

# MIGRATORY BIRDS AT CADDO LAKE

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Caddo Lake received its designation as a Ramsar “Wetland of International Importance” in part because the area is important to many birds that migrate south to Caddo from Canada and north from the Caribbean and many Latin American countries. Some migrations involve flights of several thousand miles twice a year.



Ring-necked Ducks

### A FEW EXAMPLES:

#### Winter at Caddo & Summer North:

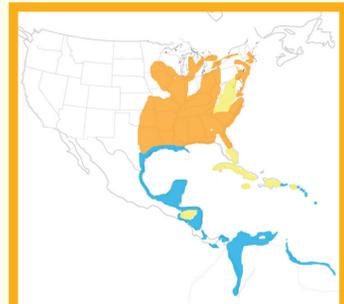
Some birds, such as the Ring-Necked Duck, choose Caddo Lake as their winter home. They spend the summers and breed in Canada or in northern U.S. states.



Prothonotary Warbler

#### Summer at Caddo & Winter South:

Some migratory birds summer at Caddo and head south in the fall to winter in Central and South America. The bright yellow Prothonotary Warbler is one example.



Mississippi Kite

**Migrating Through:** There are also migrants that just stop at Caddo on their way to and from their summer and wintering areas. They are often seen during the fall and spring months. The Mississippi Kite is one example. Some Kites fly all the way to Brazil for Brazil's summer, our winter.



ILLUSTRATIONS COPYRIGHT 2009 WATERFORD PRESS INC.

MAP INFORMATION BY CORNELL LAB ORNITHOLOGY  
RANGE DATA BY NATURESERVE

#### RANGE MAP LEGEND

- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

## HOW DO THEY DO IT?

Bird migration is a regular and seasonal movement, mostly between a bird's summer breeding areas and its wintering areas. These trips usually occur two times annually, in autumn and spring. Some birds travel at night, some in the daytime; some travel alone, some in flocks. Without a chance to rest and eat at stopovers like

Caddo Lake, many would not survive their long journey.

It is a mystery how many of them find their way. Various theories on navigational aids have been proposed. Some birds may use the Earth's magnetic fields, finding north and south much as a compass does. Others may have the ability to tell directions from the position of the sun or the stars.

Recognition of physical landmarks and local smells probably also help many birds as they get closer to their final destinations.

Not all birds migrate. Some species live year-round in the same region. But of the 650 bird species that nest in North America, 75 percent engage in some form of migratory behavior.

## TO LEARN MORE

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has a checklist of the birds of Caddo Lake that indicates if a bird is a migratory bird or a permanent resident and when each bird can be found around the Lake.

