

MISSION: Migration!

Listen ... can you hear those honking calls? Look up ... do you see that V-shape moving across the sky? It's migration time again!

Twice a year, you can watch as birds leave their homes and take to the sky. In the fall, as days grow short and cool, they fly south seeking warmer temperatures, better weather and more food. In spring, with longer days and everything in bud and bloom, they return to build nests, to mate and to raise their young.

Migration Nation

North American birds are a flighty lot! In fall, land birds such as swallows and birds of prey travel all the way to the tropics. Wading birds and northern-breeding ducks, geese and swans leave their Arctic breeding grounds to journey to warmer waters off B.C. Migrants fly thousands of kilometres, at an average altitude of 150-600 metres – sometimes without stopping.

On the next full moon, step outside, listen and look up: you may see their silhouettes as they wing their way through the night!

How Do They Do It?!

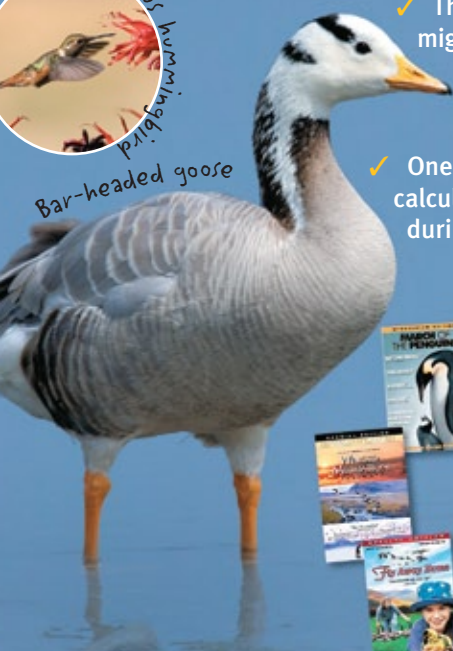
Scientists believe birds find their way through a combination of:

- genetic programming
- learning from their parents on their first migration
- recognizing environmental cues on later migrations
- being able to detect – or maybe even see! – the magnetic field of the Earth.

Migration: Believe It Or Not!

- ✓ Flying in flocks helps birds save as much as 20 percent of their energy
- ✓ The earliest recorded observations of bird migration were 3,000 years ago
- ✓ Until 1878, observers believed birds disappeared in winter because they were hibernating!
- ✓ Bar-headed Geese have been seen flying over the highest peaks of the Himalayan Mountains ... above 8,000 metres
- ✓ Bar-tailed Godwits have the longest non-stop flight of any migrant, flying 11,000 kilometres in one go
- ✓ The Arctic Tern has the longest-distance migration of any bird – over 20,000 kilometres!
- ✓ Migrating hummingbirds have the greatest body-length-to-migration-distance ratio – even longer than the Arctic Tern!
- ✓ One Manx Shearwater, a long-lived bird, is calculated to have flown eight million kilometres during its 50-year lifespan! Unbelievable!

female Rufous hummingbird
Bar-headed goose



Migration Movies

March of the Penguins:

An award-winning documentary. Prepare to love penguins!

Winged Migration: Join migrating flocks on flights around the world.

Fly Away Home: The true story of the girl who taught a goose to migrate.



A flock of migrating terns



Game Pieces: Trace, colour and cut out these bird game pieces. Turn the page to play Migration Nation - the Board Game!



Stands: Trace rectangle, cut out, fold in half and cut small slit. Insert game piece.

Over



Play MIGRATION NATION

Can you lead your flock safely south for the winter?



You started without enough energy. Fly back to the STAGING GROUNDS and fatten up!

Your information helps conserve flying energy. Fly AHEAD ONE space.

Reflective stickers save your flock from smashing into house windows. Fly AHEAD ONE space.

Logging has destroyed your traditional feeding and resting habitat. There is no cover. Fly BACK ONE space.

At last, a wildlife sanctuary for rest and food. Move AHEAD THREE spaces.

Oh, oh. Duck hunters! Fly BACK ONE space and land out of range.

A Pacific storm blows you off course and onto the Central route. MISS A TURN to rest. Next turn, begin heading inland.

Your flock narrowly avoids a collision with an airplane. Fly AHEAD ONE space.

You land your flock by a clean pond and take advantage of the fresh food and water. Fly AHEAD ONE space.

Office workers leave lights on at night. Members of your flock hit the windows. Fly BACK TWO spaces.

A new housing development has left you no place to land. Fly BACK TWO spaces.

You spot a rooftop garden on the top of a skyscraper and land your flock to rest and eat. Fly AHEAD TWO spaces.

Dogs on the beach prevent you from feeding. Fly BACK THREE spaces.

You are sucked into wind turbines and half your flock dies. Fly BACK FOUR spaces.

Your flock arrives at a stop-over site and discovers it is now a protected sanctuary. You are safe to rest and feed. Fly AHEAD THREE spaces.

You catch a railroad on the home stretch. Fly AHEAD THREE spaces.

Yikes! Your stop-over is now a golf course! Fly BACK ONE space.

Your flock is joined by another, and there is strength in numbers. Fly AHEAD TWO spaces.

Disease spreads swiftly and decimates your flock. Fly BACK FOUR spaces.

You catch a thermal column of rising hot air, allowing you to soar with ease. Fly AHEAD ONE space.

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE

You are attacked by a neighbourhood cat while feeding at a backyard feeder. Go to the WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE.

Forest fire! You must fly inland to escape. Some flock members are lost in the fire. MISS A TURN. Fly toward the PACIFIC FLYWAY next turn.

You remember a shortcut through a mountain pass. Lead your flock AHEAD ONE space.

Your flock begins its descent to a favourite stop-over site, only to discover it has been replaced by a mall! You must search for a new safe place to rest. Fly BACK ONE space.

Just as your flock is timing, you spot a field to rest in. Fly AHEAD ONE space.

As your flock is landing, you spot a farmer spraying pesticides and your flock gets sick. Fly BACK FIVE spaces.



Black Bear Basics

More black bears live in British Columbia than in any other province or state in North America. Across the province, however, our towns and cities are expanding into bear habitat. Unfortunately, sharing the same space can lead to conflict – especially when bears are lured into our backyards by garbage, fruit trees, dirty barbecues, compost and pet food.

Black bears can be dangerous. But they are also smart, curious and playful animals who perform an important role in the ecosystem. By better understanding black bears, we can help create a safe environment for us both.

Close up, black bears have sharp vision, perfect for finding small foods such as acorns scattered on the forest floor. They can also see in colour. Colour vision is believed to help bears tell when berries are ripe.

Black bears can hear ultrasonic sounds too high for human ears. Hearing is important for detecting danger in dense forests.

Scent is very important to black bears. They can sniff out food kilometres away. Even favourites like ant colonies buried underground are no match for their sensitive noses. Bears also communicate through scent marking. They leave messages for one another in urine and scat, as well as by rubbing, scratching and biting trees.

As omnivores, black bears eat both plant and animal products. Their diet includes insects, leaves, grasses, roots, berries and nuts. They also feed on fish and young deer. In the late summer and early fall, black bears fatten up in preparation for hibernation. They need the extra weight to survive the winter. During hibernation, they do not eat or drink for up to seven months! When they emerge in the spring, they can be quite skinny.

With short, curved claws, black bears make excellent tree climbers. They can climb trees from a very young age, and quickly too – up to three metres per second. Mothers send their cubs up trees to protect them from danger. Black bears are also fast runners. They can run twice as fast as an Olympic sprinter! However, they can only keep up high speeds over short distances.

Black bears are strong animals with powerful limbs. They can move aside huge rocks and logs to find food. They have even been known to peel back car doors in search of a meal.

Despite their name, black bears are not always black! They can also be white, blue, blond or varying shades of brown. White bears are known as Kermode (Kerr-mow-dee) or spirit bears. Spirit bears are only found in British Columbia.

Black bear cubs are born in a den while their mother hibernates. She nurses them as she sleeps and keeps them warm. Then the whole family emerges from the den in the spring. Cubs stay with their mother for up to a year and a half before they venture off to live on their own. Black bears are generally solitary as adults, meaning they do not live in groups.

Bear Safety

Normally, black bears are shy animals who choose to avoid people. When humans feed them, however, they get used to people and become less afraid – even aggressive. Here are some tips to keep you and your pets safe:

- Never approach bears.
- Should you see a bear in your backyard or at school, go inside right away. Should the bear see you, slowly back away toward your house or school. Once inside, tell the first adult you see.
- Supervise your pets when outdoors and keep them indoors at night. Always walk your dog on a leash.
- Where possible, use special bear-proof containers for garbage, recycling and compost, or keep containers indoors until just before pick-up. Do not leave pet food outside. Remove fallen fruit from trees.

For more tips on staying safe around black bears, visit bearsmart.com.

Where's Mom?

What to do if you find a baby deer or seal alone



SHERRI TAYLOR

Have you ever seen a baby deer (a fawn) or seal pup alone in the wild? Your first instinct may be to rescue them. They are babies, after all!

Instead of swooping in to help, the key is to **STOP** and **STAY BACK**. Often, people do more harm than good when trying to help wildlife.

Crafty Camo

When mother deer need to eat, they don't bring their babies with them. Fawns are too vulnerable to come along on foraging trips. And, for the first few weeks of their life, they're actually unable to follow their mothers at all!

Because of this, baby deer are often left behind for hours while Mom forages for food. Fawns have great camouflage and almost no scent to attract predators, so Mom feels comfortable hiding her baby. Typically, the fawn will lie quietly hidden in tall grass waiting for her return.

Suspicious Smells

Since fawns have almost no odour, people touching them can put them at risk. We'd leave our own scent behind, exposing the baby to predators even though we're just trying to help!

It is very likely Mom is actually nearby. The presence of humans could frighten her away.

Instead of approaching, leave the area and keep any pets away. If you are really concerned, check (preferably using binoculars) to see if the fawn is still there in 24 hours. Likely the mother will have already come back and moved him to a new spot!

Red flags

The fawn may truly need help if:

- He has not moved in 24 hours
- He is attempting to follow people or wandering/crying
- He is visibly injured
- He is in a dangerous location

To learn more, visit spca.bc.ca and search "fawn."



PERRY EDWARDS





Mamas on the Move

Like deer, seals also leave their babies while hunting for food. Seals give birth on land between June and September. For the first four to six weeks, pups are nursed and protected by their mothers. During that time, they practise their swimming and hunting skills in the water, but also spend a lot of time resting on the beach. So it's perfectly normal for them to be alone sometimes!

Startling a Seal

Don't approach the seal pup, or try to coax or push her into the water. This will cause her stress, and she might bite. Plus, it is possible that your presence will frighten the mother into abandoning her baby! Even observing the pup from too close a distance might scare Mom away.

Instead, leave the area and keep any pets away. Check back in a few hours (preferably using binoculars) to see if the pup is still there.

HOLLY HENRY

DANIELA MULHALL



Worrying warnings

The pup may truly need help if:

- She is visibly injured
- She has been alone for more than several hours without a parent visible nearby
- She is seriously underweight or premature
- She appears distressed or non-responsive

Visit spca.bc.ca and search "seal" to find out more.



If human interference can be harmful, what can I do to help?

The most important thing you can do to help the baby is to **STAY BACK** and keep others, including pets, away. If you have observed any of the above **red flags**, or you are uncertain whether the animal needs help, you **STILL** shouldn't attempt to capture or care for the baby yourself. The less contact a wild animal has with humans, the better.

Instead, phone the BC SPCA's wildlife hotline as soon as possible at **1-855-622-7722**. Contacting a wildlife expert for advice is the best way to help!