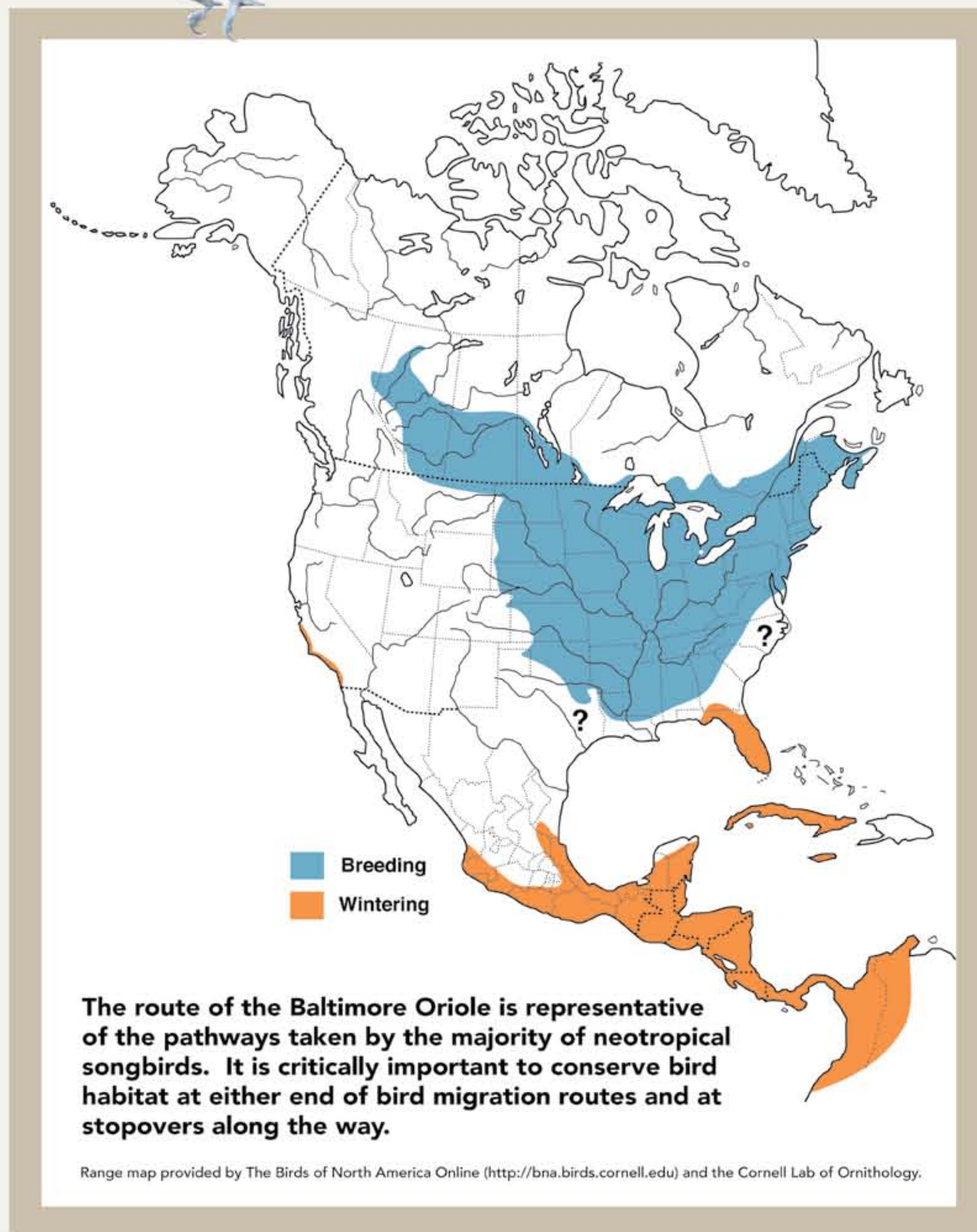




A HOMECOMING FLIGHT



Baltimore Oriole



Each spring, the Appalachian forests welcome home flocks of migrating birds called “Neotropical migrants.” These avian travelers will have flown up to 2,000 miles after leaving their wintering grounds in the tropics. They come to the Monongahela River watershed to nest and raise their young.

Changing daylight hours trigger these migrations. Songbirds arrive when their summer forest home can provide food, mostly insects and buds, and shelter in the vegetation. These trailside woods provide songbirds with a typical Appalachian warm welcoming—good food and a warm bed.

By the time they reach West Virginia, male songbirds will be sporting their bright breeding colors to attract a mate. Females will typically be camouflaged in dull browns to hide themselves and their nests from predators.

A wide variety of songbirds are found along the upper section of the Deckers Creek Trail. This is because the trail lies between the ridgelines of Laurel and Chestnut Mountains, which provides a natural pathway for birds. The Mon River Trail provides river flood plain habitat, which attracts ducks, geese, herons, hawks, owls, kingfishers, and songbirds.



▶ Indigo Bunting



▶ Scarlet Tanager

BIRDING TIPS:

The best time to view birds or hear them singing is from dawn to around noon on clear spring and early summer days. In the winter, they are most active during the mild midday hours.

Carry binoculars to see birds along the trail and a field guide to help identify them.

Find out more about local birding opportunities and conservation at www.mountaineeraudubon.org



www.montrails.org



www.wvdnr.gov

