



### Trouble in Paradise

Beginning in the 1970s, due to concerns about a damaging coffee fungus and a desire for higher yields, major changes occurred in the New World coffee industry. Varieties of coffee that would grow when planted densely in the sun were developed, and major portions of coffee cropland were converted to production of these “sun coffees.” Farms with these varieties do produce substantially increased yields, but also have significant drawbacks. As tree cover is removed, coffee crops require more chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides; they become more susceptible to drought; require more frequent plant replacement; and begin to have problems with soil erosion and toxic runoff as well as soil acidification.

When coffee plantations are converted to sun production, the diversity of birds plummets. Full-sun coffee farms host only a fraction—25 to as little as five percent—of the number of bird species on nearby shade farms.

### Make a Difference, Drink Shade Coffee

Next to oil, coffee is the most valuable legal export in the world, with North America accounting for over a third of consumption. Thus, coffee drinkers can make a tremendous contribution to bird conservation by selecting brands produced from shade-grown plants. Over the past five years, many organizations and businesses have been working to promote shade coffee, as well as develop certification criteria so that consumers can be sure that coffee labeled “shade-grown” is truly produced in a fashion beneficial to birds.

Shade coffee is currently marketed as speciality product, but it is not hard to find. With a few phone calls or on-line searches, and a little taste-testing, you should be able to find a product and provider that’s right for your situation as an individual, coffee club member, retailer, or concessioner.

By selecting shade coffee, you will be protecting important wintering habitat for:

*Ruby-throated Hummingbird*  
*Wood Thrush*  
*Red-Eyed Vireo*  
*Black-throated Green Warbler*  
*Ovenbird*  
*Wilson’s Warbler*  
*American Redstart*  
*Northern Oriole*  
*Western Tanager*  
*Scarlet Tanager*  
*Rose-breasted Grosbeak*  
*Indigo Bunting*  
*and dozens of other migrating birds!*

**Shade coffee may be a bit more expensive than sun coffee, but aren’t these birds worth it?**

### Some Sources of Shade-Grown Coffee

Shade coffee is available through a variety of sources:

- The International Migratory Bird Day 2001 Products Catalog, on-line at <http://www.BirdDay.org>
- Progressive grocery stores such as Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods Market/Fresh Fields, and Ukrops
- Wildlife-related gift shops such as Wild Bird Centers, Wild Birds Unlimited, and zoo stores
- Coffee shops and cafes
- On-line, using lists provided by:

Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center’s Coffee Corner  
(<http://www.si.edu/smbc/coffee.htm>)

The Rainforest Alliance’s Conservation Agriculture Program  
(<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/cap/program-description3.html>)

Northwest Shade Coffee Campaign  
(<http://www.seattleaudubon.org/Coffee/home.html>)

Atlanta Audubon Society  
(<http://www.atlantaaudubon.org/pages/sgcfacts.htm>)

Other sources on the IMBD website  
(<http://birds.fws.gov/imbd.html>)

If you want to see shade coffee in your local grocery store, ask the manager to stock your favorite brand.

