

THE ENIGMATIC SKILL OF ANIMALS

- 1 One of the most mysterious things in nature is the ability of certain creatures to find their way home, sometimes from great distances. Birds are not the only ones who can do this. Bees, eels, and salmon are able to return to a particular place after long journeys, too.
- 2 Most migrations take place between breeding grounds and regions where animals feed. For some animals, such as the lemming, the move is a one-way trip. Some scientists call this movement *emigration*, because these animals never return to their homes. For other animals, such as birds, the migration includes a return trip home. Birds move in *periodic migrations*, or at regular times during their lives, and often to the same place year after year.
- 3 Many experiments have been made with birds in an attempt to find out what guides them on their way home. In one case, seven swallows were taken 400 miles from home. When they were set free, five of them returned to their nests. In another case, a certain kind of sea bird was taken from its nest off the Welsh coast to Venice by plane. When it was released, it made its way home to its nest, a distance of 930 miles if it flew in a straight line.
- 4 Migrating birds offer an even more amazing example of **this ability**. There are swifts and house martins that migrate from England to South Africa every year. They not only return to England the next spring, but many of them come back to nest in every same house where they nested the year before. They fly the incredible distance of 6,000 miles, one way.
- 5 Certain types of butterflies migrate, too, and find their way home over long distances. In the tropics one can sometimes see great mass flights of butterflies all flying steadily in one direction. They may go a thousand miles and more and then return again in another season.
- 6 Despite all the efforts that have been made to explain how these creatures find their way home, we still have no sure explanation. Since many of the birds fly over great bodies of water, we can't explain it by saying they use landmarks to guide them. Just to say they have an "instinct" doesn't really explain the right conditions. The reason they do it may be to obtain food or to reproduce under the right conditions. But the **signals** and guideposts they use on their flights are still a mystery to man.

TRACE READING EXERCISE

1. What does this text mainly discuss?
 - A) How migratory creatures find their way home
 - B) Popular places for migration
 - C) The emigration patterns of butterflies

2. According to paragraph II, the main difference between animal *emigration* and animal *migration* is ---.
 - A) the breeding places
 - B) the route taken
 - C) the final destination

3. In paragraph IV the phrase "**this ability**" refers to ---.
 - A) the ability to fly without stopping
 - B) the ability to build nests year after year
 - C) the ability to find their way home

4. The word "**signal**" in paragraph VI is closest in meaning to ---.
 - A) indications
 - B) instincts
 - C) radar

5. According to the text, swallow travelling from South Africa to England ---.
 - A) cover a relatively short distance
 - B) often return to precisely the same point each year
 - C) rebuild the same type of nest in similar locations each spring

ANSWER KEY: 1A 2C 3C 4A 5B

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