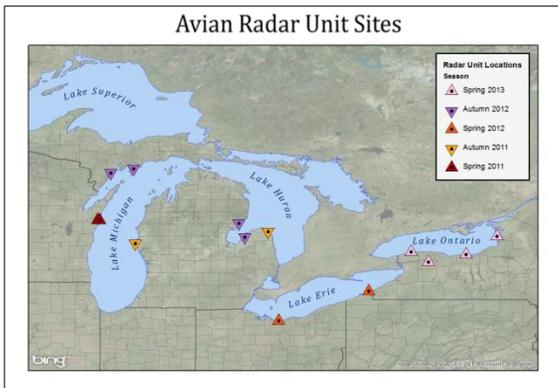


Every spring and fall, millions of birds and bats participate in one of the largest migrations on Earth. In the spring, they travel from their wintering grounds as far south as Brazil and Argentina to their breeding grounds throughout the United States and Canada and then return back to their wintering grounds in the fall. Those that travel along the Atlantic or Mississippi flyways (flight paths similar to our highways) encounter a barrier in the Great Lakes. These are barriers to most birds and bats because they lack safe places to land and require a great deal of energy to cross. Therefore, some birds and bats cross the lakes while others travel around them.



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has operated two mobile radar units around the Great Lakes since 2011. These units operate 24 hours a day since most migration happens at night. The radar units track birds and bats as they fly, collecting data on their numbers, direction of flight, and height. By combining this information with bird surveys, banding data, weather data, and acoustic and ultrasonic monitors, we are learning a great deal about when, where, and how birds and bats migrate as they encounter the Great Lakes.



With this information, we can make thoughtful decisions about placement of wind turbines and communication towers and the protection of stop-over habitat (habitat used to rest and refuel before continuing migration). As human populations expand and the demand for green energy and living space grows, so does the need to make environmentally sustainable decisions that will benefit both people and wildlife.

<http://www.fws.gov/radar>

