• **Natural Disasters**: Hurricanes, blizzards, wildfires and other natural disasters can destroy crucial stopover and rest sites as well as destroying food sources birds need to refuel along their journeys.

• **Collision**: Tens of thousands of migrating birds collide with obstacles in mid-flight during both spring and fall migrations, and the majority of these collisions cause fatal injuries. Such obstacles include tall buildings, electrical wires and wind turbines.

• **Starvation**: Inadequate food supplies cause starvation among migrating birds every year. This may be caused by habitat destruction that effectively strands migrating birds without food along their route, or it may be a result of greater feeding competition among large masses of migratory birds. Climate change also leads to inadequate food sources.

**What you can do to help**

• Avoid polluting the natural environment and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

• Remember, natural disasters are brought on by human activities such as deforestation, filling wetlands and overharvesting.

• Provide water and nutritious foods such as suet, black-oil sunflower seeds, fruit, nuts and nectar for birds.

• Keep bird feeders and bird baths clean and fresh to avoid spreading diseases that could infect migrating birds and thus spread to migratory flocks.

Migration is a natural part of many birds’ lives, but it is one fraught with danger. By understanding the threats to migrating birds, it is possible for every birder to take steps to help their feathered friends complete these seasonal journeys safely.
World Migratory Bird Day is an annual, global initiative aimed at celebrating migrating birds and promoting their conservation worldwide. The awareness raising event was initiated in 2006 and is celebrated on the second week of May each year. It will be celebrated on the weekend 10 – 11 May 2014. The celebration of migratory birds is marked by public events such as bird festivals, educational programmes and bird-watching excursions.

Tourism and migratory birds
This year’s theme for World Migratory Bird Day is Tourism and migratory birds. Every year thousands of birds migrate to South Africa to enjoy the spring and summer months. World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated when the birds leave South Africa’s cold winters in search of warmer locations.

The theme is also closely linked to ideals of the Green Economy. Migratory birds fly across the globe creating a spectacular view for bird-watchers and nature enthusiasts.

Properly managed, popular bird-related tourism activities such as bird watching or bird photography can serve as the foundation for a mutually beneficial relationship between people and migratory birds.

Migratory Birds in South Africa
Research by National Geographic reveals that up to 4.5 billion birds, representing around 185 species, fly from Europe and Asia in the north to southern Africa and back every year.

Birds that migrate to South Africa:
- Greater Striped Swallow
- Amur Falcon
- White-rumped Swift
- White Stork
- Pygmy Kingfisher
- Yellow-billed Kite
- Lesser Kestrel
- Honey Buzzard
- Woodland Kingfisher
- Red-chested Cuckoo
- European Bee-eater

Threats to migrating birds
- Pollution: Heavy pollution will reduce available food supplies and suitable habitat, making it more difficult for birds to complete their migration successfully.
- Habitat Destruction: Destroying forests, cutting down trees and building close to or on a wetland destroys habitats for birds.

Bird of the year
Curlew Sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea)