

MIGHTY MIGRATION

BIRD MIGRATION IS ONE OF NATURE'S GREAT WONDERS AND THE MOST EXCITING TIME OF YEAR FOR BIRDERS AND BANDERS ALIKE!



Photo: Adult male Wilson's Warbler

Every spring (and fall), a spectacle unfolds in the night sky as millions of birds attempt long, perilous journeys between their wintering grounds and summer breeding grounds here in Canada.

Our first Rufous Hummingbird of the season was a retrap female – this tiny bird weighing 3.3 grams would have wintered in Mexico and made her way back to our nets in Colony Farm. How do they do it? How do birds return to precisely the same site they occupied previously? We know that birds use polarized light, constellations, the earth's magnetic field and visual landmarks to navigate, but there is still so much we don't know.

Most of the thousands of bird species that engage in this annual migration travel at night when the air is cooler, less turbulent and no diurnal predators present. The birds typically follow established flyways, generally north-south routes that offer the best opportunities for rest and refuelling along the way.

For real-time analysis maps showing intensities of actual nocturnal bird migration detected by the US weather surveillance radar network between local sunset to sunrise, check out the [BirdCast](#) website.

