

RESOURCE LIBRARY

ACTIVITY : 1 HR 15 MINS

Why Animals Migrate

Students discuss reasons animals migrate. Then they watch video clips from the series *Great Migrations*, organize factual information about species, and compare and contrast two migratory species.

GRADES

5 - 8

SUBJECTS*Biology, Ecology, Geography, Physical Geography***CONTENTS**

2 PDFs, 4 Videos, 1 Link

OVERVIEW

Students discuss reasons animals migrate. Then they watch video clips from the series *Great Migrations*, organize factual information about species, and compare and contrast two migratory species.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/why-animals-migrate/>

Program



DIRECTIONS

1. Discuss reasons animals migrate.

Ask: *What do most animals need to survive?* List students' ideas on the board. Make sure students include air, water, food, and the ability to reproduce. Then ask students to think of one word that explains why animals migrate (survival). Ask: *Isn't it easier to stay where you are? What might cause a species to migrate?* Elicit answers from students such as: lack of food and/or water, harsh weather, and specific needs for mating/hatching. If possible, look at animal migration examples on the worksheet Match the Animal to its Migration Type, from the activity Many Moves of Migration.

2. Have students preview the worksheet Species That Migrate.

Divide students into six small groups. Distribute one copy of the worksheet Species that Migrate to each group. Read aloud the directions. As a class, preview the table by discussing the provided example for sockeye salmon. Answer any questions students may have. Tell students they will watch four video clips. Encourage them to listen for the type of information covered in the table as they watch each.

3. Watch a video clip from *Great Migrations* and have groups find additional facts.

Show students the video clip "Monarch Migration." Then have small groups identify migratory habits of the species in the clip, using the Animals A-Z feature on the National Geographic Animals website to find additional facts about each animal. Allow students enough time to complete the row for the monarch butterfly in the worksheet.

4. Repeat the process with three additional video clips.

Show students "Wildebeest Migration" and allow them time to refer to the National Geographic Animals website to find additional facts about wildebeest and complete that row. Repeat the same process for the video clips "Sperm Whale Gathering" and "Red Crab Eggs."

5. Have groups compare and contrast the migratory habits of two species.

Distribute one copy of the worksheet Compare and Contrast Migratory Species to each group. Assign each of the six groups a different pair of species to compare and contrast. Have groups complete the Venn diagram for their assigned species.

6. Have groups present their findings.

Draw a large Venn diagram on the board. Have each group present the information from their completed worksheets by writing facts on sticky notes and placing them correctly in the diagram. As a class, discuss each group's species using the discussion questions provided on the worksheet.

Informal Assessment

Have small groups combine to form three larger groups. Challenge the groups to write every reason they can think of that a species might migrate; for example, to find a mate, because of a diminished food source, drought, flooding, volcanic activity, destruction of habitat, human presence in a habitat, an earthquake, seasonal changes, overpopulation of an area, or pollution. Then have each group read their list of reasons. Judge whether or not each reason is valid. If another group has the same reason, have all groups cross it off the list. Each group gets one point per reason that no other group wrote. After all three groups have read their reasons, tally the points.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Biology

- Ecology

Geography

- Physical Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- explain why animals migrate
- organize factual information about migratory animals based on videos and Internet research
- compare and contrast two migratory species

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Cooperative learning
- Discussions
- Information organization
- Multimedia instruction

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Analyzing
 - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - Acquiring Geographic Information
 - Analyzing Geographic Information
 - Organizing Geographic Information

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 3:

How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

- (5-8) Standard C-1:

Structure and function in living systems

- (5-8) Standard C-3:

Regulation and behavior

- (5-8) Standard C-4:

Populations and ecosystems

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Completed worksheets from previous activity
- Pencils
- Pens
- Sticky notes

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per small group, Projector, Speakers
- Plug-Ins: Flash

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction
- Small-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Animal migration is the large-scale movement of a species from one place to another. Most species migrate during specific seasons, in search of food or water, or for mating reasons.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- [Animal Navigation](#)
- [Internal and External Migration Cues](#)
- [Many Moves of Migration](#)

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
animal migration	<i>noun</i>	process where a community of animals leaves a habitat for part of the year or part of their lives, and moves to habitats that are more hospitable.
migrate	<i>verb</i>	to move from one place or activity to another.
reproduce	<i>verb</i>	to create offspring, by sexual or asexual means.
species	<i>noun</i>	group of similar organisms that can reproduce with each other.
survive	<i>verb</i>	to live.
weather	<i>noun</i>	state of the atmosphere, including temperature, atmospheric pressure, wind, humidity, precipitation, and cloudiness.

For Further Exploration

Articles & Profiles

- [National Geographic Magazine: Animal Migrations](#)

Audio & Video

- [National Geographic Channel: Stalking Whales](#)
- [National Geographic Channel: Red Crab Marathon](#)

Interactives

- [National Geographic Animals: Migrations Quiz](#)
- [National Geographic Channel: Great Migrations—3D Animal Migration Globe](#)

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