


# Soar into Spring with Bats and Birds



From the big city to your own backyard, you can get a front row seat for one of the greatest shows on Earth this spring just by looking up! As the mercury rises, colorful, migrant birds will flock north from their winter homes in Central and South America. Northern Virginia is one of the best areas for bird watching because of its location near the coast, the mountains and along the north/south divider, and on April 28, you can learn more about both day- and night-flyers and the important role they play in the environment at the Birds and Bats Festival at Lake Accotink Park.

“Birds are an excellent indicator of how healthy our environment is,” said Park Authority naturalist Tony Bulmer. “They are pollinators, food for many animals and good at insect control. Plus, they are just fascinating to watch.”

Many birds entertain us with their seasonal rituals and their jubilant songs heralding spring’s arrival. By contrast, the stealthy bats soar at night as they serve a very important role in keeping food on your table.

“Bats are the primary predators of night-flying insects, such as the hornworm moth,” Bulmer said. “Hornworm moth larvae cause severe damage to corn and other crops that are commonly seen on our dinner table, and one study shows that bats save corn farmers \$1 billion annually in insect control.”

More fun facts and family-friendly activities await you at the Birds and Bats Festival at Lake Accotink Park. Enjoy bird and nature exhibits, take a naturalist-led bird hike or boat ride and discover how to create a bird habitat in your own backyard. It could be your ticket to a colorful show of winged wonders for years to come.

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To learn more about the Birds and Bats Festival, turn to the Events section, and to explore bird programs throughout Fairfax County, turn to the Nature section.