

Kalamazoo Nature Center to celebrate Winged Wonders

by Kit Almy

The Kalamazoo Nature Center will host "Winged Wonders: A Celebration of Birds" on the weekend of May 6 and 7, 2000. Veteran and novice bird enthusiasts alike will find plenty to interest them at this fun and educational event devoted to promoting the conservation of birds.

This is the second annual event the nature center has held in conjunction with International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), a cross-continent event devoted to promoting the conservation of migratory songbirds that spend their

summers in North America and winter in the tropics.

Activities at the nature center will be geared toward appreciating birds at home and around the region, as well as understanding some of the environmental issues—such as habitat loss—that threaten the populations of many species. This year, the birds in the spotlight will be hawks and owls, with live bird-of-prey programs a prominent feature of the event.

Each day will feature morning birding hikes on the nature center grounds, led by local bird experts. In the afternoons, various individuals and organizations will be on hand with informational presentations and exhibits on topics relating to birds and conservation, including landscaping for wildlife and other ways individuals can get involved to help our feathered friends. The work of various wildlife artists will also be on display. There will be hands-on activities for kids, and refreshments will be available.

The wonders of spring migration are not to be missed, so in addition to the morning hikes on the weekend, expert birders from the nature center and the Kalamazoo area will lead field trips throughout the week before the event (May 1-5). Participants will get a chance to visit several sites that represent a variety of different habitats throughout the Kalamazoo area and greater Southwest Michigan.

IMBD is a project of *Partners in Flight*, a coalition of government and nongovernment organizations and private industry working together to prevent further declines in migratory birds. IMBD is celebrated annually during the height of spring migration, when more than 300 migratory bird species travel from their southern wintering grounds to their breeding territories in North America.

Although many of these birds are still common, birders and scientists alike have noticed alarming decreases in the populations of some species, including the Northern (Baltimore) Oriole, Wood Thrush, and Wilson's Warbler. This is most likely due to habitat destruction throughout the Americas.

The Kalamazoo Nature Center has been involved in avian research since its foundation 40 years ago and is proud to be contributing to this effort to help people learn what they can do to keep our woods, fields, and backyards vibrant with the sound of bird song.

More details about Winged Wonders will be coming soon. To find out more about this event, call (616) 381-1574, ext. 41.

Kit Almy is the community relations coordinator at the Kalamazoo Nature Center. The Wild Bird Center is pleased to be a major sponsor of Winged Wonders.



Wild Bird News®

Kalamazoo Edition

ISSN 1078-2710

is a publication of the

Wild Bird Center of Kalamazoo, MI
(616) 343-WILD

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e-mail: roger@WildBirdKalamazoo.com
and the

Wild Bird Centers of America, Inc.®

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Bird Center Hours

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