All About Migrations!



# Topic

* Ecology and Animals

# Objective

* Learn about where, why and how animals migrate.
* Be creative, and hands-on in practicing geographical thinking.
* Encourage students to think critically about animal movements.

## Environmental Education Activity

# Age/Grade Range

* Age 10-15

# Group Size

* Large group activity (15-30 students)

# Time

* Set-up: 5-10 minutes
* Activity: 30 minutes

# Materials

* Devices with access to Internet
* A projector (optional)
* Handouts: blank map of the world, or large flipchart paper for small group activity

# Set Up

1. Bring up the National Geographic map (link below) on the projector, so it is ready to go.
2. Ensure you have enough map handouts for the class.
3. You may want to write out some migration descriptions on the board as examples.

# Delivery Tips

* This is best run with at least two facilitators

# Activity Directions

1. As a class, explore this interactive map of bird migrations in North America published by National Geographic: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/hires/1979-bird-migration-in-the-americas-map/>
   1. Although it doesn’t include all birds, it does offer an excellent perspective on the scope of bird migrations in the Americas.
   2. Try to track a few of the bird species across their entire migration. Choose species that migrate to the NWT, or at least Northern Canada.
2. Spit into small groups and have students draw their own migration map, including animal paths that they know or can look up on the Internet. This can be done on individual map handouts or in a large group on chart paper.
   1. Students will need to discover where various animals migrate to and from, and then draw arrows on their map to mark the routes.
   2. You may want to give them a list of migrating species in the NWT, like ptarmigan and barren ground caribou, as examples to get them started. Try to cover a variety of migrations (long-distance, alpine, overland, flying, marine, etc.)
   3. They can draw a picture of each animal along their respective routes.
   4. Alternatively, have students add their own migration paths, or the paths of their family.

# Questions/Points of Discussion

* Why do some animals move around while others don’t?
* Think about why people move, what pressures have influenced the movements of humans and other animals in the past
* How do the growing effects of climate change influence these movements into the future.

# Modifications

* If students do not have access to computers/internet, you can run this activity by providing handouts with descriptions of the migrations that they can then try to draw as lines on their map. You do the research ahead of time, but they still have to try to interpret your descriptions and put their understanding of geography to use.
* Find more activity ideas and information about bird migration from the United States National Environmental Education Foundation:

<https://www.neefusa.org/nature/plants-and-animals/important-message-birds>

<https://www.neefusa.org/resource/animal-migration-activity-guide>