



Name: _____

The Great Escape: Migration

When the autumn wind begins to whistle through the trees and the days grow shorter, many animals do not prepare for a long nap. Instead, they gather in large groups, pack their "bags," and start a journey that can span thousands of miles. This seasonal movement from one region to another is called migration. It is one of nature's most demanding and mysterious events.

Why Do Animals Leave?

Animals don't travel thousands of miles just because they want a vacation. They migrate to survive. As winter approaches in the north, the ground freezes, and plants stop growing. For animals that eat leaves, nectar, or insects, staying put would mean starvation.

By moving to warmer southern climates, animals find a fair environment where food is still plentiful and the weather is mild enough to raise their young. Once the ice melts and the flowers bloom back north in the spring, the animals return to take advantage of the fresh summer food.

Champions of the Journey

The variety of migratory animals is staggering. The Arctic Tern is the undisputed champion of distance; it flies from the Arctic all the way to the Antarctic and back again every single year. That is a round trip of about 25,000 miles!

On land, the Caribou of the Arctic tundra trek hundreds of miles to find better grazing grounds. In the air, the delicate Monarch butterfly—weighing less than a paperclip—travels from southern Canada all the way to specific forests in Mexico. Even in the deep blue sea, Humpback whales swim from the icy poles to the warm tropics to give birth to their calves.

The Mystery of Navigation

How do these animals find their way across vast oceans and continents without a GPS or a map? Scientists have discovered that animals use a "toolkit" of different senses:

- **Solar and Stellar Compasses:** Many birds and insects use the position of the sun during the day and the patterns of the stars at night to stay on course.
- **Magnetic Sense:** Some animals have a tiny amount of mineral in their bodies that acts like a built-in compass, allowing them to feel the Earth's magnetic field.
- **Landmarks:** Many travelers follow physical features like "highways." They use the curves of rivers, the lines of mountain ranges, and the edges of coastlines to remember their path.





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1. Which of the following best states the main idea of the entire passage?
 - A. Arctic Terns fly farther than any other bird in the world.
 - B. Migration is a difficult journey that animals take to find food and survive.
 - C. Monarch butterflies are amazing because they are very light but very strong.
 - D. Scientists are still trying to figure out how animals use the stars to fly.

2. How is the "Mystery of Navigation" section organized?
 - A. It uses chronological order to show when animals leave and arrive.
 - B. It uses comparison to show why whales are better travelers than butterflies.
 - C. It uses description to list the different methods animals use to find their way.
 - D. It uses cause and effect to explain what happens when an animal gets lost.

3. Read this sentence from the passage: "By moving to warmer southern climates, they find a fair environment where food is still plentiful..." In this sentence, the word "fair" most likely means:
 - A. A place where people go to ride a Ferris wheel and eat popcorn.
 - B. Following the rules of a game so everyone has a chance to win.
 - C. Weather that is pleasant, clear, and not too extreme.
 - D. Having a light complexion or very blonde hair.

4. Based on the "Why Do Animals Leave?" section, what can you infer about a bird that decides NOT to migrate?
 - A. It will likely grow thicker feathers and hibernate in a tree.
 - B. it will struggle to find enough food once the insects and plants disappear.
 - C. It will wait until January to start its journey when the snow is deeper.
 - D. It will change its diet to eat ice and snow instead of nectar.