

Migratory Friends – Nature’s pest control

Spring is on the way. And with this new season, the migration of many birds arriving here in Raymond. One of the travelers is the barn swallow. Barn swallows travel enormous distances. They have been recorded traveling 7250 miles. The barn swallows arrive in the barn around May 5th and leave around Labor Day. The swallows create mud nests attached to the barn beams. The historical barn offers the perfect nursery for the fledglings. Shelter is provided from the elements, temperatures remain constant to brood eggs, and predators cannot gain access. The swallows offer in return organic pest control. One barn swallow can capture 60 insects per hour. The colony eats thousands upon thousands of mosquitos and biting flies every day. Another benefit is the entertainment. Sitting in the yard watching the aerial acrobatics is awe inspiring. The wings shimmer as they flow in and out of the barn dawn to dusk. The parents employ a tag team approach to feeding the hungry mouths. The formations are militarily precise, flying at great speeds, dipping, and turning and hurling towards the ground, whoosh a catch, and away they go. I am always sad when they leave. The morning I walk out and it is silent, I look up, empty nests. But, I know spring will bring these wonders back and I can continue being grateful for their presence.

Raymond has other migratory birds that rely on our town to nest. Robins, grey catbird, scarlet tanager, green herons, osprey, to name a few. Have you seen any of these wonderful guests in town or your yard? Keep an eye open, they will be here soon.

by Patricia Bridgeo

