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NEWS RELEASE

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WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2020 TO HIGHLIGHT FOR PARTICIPANTS HOW BIRDS CONNECT OUR WORLD

“Birds connect our world” is the theme for this year’s [World Migratory Bird Day](#) (WMBD), the only international education program that celebrates the migration of hundreds of bird species between their nesting habitats in North America and wintering grounds in Latin America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

This year’s conservation campaign will highlight the tracking technologies that researchers use to learn about migratory routes, examine the hazards birds face during their journeys, and implement conservation actions to help migratory birds along the way. “Birds connect our world” will be celebrated around the globe at schools, parks, zoos, wildlife refuges, museums, libraries, and many other locations. Many of the events will include cleanups and other habitat restorations as well as educational presentations, bird walks, and creative art activities.

Now in its 27th year, WMBD has grown from a one-day event into a year-round framework underpinning hundreds of projects and programs. In the Western Hemisphere World Migratory Bird Day is coordinated by [Environment for the Americas](#), a Colorado-based nonprofit organization that provides bilingual educational materials and information about birds and bird conservation to raise awareness of migratory birds and to promote actions that protect these feathered travelers.

“In 2009 scientists captured a Whimbrel in coastal Virginia, which is an important stopover site for this species,” says Susan Bonfield¹, Executive Director of Environment for the Americas. “When this bird, a female nicknamed Hope, was released,” says Bonfield, “she carried a satellite transmitter that showed her shuttling between breeding grounds in northwestern Canada and a wintering site in the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

After being tracked for more than 50,000 miles, the hardy Whimbrel disappeared in 2017, when Hurricane Maria struck St. Croix. “Hope demonstrated both the spectacular journeys that migratory birds make each year and the threats they frequently face during them,” Bonfield says. These include intense storms, pane-glass windows, loss of habitat, free-ranging cats, and plastic pollution, all of which WMBD touches on.

In addition to raising awareness about issues important to bird conservation, World Migratory Bird Day is also a celebration – and an opportunity to inspire people around the globe to take action to protect birds like Hope. “Migratory birds connect billions of people around the world,” says Bonfield. “Small actions, when taken by so many people, can add up to significant change.”

Although WMBD is traditionally celebrated in Canada and the U.S. on the second Saturday in May, in reality every day is bird day, and programs, festivals, and other events occur throughout the year, whenever it works best for organizers—and the birds. “Ultimately, the goal of WMBD is to connect

people to nature through birds,” says Miguel Matta, Latin America Program Coordinator for Environment for the Americas.

Add your local information!

You can learn about World Migratory Bird Day in the Americas, as well as Environment for the Americas, at www.migratorybirdday.org, which has information about this year’s theme, downloadable educational and promotional materials in Spanish and English, and instructions for registering your World Migratory Bird Day event on our global map. For more information, write to info@environmentamericas.org.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. **Dr. Susan Bonfield** is the Executive Director for Environment for the Americas. After studying Black-legged Kittiwakes in Alaska, she returned to the Lower 48 where she has since gained over 17 years of experience in bird research and education. She has created education programs in the U.S. and Mexico, assisted with workshops on bird monitoring and conservation in both countries, taught basic identification courses, and led a course for the USFWS National Conservation Training Center. Susan has a B.S. in Biology from Randolph-Macon Woman's College, an M.S. in Ecology, Fisheries, and Wildlife from University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources from Colorado State University.

Photos and Captions (see attached high-resolution photos):