

Bird Migration Reading Passage

You should spend 20 minutes reading the passage below and answering each question (1–13).

Bird Migration

- A. Birds' various distinctive design elements allow them to pull off such astounding endurance feats. They have hollow, light-weight bones, intricately patterned feathers that provide thrust and lift for swift flight, navigation systems that are far superior to those created by humans, and a clever heat-conserving structure that, among other things, emphasises all blood circulation below layers of warm, water-resistant plumage, making them capable of surviving in the harshest climates. Their respiratory systems must function effectively during prolonged altitude flights, thus they have an oxygen extraction system from their lungs that is significantly superior to that of any other mammal. Their bodies can build up significant amounts of fat throughout the later stages of the summer breeding period, when food is abundant, to give them enough energy for their lengthy migratory trips.
- B. Finding enough food during the winter, when it is scarce, is the primary driver behind bird migration. This is especially true for birds that breed in the Northern Hemisphere's temperate and arctic regions, where there is an abundance of food throughout the brief growing season. Many species must move when food is sparse since they can withstand frigid conditions if there is plenty of it. But intriguing issues still exist.
- C. Many birds go farther than would be necessary only to locate food and favourable weather, which is a curious reality. Nobody is sure why British swallows don't travel thousands of miles further to their preferred winter habitat in South Africa's Cape Province, despite the fact that they could certainly make it through the winter in equatorial Africa. The huge migrations performed by shorebirds that breed close to the poles and arctic terns that hunt on mudflats are still unresolved. In general, migrating species spend their winters farther south the further north they breed. This requires an annual round trip of 25,000 kilometres for arctic terns. All of these individuals, however, fly over other regions of what appears to be ideal habitat spanning two hemispheres en route to their eventual destination in remote southern latitudes. Whilst we may not entirely comprehend the reasons why birds visit certain locations, we can nevertheless be in awe of their accomplishments.
- D. One of the biggest mysteries is how young birds, who don't have parental supervision, can find the typical wintering locations. Fewer people travel with young children, and occasionally kids don't even know what their parents seem like. The cuckoo, which lays its eggs in the nest of another species and never sees its young again, is a well-known example. It is incredible to think that after being nurtured by its host species, the young cuckoo migrates to its original tropical wintering habitats before returning alone to northern Europe the next season to seek for a mate among its kind. The logical conclusion is that it receives from its parents an innate ability to

navigate and find its way, as well as a mental image of another cuckoo. However, no one has the foggiest notion how this is even conceivable.

- E. There is growing proof that birds utilise the sun and stars' positions as compass directions. Additionally, they appear to be able to sense the earth's magnetic field, which is possibly because their brains contain tiny magnetite crystals. However, accurate navigation also necessitates a sense of place and time, particularly when being lost. Birds can still quickly return to their nesting locations even after travelling thousands of kilometres over an alien terrain, according to experiments. Such extraordinary abilities are the result of the computation of a number of complex stimuli, such as an innate map of the night sky and the pull of the earth's magnetic field. Unknown is how the birds employ their "instruments," but one thing is certain: their sensory awareness of the environment is superior to ours. The majority of tiny birds migrate at night and follow the position of the setting sun. Nevertheless, in addition to witnessing the sun set, they also appear to see the plane of polarised light that it produces, which serves to calibrate their compass. Other advantages of nighttime travel exist. Predators who hunt during the daylight hours are avoided, and there is less of the probability of being dehydrated from extended flight under hot, sunny sky. Additionally, the air is often calmer and cooler at night, which is perfect for stable, long-distance flight.
- F. All journeys, however, carry a significant amount of danger, and leaving on time is a skill in itself for arriving safely. This calls for using precise weather forecasts and taking advantage of suitable winds. Birds are skilled at both, and laboratory experiments have revealed that some of them can even detect the slight variation in barometric pressure between the room's floor and ceiling. Birds frequently respond to weather fluctuations before there is any outward evidence of them. Lapwings, which consume grassland, travel from the Netherlands to the British Isles, France, and Spain as a cold front approaches. The birds might go hungry if the ground freezes. However, they make their way back to Holland before a thaw because of a pressure change that predicted an improvement in the weather.
- G. The day prior a letter announcing its release, a Welsh Manx shearwater that had been transported to America and freed was found returned in its burrow on Skokholm Island off the coast of Pembrokeshire! On the other hand, every autumn, a few North American birds are carried across the Atlantic by swift westerly tailwinds. They certainly make it to Europe without incident, however there is compelling evidence that some of them return to North America the following spring, having likely spent the winter with European migrants in warm African climates.

Bird Migration IELTS Reading Questions

Questions 1-7

Seven paragraphs comprise the reading passage, from **A-G**.

From the list of headings below, pick the appropriate heading for each paragraph.

On the answer sheet, fill in boxes **1-7** with the proper number, **I-X**.

List of headings

- I. The best moment to migrate.
 - II. The unexplained rejection of closer feeding ground.
 - III. The influence of weather on the migration route.
 - IV. Physical characteristics that allow birds to migrate.
 - V. The main reason why birds migrate.
 - VI. The best wintering grounds for birds.
 - VII. Research findings on how birds migrate.
 - VIII. Successful migration despite the trouble of wind.
 - IX. The contrast between long-distance migration and short-distance migration.
 - X. Mysterious migration despite lack of teaching.
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- 1. Paragraph A
 - 2. Paragraph B
 - 3. Paragraph C
 - 4. Paragraph D
 - 5. Paragraph E
 - 6. Paragraph F
 - 7. Paragraph G

Questions 8 and 9

Pick **TWO** letters from **A-E**.

Fill in boxes **8** and **9** on the answer sheet with the appropriate letters.

Which **TWO** of the following claims about bird migration are true?

- A. Birds frequently fly farther than necessary.
- B. Birds that travel in families are secure.
- C. Nighttime bird flying requires less water.
- D. Compared to humans, birds have far sharper eyesight.
- E. Only migratory birds can withstand heavy winds.

Questions 10-13

Applying **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage, complete the sentences below.

Fill in boxes **10–13** on your answer sheet with your responses.

- 10. How juvenile birds like cuckoos can locate their wintering sites without _____ is a huge enigma.
- 11. There is proof that birds can determine directions like a _____ by looking at the sun and stars.
- 12. One benefit of nighttime flying for birds is that they can avoid _____ contact with.
- 13. According to laboratory testing, birds can sense weather without the _____ cues.

Bird Migration reading answers with explanation

The **Bird Migration reading answers** with explanations are given below.

(Note: The language highlighted in bold refers to the passage's location and answer. The explanatory sentences from the reading passage are shown in italics.)

1. IV

Answer Location: Paragraph A, Line 2.

Explanation: *The second line of the paragraph have clearly mentioned the physical traits of the birds that enable them to migrate and that are, “They have hollow, light-weight bones, intricately patterned feathers that provide thrust and lift for swift flight, navigation systems that are far superior to those created by humans, and a clever heat-conserving structure that, among other things, emphasises all blood circulation below layers of warm, water-resistant plumage, making them capable of surviving in the harshest climates.”*

2. V

Answer Location: Paragraph B, Line 1.

Explanation: *The paragraph clearly portrays that, “ Finding enough food during the winter, when it is scarce, is the primary driver behind bird migration. Hence, the main reason why birds migrate is illustrated.*

3. II

Answer Location: Paragraph C, Line 2.

Explanation: *The line clearly depicts that, “Nobody is sure why British swallows don't travel thousands of miles further to their preferred winter habitat in South Africa's Cape Province, despite the fact that they could certainly make it through the winter in equatorial Africa. The huge migrations performed by shorebirds that breed close to the poles and arctic terns that hunt on mudflats are still unresolved. In general, migrating species spend their winters farther south the further north they breed.” Thus, the Line means unexplained rejection of closer feeding ground.*

4. X

Answer Location: Paragraph D, Line 1.

Explanation: *The first line of the paragraph, “One of the biggest mysteries is how young birds, who don't have parental supervision, can find the typical wintering locations. Fewer people travel with young children, and occasionally kids don't even know what their parents seem like” depicts the information of mysterious migration despite lack of teaching.*

5. VII

Answer Location: Paragraph E, Line 1.

Explanation: *It is illustrated in the paragraph first line that, “There is growing proof that birds utilise the sun and stars' positions as compass directions. Additionally, they appear to be able to sense the earth's magnetic field, which*

is possibly because their brains contain tiny magnetite crystals". As here it is stated about research findings on how birds migrate.

6. I

Answer Location: Paragraph F, Line 5.

Explanation: *It is clearly mentioned in the paragraph, "Birds frequently respond to weather fluctuations before there is any outward evidence of them. Lapwings, which consume grassland, travel from the Netherlands to the British Isles, France, and Spain as a cold front approaches". Therefore, it is the best time to migrate.*

7. VIII

Answer Location: Paragraph G, Line 8.

Explanation: *In the paragraph it is stated that, "On the other hand, every autumn, a few North American birds are carried across the Atlantic by swift westerly tailwinds. They certainly make it to Europe without incident, however there is compelling evidence that some of them return to North America the following spring, having likely spent the winter with migrants from Europe in warm climates in Africa." Despite the difficulties caused by the wind, it demonstrated the effective bird migration.*

8. A

Answer Location: Paragraph C, Line 1.

Explanation: *It is illustrated in the text that, "Many birds go farther than would be necessary only to locate food and favourable weather, which is a curious reality." On this account, A is the correct answer, Birds frequently fly farther than necessary.*

9. C

Answer Location: Paragraph E, Last Line.

Explanation: *The passage's phrases paint a vivid picture that, "Additionally, the air is often calmer and cooler at night, which is perfect for stable, long-distance flight." As nighttime bird flying requires less water.*

10. Parental guidance

Answer Location: Paragraph D, Line 1.

Explanation: *The passage's phrases, "One of the biggest mysteries is how young birds, who don't have parental guidance, can find the typical wintering locations". Thus, a huge enigma for juvenile birds like cuckoos can locate their wintering sites is without Parental guidance.*

11. Compass

Answer Location: Paragraph E, Line 1.

Explanation: *The sentence reveals the information that, "There is growing proof that birds utilise the sun and stars' positions as compass directions." Therefore, the answer is that by looking at the sun and stars birds can determine directions like a compass. There is proof for this.*

12. *Predators*

Answer Location: Paragraph E, Second Last Line.

Explanation: *According to the paragraph one benefit of nighttime flying for birds is stated, that is, “Predators who hunt during the daylight hours are avoided, and there is less of the probability of being dehydrated from extended flight under hot, sunny sky.”*

13. *Visible*

Answer Location: Paragraph F, Line 5.

Explanation: *As per the paragraph, “Birds frequently respond to weather fluctuations before there is any visible sign of them”. According to laboratory testing, birds can sense weather without the visible cues.*