# Wings Over the Water

## Miracles of Migration

*"The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed time: and the turtle dove, and the crane, and the swallow, observed the time of their coming"* ~Jeremiah (8:7)

Waterfowl
Jerry Segraves

**For thousands of years, we have marveled at bird migration. How could we not? Scientists report that a godwit tracked by satellite flew 7,145 miles without landing. But feats that amaze us are routine for birds that fly such distances every year. Consider the migratory birds that frequent our wetlands.**

Many breed in the arctic, then fly south as far as the tip of South America. Along the way, these birds depend on a network of wetlands for rest and refueling.

The marshes of the Texas Gulf Coast, the Great Salt Plains of Oklahoma, Quivira and Cheyenne Bottoms here in Kansas, the Rainwater Basin in Nebraska, and the Missouri Couteu region of North Dakota and Canada are interconnected by the birds that migrate between them. For waterfowl and shorebirds, these wetlands are like stepping stones across a stream. One missing stone can be ruinous.

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Great Blue Heron/Jerry Segraves

### Fat for Flight

Shorebirds often arrive at our wetlands with little fat for continuing migration. Simply put, they are out of gas. Once here, though, they may double their body weight. Shorebirds may fatten to a point where an extra ounce would prevent them from taking off!

Reddish Egret with Band/Houston Audubon Society

Catbird/Doug Backlund

### Motion and Change

Scientists have many high-tech ways to monitor bird migration. Much of what we now know came from researchers who worked before the days of satellites and radio transmitters. Local bird banders, like Frank Robl and Ed Martinez, labored tirelessly to net, measure, band, and release birds, illuminating the migration miracle.

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*Funded in part by the Federal Highway Administration through the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.*