



Insider's Look at Grand Canyon

Webisode #39 – Rangers Ron and Pat Brown Talk about Bird Migration Transcript

Ranger Patrick Gamman: Welcome to this week's webisode of Insider's Look at Grand Canyon. Hi, I'm Ranger Patrick and my two guests; well they've been on the show before. This is Ranger Pat and Ranger Ron Brown. Welcome to the show.

Ranger Ron Brown: Hi Patrick. Glad to be here.

Ranger Pat Brown: Nice to be back again.

Ranger Patrick: So the last time we got together to talk, it was about the California condor workshop. This time it's not about condors, but you two are really, really good at talking about birds and sharing that with the public and I think the folks out there would like to know more about birds, all birds that come to the Grand Canyon. What can you tell us is going on?

Ranger Ron: Well there is something really special that happens every year. It happens throughout the country. It happens throughout the world, but it also happens here at the Grand Canyon and that is the annual spring migration. This is the time of year when the birds that migrate from north to south are crossing and moving north to their breeding habitat. What that means is that there is literally a river of birds that is coming out of South America flying its way across the western United States, the eastern United States and in fact the Grand Canyon National Park is on one of those major flyways. So that river of birds is flying across the Grand Canyon right now headed north for spring.

Ranger Patrick: I like that, the idea of a river of birds. But Ranger Pat how many species of birds are in the park?

Ranger Pat: There are 373 species of birds in the park and that's because of this rich habitat that we have here inside the park. We have all kinds of habitats. We have river, we have desert, we have forest up here on top and that's what gives us the advantage of having such a great variety of birds here. So that means if you're walking along the rim of the Grand Canyon you have a possibility of seeing jays or warblers. If you look down into the canyon you might hear one of our wrens or see sparrows. If you walk back into the forest, you might see woodpeckers, sapsuckers, chickadees, titmice, and if you look up in the sky you just might see swifts or swallows. While down at the river, there's ducks and herons. Also the migratory birds use this habitat as well.

Ranger Patrick: So how do these migratory birds use the park?

Ranger Ron: Well it's interesting. As they travel, these birds have got a very long way to go. Some of these birds are going all the way from South America to Canada. And just like we do when we travel, they have to stop once in a while. When you're out there on the road you want to stop once in a while for maybe a nice place to rest, a hotel, maybe dinner. The Grand Canyon National Park with all that habitat that Ranger Pat just talked about means that these birds can find those things that they need on that long journey so they stop here they rest they get a place to sleep maybe they can find a little food and then they can continue that long and arduous journey. Just like you when you're traveling across the country these birds when they're traveling across the country need a restaurant and a hotel. And Grand Canyon provides that for these migrating birds.

Ranger Patrick: That's great so Grand Canyon is a good stopover for people and birds. But Ranger Pat is there anything special that folks can celebrate for this amazing migration?

Ranger Pat: Well every year there's a International Migratory Bird Day. This year it's going to be on May 8. And it's just an event that takes place to kind of enhance our understanding and appreciation for this amazing bird migration that goes on and to celebrate it also. So if you do a search on your internet, International Migratory Bird Day, you could find events that would be taking place in your area of the country.

Ranger Patrick: So before we close the show for this webisode is there anything else you want to share with us? Like when is the next time we are going to see you two?

Ranger Ron: Well as you know everything that flies north is sooner or later is going to have to fly back south. So in fall there is a southward migration so we'll get together again next fall and we'll talk about the southward migration of the birds of prey.