



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



An approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing 14 February 2012

Remember "National Bird-Feeding Month"

An opportunity to spread the word



It's February, and today you may be thinking about Valentine's Day, but we also have the opportunity to remember that February is National Bird-Feeding Month.

As a testament to the popularity of bird feeding, in January 1994, Congressman John Porter, a Republican from the 10th District of Illinois, read a resolution into the Congressional Record making February "National Bird-Feeding Month." On the floor of the House, Congressman Porter stressed that "backyard bird feeding is an entertaining, educational, and inexpensive pastime enjoyed by children and adults. Bird feeding provides a needed break from today's frantic lifestyles. Adults enjoy the relaxation and peacefulness afforded by watching birds -- nature serves to relieve the stress and can get one's day going on a tranquil note."

This is as true today as it was in 1994.

"National Bird-Feeding Month" was created to advance and publicize the practice and enjoyment of wild bird feeding and backyard bird watching. February, moreover, is an ideal month to introduce a family friend or neighbor to the pleasures of backyard bird-feeding.

February can be one of the toughest months - weather-wise - for our wild birds, and that's another reason why this month was chosen. Generally, birds don't need us to provide a food source as much as we seem to need them for inspiration, pleasure, and relaxation.

And speaking of inspiration, pleasure, and relaxation on a day like this, you might still be able to rush out and get a Valentine's Day gift of a bird feeder and seed - or a Nyjer sock or bright hummingbird feeder - to give to someone special who would appreciate it. Of course, that might have to be someone *very* special!

It's IMBD Time Again

Created in 1993, International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) is celebrated at over 500 sites throughout the Western Hemisphere. The event reaches hundreds of thousands of youth and adults.

The official date for IMBD in the U.S. and Canada is the second Saturday in May each year, but today, IMBD programs, events, and gatherings are

celebrated year-round, held at schools, parks, refuges, libraries, museums, zoos, nature centers, and elsewhere.

Given 20 years of IMBD experience, the annual bird conservation theme for 2012 revolves around 20 ways people can help preserve birds. There are lots of ways to get involved through IMBD in bird conservation, bird education, habitat projects, and birding. IMBD provides the framework for all sorts of events as well as the opportunity to motivate people of all ages to get outdoors to learn about birds.

You can participate in or launch an IMBD event this year. Find out more [here](#).



Transportation Bill: Running Backwards

The proposed Surface Transportation Bill currently working its way through Congress is shaping up to be a real loser and poised to undo important gains made over many years of hard work.

Unfortunately, both version (in the House and Senate) are failing to preserve dedicated funding for trails, walking, and bicycling, and both version of the bill may be moving quickly this week.

The House bill, for example, eliminates the proven and successful National Scenic Byways Program, eliminates

dedicated funding for trails, walking, and bicycling, and does away with the rail-to-trail eligibility category under Transportation Enhancements (TE).

So, why would anyone with a bird interest or bird orientation actually care about a Surface Transportation Bill?

Eliminating Scenic Byways and doing away with rail-to-trail opportunities, for example, will have an impact on visitor-based economies, livable communities, natural corridor enhancements, protecting our natural resources, and access to quality habitat (for birding, simple wildlife-watching, photography, and other wholesome activities). The House bill also would open nearly all of the country's coastal waters to oil and gas drilling, including those areas that have long been considered off-limits

In a huge multi-year Transportation Bill that sets priorities for steel bridges and concrete roads, for the interstate highway system, for local transit systems, and for freight rail operations, it is sometimes difficult to find those edges and corners that build upon quality enhancements and ecotourism compatible with such activities as birding. But they do exist. To see those constructive edges and corners chipped away or eliminated altogether should be of deep concern.

See [here](#) for some more concerns and details, under the "hot topics" section, and [here](#) for other particulars.



Words to Consider:

"I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources... but I do not recognize the right to waste them or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us."

- Theodore Roosevelt, in Kansas, 31 August 1910

For More Information:

If you wish, you can contact me concerning your avitourism interests, site and trail/byway evaluations, and group presentations. (A list of my standard 2012 talks can be sent to you on request.)

I can be reached at the e-mail and/or P.O. Box address below:

Paul Baicich

Great Birding Projects

P.O. Box 404

Oxon Hill, MD 20750

paul.baicich@verizon.net