end their journeys. In addition to those obstacles, humans have altered or removed much of the habitat that was formerly used by migrant birds through agriculture, forestry practices, residential and commercial development, and the introduction of invasive species of plants and animals.

For more information visit the following sites:

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
www.btneop.org

North American Bird Conservation Initiative
www.bsc-eoc.org/nabci.html

North American Waterfowl Management Plan
www.nawmp.ca

Partners in Flight Program
www.partnersinflight.org

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Shorebird Management Plan
shorebirdplan.fws.gov

U.S. Geological Survey
www.usgs.gov

