



Spring Migration at the Marsh

By: Ashley Fox

Spring is only weeks away, and that means one thing for bird watchers in Ontario: it's time to dust off those binoculars and get ready for the avian parade of migration! Every year, hundreds of thousands of birds make their way from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds in Ontario and other parts of Canada. It's like a giant game of Follow the Leader, but with less silly dancing and more flying.

But why do birds migrate in the first place? Well, it's all about the birds and the bees, and the bugs. As the weather gets warmer and the days get longer, insects and other small critters start to come out of hiding. And as any bird parent knows, baby birds need a steady diet of protein to grow big and strong. So, the birds pack up their little birdie bags and head north to take advantage of the bountiful bug buffet.

But enough science, let's talk about the real stars of the show: the birds themselves. One of the most popular birds to watch during spring migration is the Baltimore Oriole. These brightly colored birds are a favorite among bird watchers and can be found in woodlands, orchards, and gardens. They're like the orange and black version of the Where's Waldo of the bird world.

Another interesting bird to watch during spring migration is the Common Loon. These large water birds are known for their mournful calls and striking plumage. They can be found on lakes and rivers

throughout Ontario during their migration. And let's be real, their calls are like the avian version of a sad trombone.

One of the most spectacular sights during spring migration is the flocks of Sandhill Cranes. These large birds can be found in wetlands and grasslands during their migration. They can be seen flying in large flocks, often in a V-formation, as they make their way north. It's like the avian version of a V for Victory!

Spring migration is not only a treat for bird watchers, but it's also an important event for the birds themselves. For many species, migration is a vital part of their life cycle and is essential for their survival. Birds must navigate treacherous obstacles, such as storms, predators, and human-made barriers, to make it to their breeding grounds. It's like a real-life game of Angry Birds.

One of the best ways to observe spring migration is by visiting one of Ontario's many bird-watching hotspots. One of my favourite spots is Oshawa's Second Marsh. This site offers excellent opportunities to see a wide variety of birds and to learn more about their migration patterns and behaviors. Friends of Second Marsh, the non-profit group committed to protecting this space, has a Facebook page where you can find out more about free activities for the family. Grab your binoculars, head to one of Ontario's bird-watching hotspots and enjoy the spring migration. It's like a bird-watching buffet, and who doesn't love a good buffet?