

Ethical, Informed Citizens:

Where did all the swallows go?

Discover four fresh ways to explore animal migrations.

From a research task, to climate discussion with a literacy focus, to a piece of imaginative writing, to a structured debate, you'll find plenty to thrill and intrigue your pupils.



Credit: Alan Price / Gatehouse Studio

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To use this resource, you will need:

- A PDF of [‘Masters of the Air’ from Wildlife Watch issue 102 \(Summer 2022\)](#) – Links with document
- This document – there’s a brief summary below, with the main resources and links on the following pages.

Here are [four fresh ways to explore animal migrations](#):

Step 1: Research the perilous journey a species takes during migration.

You may decide to stick to some of Wales’ most unique migratory species - ospreys, common seals, skates and rays, bats - or even focus on species with endangered conservation status. For specific reasons why animals migrate, you will find lots of information on species’ fact files on the ‘Learn’ section of our website - it’s a perfect place to direct students as their learning journey begins.

You could begin by completing a fact file using the template and links later in this resource.

Step 2: Contrast the different environments various animal species call home at certain times of the year.

On A2, hand drawn world maps, pupils could plot the journey of a species and add pictures or photographs of natural landmarks or hazards the animals would pass on their way. This might be an opportunity to consider how the Climate Crisis has affected a variety of environments along the course of a migratory route. As a full class display, groups of pupils could use different coloured strings or wool to represent their specific species, and a key could be added to present the information more clearly.

Again, there are more ideas and links later in this resource – make sure you turn to the following pages.

Step 3: Pupils could write a first person paragraph from their species’ perspective.

Pupils can work independently in groups. As a group task, each pupil could narrate a specific point of the animal’s journey. Remember to agree on a form of narration, such as first person (I, we, our) and to agree on a tense in a group (present tense or past tense) to make certain the story will sequence well. Once finished, pupils can read their stories as a one sequence, and their writing could be attached to a migration display, or even hung somewhere on a larger class display.

There are templates on how to structure the migration, and an example from a pupil to use as inspiration, later in this resource.

Step 4: Run a scored debate.

Discuss which environment an animal could stay in permanently if migration was no longer an option for the species. You may decide this topic could be the basis for an interesting debate, in which case, how about establishing some golden rules for taking part in a debate first.

There are some recommendations for rules and a suggested scoring scheme on the closing pages of this resource.

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Please consider sharing your pupils' learning by sending a photograph and some details about your school and the activities your students enjoyed most to chris.baker@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk

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Step 1: Research the perilous journey a species takes during migration.

Migration fact file: bar-tailed godwit



Credit: Chris Gomersall/2020VISION

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| species | bar-tailed godwit | <p>Bar-tailed Godwit 234684</p> <p>Dispersed YED 13 Oct 2022</p> <p>Arrived Anson's Bay 24 Oct 2022</p> <p>Map © Adam Toop Publication: North Wales Wildlife Centre https://www.nwllw.org.uk</p> |
| place of departure | Kuskokwim Shoals, Alaska | |
| date of departure | 13th October, 2022 | |
| distance travelled | 13,560km | |
| length of journey | 11 days | |
| place of arrival | Anson's Bay, Tasmania | |
| date of arrival | 24th October, 2022 | |

Credit: Adrien Riegan

Migration fact file:

| | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| | | |
| species | | |

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| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| place of departure | | |
| date of departure | | |
| distance travelled | | |
| length of journey | | |
| place of arrival | | |
| date of arrival | | |

Find out more about:

North Wales' flora and fauna with fact files on every species you could seek to discover:

<https://www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer>

birds that migrate through North Wales: <https://www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/days-out/seasonal-spectacles/spring-wildlife/bird-migration>

wading birds that will soon be arriving to 'overwinter' in the UK:

<https://www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/days-out/seasonal-spectacles/spring-wildlife/bird-migration>

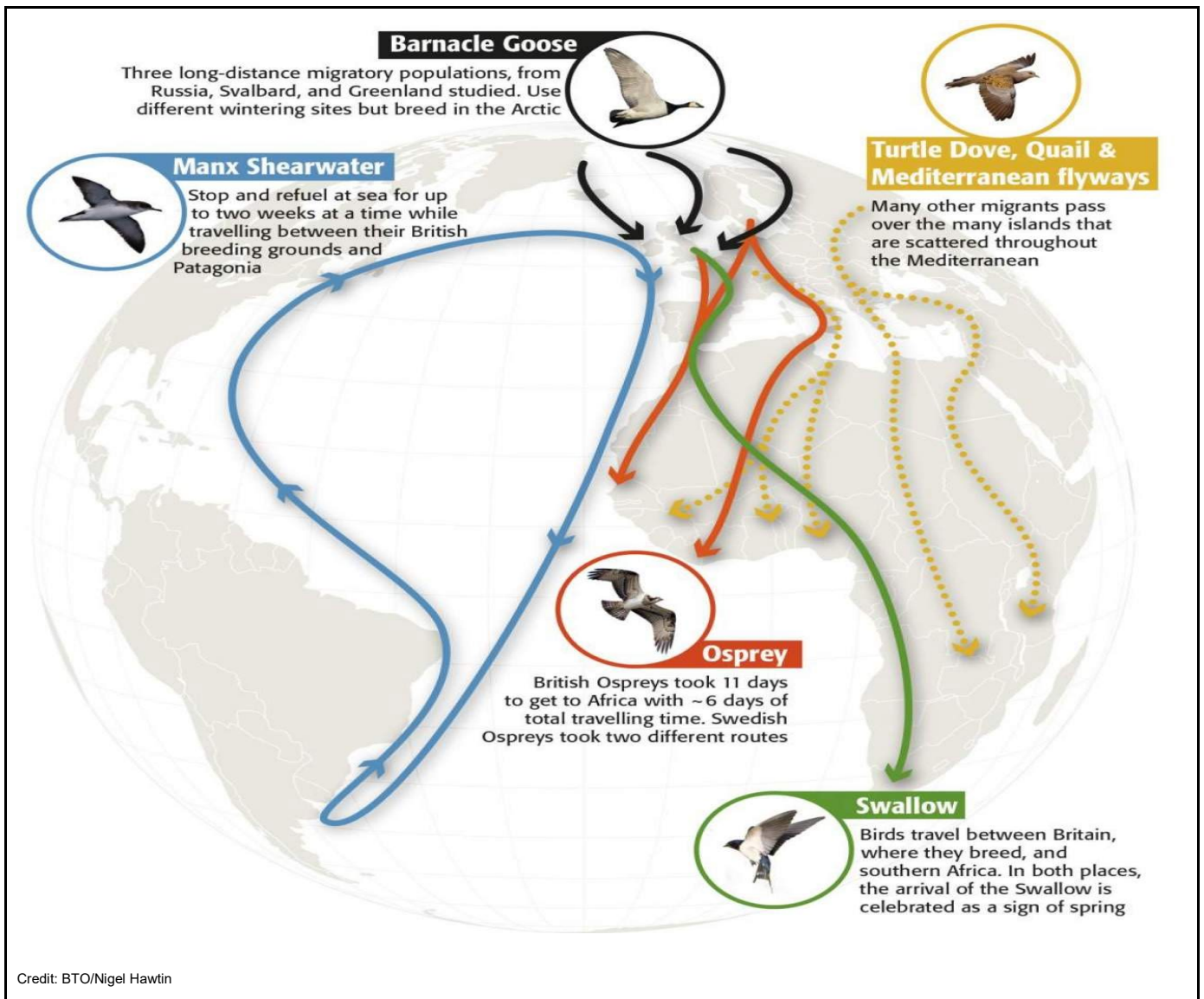
Searching for bird migrations can be straightforward, with immediate answers available to your pupils for many UK species. However, if you would prefer to give pupils specific species to focus on, you may wish to use this infographic to sharpen their focus:

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Step 2: Contrast the different environments various animal species call home at certain times of the year.

Use the habitats section of the website to help you complete a contrast of your species' breeding grounds and where they overwinter: <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/animal-habitats>

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| species: | | |
| | place of departure | place of arrival |
| average temperature (in °C) in month of departure / arrival | | |
| average rainfall (in mm) in month of departure / arrival | | |
| daily hours of sunshine at time of departure / arrival | | |
| habitat (bogs, woodland, heathland, freshwater, mountains, grassland) | | |
| an image of the species in their habitat | | |
| diet / main food sources | | |
| CHALLENGE: does your species have any adaptions that allow survival in this location? | | |

Literacy focus: using Tier 2 vocabulary

Once your pupils have completed their research, you could encourage them to write sentences using conjunctions to link their points:

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| In the summer in Wales, swallows can experience between 10 and 14 hours of daily sunshine | similarly likewise correspondingly comparably | when they arrive in South Africa, swallows will encounter between 10 and 12 hours of sunshine each day. |
| The average annual temperature in Wales in | whereas however | in the South African summertime, the daily temperature is, on average, 4°C |

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| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| September is 14°C | in contrast adversely | warmer. |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------|

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Step 3: Pupils could write a first person paragraph from their species' perspective.

Encourage your pupils in groups to structure the journey of one species into separate parts. There should be enough sections for pupils to write one part each. You could encourage pupils to research the dangers of a part of the journey, or the effects of the Climate Crisis, so they can incorporate them into their part of the story.

| A swallow's journey | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Step 1: Leaving Wales | Step 2: Crossing the Sahara desert | Step 3: Crossing the Congo rainforest | Step 4: Arriving in South Africa |
| -swallows mate for life so they must wait for their partner - fledglings leaving the nest late because of droughts - fewer insects means the swallows may not be in the best condition for the journey - sea storms | -droughts are making the desert extend each year -there is less food so many swallows starve -fewer places to rest safely on the journey | -hawks, eagles, kites -travelling 200km each day and becoming exhausted -rainforest shrinking -fewer insects to eat -human trappers | -swallows mate for life so they must wait for their partner -nest sites are disappearing as towns and cities expand -swallows are very territorial so using another bird's nest site is difficult |

Here is an empty grid for your classes to edit:

| A _____ journey | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Step 1: Leaving | Step 2: Crossing | Step 3: Crossing | Step 4: Arriving |
| - | - | - | - |
| - | - | - | - |
| - | - | - | - |

Once they're ready to begin, remind them that they are all writing a part of the same story, so it must be consistent. The best way to do this is to agree on a narrative voice and a tense.

| narrative voice | tense | Other considerations |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| first person: I we our | present tense: It is time to leave My wings are waving goodbye | You could include specific parts of the animal's body You could include features of the habitat You could include parts of their diet You could describe the movements they make You could try to keep one mood throughout your paragraph (hopeful, angry, sad) |



Pupil example: Swallow. Part 1. Leaving Wales.

As I leave my mind starts racing, will I make it? Will my chicks make it? Will the exhaustion get to them or will they cope? If I fall from tiredness, will they cope? The chicks have never flown such a distance in 40 days, and 6000 miles is one marathon after another marathon after another marathon.

As my feathers spread out I look behind me and see the chicks mimicking me wingbeat by wingbeat. When I rise, I flap my wings and feel a cold gust of wind that makes a growling sound. I worry that the sea will be angry today. I look across the red sky and all the trees started vibrating; another black wave of swallows plummets out of their orange leaves. We are already behind the flock - the humans here call a group of us 'a richness' - we won't see their homes, their gardens, their waves for another nine months now.

I glide towards the flight of my family, my chicks following me at a steady pace. Our journey has begun.

Arthur, age 10, Ysgol Pen-y-Bryn



Step 4: Run a scored debate.

Scored debate sheet

| Positive | | Negative | |
|----------|--|----------|--|
| points | behaviour | points | behaviour |
| 2 | Making a relevant comment | -2 | Interruption |
| 2 | Using evidence to support a position or presenting factual information | -2 | Monopolising the debate |
| 2 | Using an analogy to demonstrate a point | -3 | Making a personal attack |
| 1 | Using ambitious vocabulary | -2 | Not paying attention or distracting others |
| 1 | Asking a clarifying question or 'moving the discussion along' | -1 | Irrelevant comment |
| 1 | Recognizing contradictions in another person's statement | -1 | No involvement in the debate |
| 1 | Drawing another person into the discussion | -1 | No research prepared |

Empty table to construct your own skills / points:

| Positive | | Negative | |
|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| points | behaviour | points | behaviour |
| | | | |

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Rules for a Scored Debate

Pre-debate - Share an article or video as a **catalyst** to provide an **overview** of the topic

Decide on a **statement** that pupils can **agree** or **disagree** with.

Encourage pupils to **work in groups** with others who share the same opinion

Allow pupils time to **research** their **stance** in class or at home

Provide pupils on both sides with a **page of facts** /statistics / quotations

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Share the scoring sheet with pupils to encourage **positive behaviour**

Decide if pupils will face other or the teacher

Debate -

- 1 **Rearrange the seating** so pupils are in two groups: FOR and AGAINST
- 2 One pupil from the **FOR** side of the debate gives an **opening statement**
- 3 Pupils from the **AGAINST** side stand / raise a hands for the chance to **reply**
- 4 **FOR** speaker chooses the **AGAINST** speaker who will reply and 'gives way'
- 5 The **AGAINST** speaker makes their challenge
- 6 The **FOR** speaker has the chance to make a further response
- 7 **Repeat** the process until both sides have considered this part of the debate
- 8 The teacher invites a pupil from **AGAINST** side to introduce a new point
- 9 One student from **FOR** and **AGAINST** gives a closing statement
- 10 Pupils **vote** on whether they agree or disagree with the original statement
- 11 The votes are added to the **scores** on the teacher's score sheet

