



Birds On the Niagara

www.birdniagara.org

North America's only International Bird Festival

Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2023

Contact: Jay Burney

Email: greenwatch100@gmail.com

Phone/text: 716 536 5723

Lights Out Niagara Saturday May 13 is Migratory Bird Day 2023

You are invited to a Press Event Celebrating Migratory Birds and their conservation in the International Niagara Region

When: 9:00 AM May 12, 2023

Where: Tifft Nature Preserve Parking Lot

1200 Fuhrmann Blvd, Buffalo 14203 (Buffalo Outer Harbor)

Saturday May 12, 2023 is Migratory Bird Day!

Our region is located in a critical and sensitive area for migrating birds. Many species of birds that migrate from as far away as South and Central America and the Caribbean and travel to the arctic regions, depend on this area for food and shelter during their long and perilous journeys. The Niagara region is so important to global and regional birds that the international Niagara River which includes Buffalo's Outer Harbor, is a "Globally Significant Important Bird Area" just like the Galapagos, the Everglades, and Yellowstone National Park. Unfortunately, migrating birds are in great peril due to both habitat loss and development that is not bird friendly.

In general, bird populations are rapidly declining as many species have been reduced by up to 70% since the 1980's. Many of our most recognizable birds including Cardinals, Chickadees, Junco's, and grassland birds, and warblers are vanishing.

According to NYS Agencies including the New York State DEC, and conservation organizations including the American Bird Conservancy, up to a billion birds are killed each year, with millions killed in the Great Lakes region alone.

Industrialization and intense urbanization continues to provide threats to the well-being and health of migrating birds. Each year during migration seasons, These deaths are due to collisions with buildings and other obstructions. Weather conditions including fog, lighting conditions that attract birds, and poorly located and designed buildings including windows that are not easily visible to flying birds, are lethal hazards. Birds, which are very sensitive to night time conditions navigate with starlight. Artificial lights cause birds to become disoriented and causes what is called Fatal Light Attraction. During migration season many streets in urban areas such as Buffalo are littered with the bodies of now dead migrating birds.

This year's Migratory Bird Day conservation theme is **Water: Sustaining Bird Life**

The Great Lakes Bioregion contains 20+% of the worlds fresh surface water. Conservation of this rare resource including development decisions and policies is important for humans and wildlife, including birds. The location of the Niagara River makes our area a very important and strategic place for migratory birds and the biodiversity that keeps them and all living things on our planet healthy.

Fortunately, many of these issues and obstacles can be addressed by adopting designs and policies that are bird and nature friendly.

Birds on the Niagara, Lights Out Niagara, and the various partners that we represent, are advocating that municipalities and other government agencies in the region, and private building owners and homeowners turn out the lights during the spring and fall migration seasons.

In May of 2022 New York State, through the Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Office of General Services adopted a Bird Friendly, Lights Out policy that directs State-owned and managed buildings to turn off non-essential outdoor lighting from 11 p.m. to dawn during the spring migration April 15 through May 31 and also during the peak fall migration, August 15 through November 15. Lights out Niagara urges all building owners and managers including homeowners to turn out your lights during these critical migratory periods.

In addition we are advocating that the City of Buffalo and other municipalities in the international Niagara Region consider adopting bird friendly city policies such as have recently been adopted in New York City and Washington DC. This includes bird and nature friendly building designs and codes addressing outdoor lighting, glass, and other infrastructure concepts that promote the environment and quality of life for future generations

Online Resources

Lights Out Niagara

<http://www.birdniagara.org/lights-out-niagara.html>

New York State “Lights Out” Initiative launched in New York to protect Migrating Birds

May 20, 2022

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/125415.html>

Celebrating Migratory Bird Day

<https://www.migratorybirdday.org>

Highlighting other Bird Friendly City initiatives including the New York City and Washington DC bird friendly city initiatives recently adopted

<https://abcbirds.org/news/dc-bird-friendly-building-act/>

[#:~:text=In%20a%20unanimous%20vote%2C%20the,alterations%20after%20October%201%2C%202024](https://abcbirds.org/news/dc-bird-friendly-building-act/#:~:text=In%20a%20unanimous%20vote%2C%20the,alterations%20after%20October%201%2C%202024)