



Interesting Facts About Bird Migration

- 1) About 40% of the world's 10,000 birds migrate regularly. Even birds that don't fly may migrate, including some species of penguins (they swim) and Australia's emus (they walk).
- 2) The Bar-headed Goose is the highest-flying migrant. It reaches altitudes of up to 8.8 kilometers (5.5 miles) above sea level - more than twice as far above sea level as the highest mountains in New Mexico!
- 3) The Great Snipe maintains speeds of up to 96 kph (60 mph) over the course of its 6,800 kilometer (4,200 mile) migratory path. No other bird (or other animal of any kind) travels at such high speeds for such long distances.
- 4) The Arctic Tern, is the world's leader in miles logged per year. These birds fly twice annually between the Arctic and Antarctica!
- 5) The Swainson's Hawk has the one of the longest migrations of any raptor found in North America. It spends the breeding season in open lands from Alaska to northern Mexico and winters in Argentina. Swainson's Hawks can be found nesting in grasslands and agricultural lands throughout New Mexico.
- 6) Some Lesser Sandhill Cranes (a subspecies of the Sandhill crane) breed in Siberia but winter in New Mexico!
- 7) The Bar-tailed Godwit flies the longest distance non-stop of any bird: 11,000 kilometers (7,000 miles) from Alaska to New Zealand in just 8 days!
- 8) **Hyperphagia** is a state in which birds bulk up on food prior to migration in order to store fat that they'll use during long and often non-stop journeys. Some birds almost double their body weight during hyperphagia! For example, a Prothonotary Warbler was captured during migration by Rio Grande Bird Research at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park. This is an Eastern species and so it was way off course, maybe blown in by a storm system. It was captured twice. When first measured it scored a low number for the amount of fat present on its body. It was recaptured a week later and scored the highest number possible.

Adapted from National Audubon's *Nine Awesome Facts about Bird Migration* (<https://www.audubon.org/news/9-awesome-facts-about-bird-migration>)

MIGRATION - by Linda Rockwell

*While you were sleeping last night
I flew 300 miles without stopping or eating.
An ounce of bright feathers, heart, muscle,
And bones as light as air.
Danger everywhere:
Predators, exhaustion, windows that look like sky.
Today I eat seeds in your garden.
You do not notice a miracle.*