

Feathers in Flight

Melissa Leasia. March 1, 2021 :

Paraphrasing the well-known poem, it's that time of year when a young birder's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of migration! That's certainly the case with Evergreen Audubon. Both our March and April chapter meetings are about migration and then, on Saturday, May 8th, we'll head outside to celebrate Migratory Bird Day with our own, socially distant, Dawn Chorus.



Willow Flycatcher (Photo credit: Mick Thompson)

But wait! There's more! We have just learned that the National Geographic sponsored short film, "Feathers in Flight," about the Bird Genoscape Project, is available for viewing on YouTube. This 15-minute film is as delightful to the eye and it is fascinating. Using the migration story of the endangered Willow Flycatcher, the film shows how researchers throughout North, Central and South American are working together to solve the mystery of migration, basically by creating an Ancestry.com for birds. Their goal is to understand migration better. Once migration is better understood, measures can be put into place to protect the billions of birds that migrate annually across the Western Hemisphere.

Publicity from the filmmakers states: "In order to protect [migrating birds], we need to know exactly where they go when they leave their breeding grounds. Borrowing cutting-edge technology from the Human Genome Project, researchers extract DNA from individual feathers and use it to map bird migration with greater precision than ever before. The so-called "Bird Genoscape Project" is revolutionizing bird conservation by connecting migratory birds – and the people who care about them – across the Americas."

Save the date for the April 1 chapter meeting (more information will be included in the March 29th e-dipper). Our speaker for that meeting will be one of the Colorado State University researchers at the forefront of this

groundbreaking effort. In the meantime, you can watch the film for free on the National Geographic YouTube channel.

[Watch Now](#)