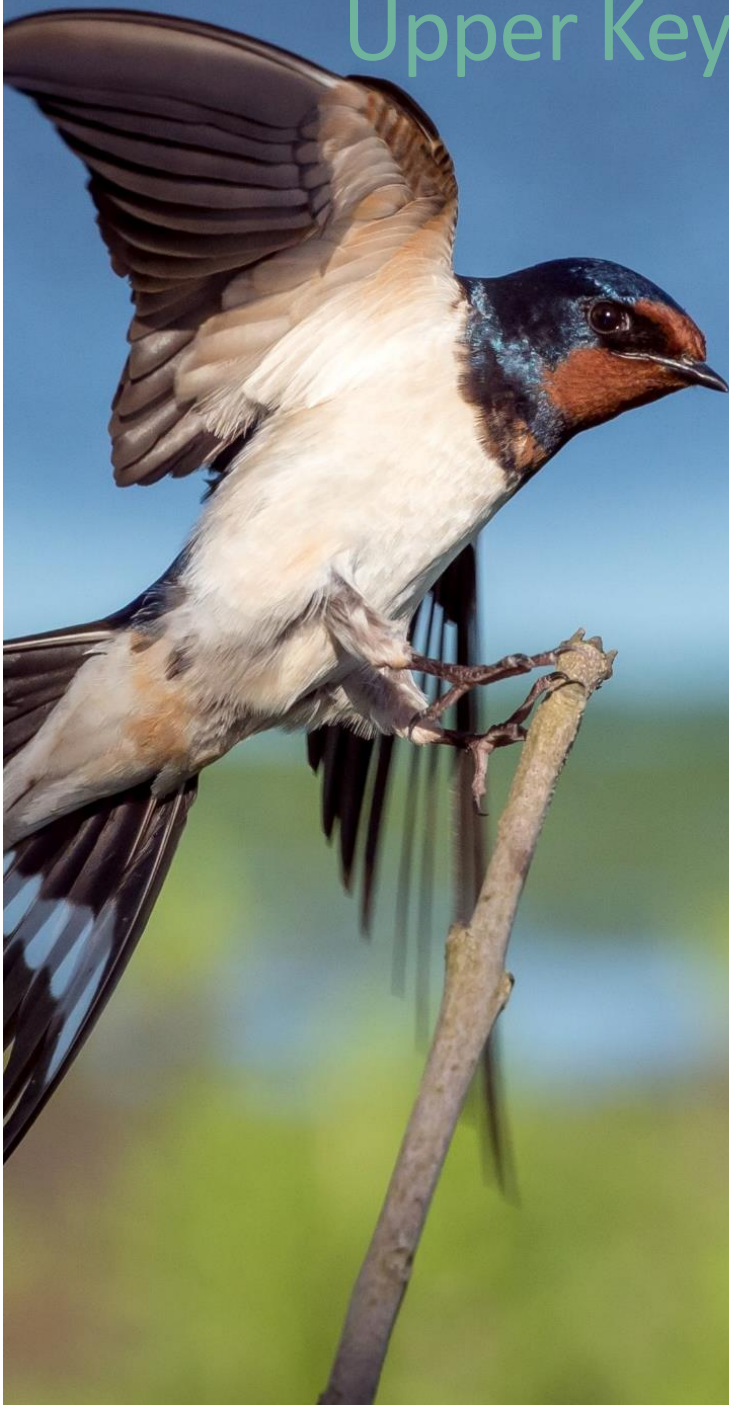


Topic based resource

Global Citizenship

Upper Key Stage 2



Eco-Schools



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

15 LIFE
ON LAND



cadwch keep
gymru'n wales
daclus tidy

Background information

Swallows are seen as an important sign of Spring in the UK. This is the same in South Africa so if the swallows die out here, we will lose this, but so will the South Africans.

Bird migrations have long been a source of mystery. For a long time, it was believed that when some bird species disappeared in the winter they were hibernating in trees. It was only by ringing birds that their long journey was discovered. The reasons behind the long migration are still slightly mysterious but it is felt that the swallows fly south for the abundance of insects available. The 6000-mile journey has become more and more perilous though, as human activity has started to play more of a part. The birds now must avoid tall buildings, people who wish to trap them for food, and a decreasing environment as land is developed, as well as oil rigs and lighthouses, the lights of which they are drawn to causing injury and death. This means that swallow numbers are dropping. It is important children realise that this is a global problem - each step of the journey has its own problem and each country they pass through has different dangers. If the swallows are lost due to hazards in one country, then they are lost to us all.



Climate perspective

Climate change is causing significant problems for swallows. The weather is becoming less predictable meaning that swallows are staying in the UK longer for the warmer autumn but then when they begin their journey they are caught out by cold spells over the Pyrenees as the winter brings icy weather and unpredictable storms. Climate change and over grazing is also affecting

the Sahara Desert meaning that it is becoming wider and the journey across it longer. Since there is no food available to the swallows whilst flying across the Sahara they are starving to death before they can make it across. If climate change continues at this rate it could be devastating to swallow numbers.

Swallow Migration Game

Upper KS2

How far can you fly?

The aim of this activity is to show the difficulties swallows face during their migration. There are many different dangers they will encounter as they cross different countries and cultures. The children will take different roles in the game with some being the swallows migrating and others representing the dangers, who will try to stop them.

Materials needed

- Country pictures
- Distance cards
- Swallow masks (if desired)
- Markers (could be cones or hoops)
- Swallow fact card



Step 1

Lay out the country cards around your space in order, trying to space them out roughly according to distance e.g. the distance between Cardiff and the Pyrenees (643miles) should be smaller than that between Malaga and Marrakesh (1155 miles). See the distance card for information.

Show the photograph of the swallow and explain how the swallow lives in the UK for the summer and nests here but then as the weather cools it migrates to South Africa. This is a journey of about 6000 miles which they usually complete in less than two weeks. In both the UK and South Africa, they are thought of as an important sign of spring.

Step 2

Divide the class into groups.

- Group 1 = Swallows. Their role is to fly from the UK to South Africa safely.
- Group 2 = Pesticides on crops – this group pretend to be insects (who have eaten crops with pesticides on) if they touch a swallow then it is out.

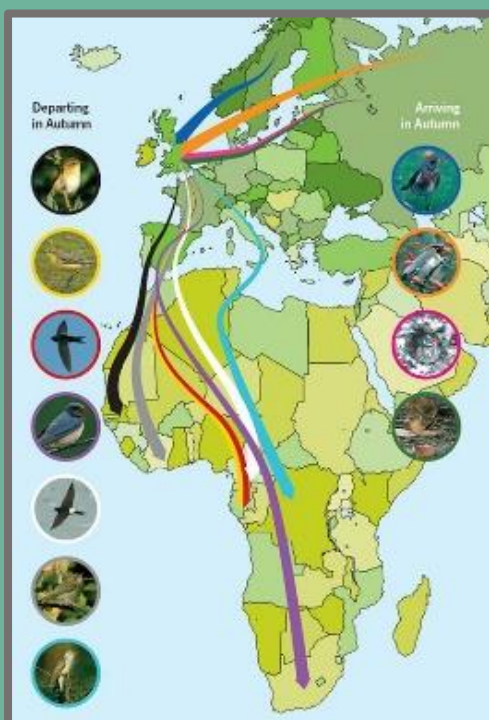
- Group 3= Bad weather across the Pyrenees – they should pretend to be the wind by blowing or the icy temperatures pretending to shiver. If they touch the swallows as they pass that swallow is out.
- Group 4 = Lighthouses and oil rigs along the coasts of Spain and North Africa – they should stand still but can wave their arms to catch swallows as they go past.
- Group 5 = Sahara Desert – Children stand in a line with their arms extended and the swallows must weave through. If it takes a swallow more than 10 seconds to get through (this time can be changed to make the games easier or harder) then they are deemed to have run out of energy supplies and are out.
- Group 6 = Humans trapping the birds for food in Central Africa – stand at the side and then run in to catch a swallow and take them off.

Step 3

Tell the swallows they must fly around the playground in a flock to get from the UK to South Africa avoiding hazards on the way. If they are affected by a hazard they are out. Add in groups/hazards gradually so that the children understand that the journey is becoming more difficult meaning that swallow numbers are diminishing. Maybe start with pesticides and bad weather.



Step 4



Discussion – Here are some questions you could pose to the group to get them thinking about how actions in this country can affect other countries.

- Why do birds go on such dangerous journeys?
- If the swallows are poisoned by pesticide while they are in the UK what effect will it have in South Africa?
- What can we do to help protect the swallows?

Step 5

Ask the children to think about the journey that the swallows undertake and the things they might see on the journey. In small groups they need to make up a story of a swallow travelling from Wales to South Africa and the adventures they have. They can then act out this story for the other groups.



Curriculum Links

Area of Learning and Experience - Humanities

Statement of what matters:

Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.

Area of Learning and Experience - Science and Technology

Statement of what matters:

The world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival.

Next steps and other ideas

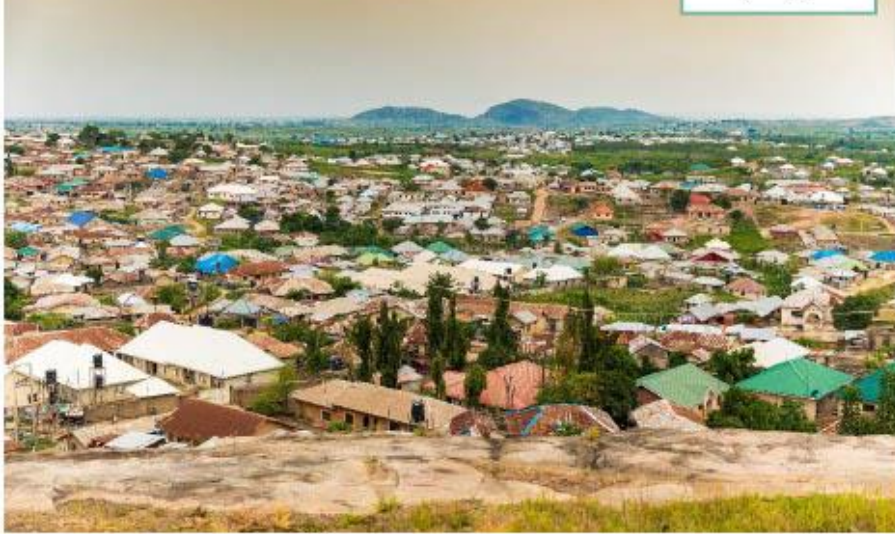
- Research the threats that swallows face further.
- Choose another different bird that migrates and investigate their journeys.

Websites that could help with this:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/natures-home-magazine/birds-and-wildlife-articles/migration/>

<https://www.bto.org/understanding-birds/articles/bird-migration-masterclass>

Abuja - Nigeria



Marrakesh - Morocco



Cardiff - Wales



Céret – French
Pyrenees



Kinshasa – DRC via
Rainforests



Crossing the Sahara
Desert to get to Timbuktu



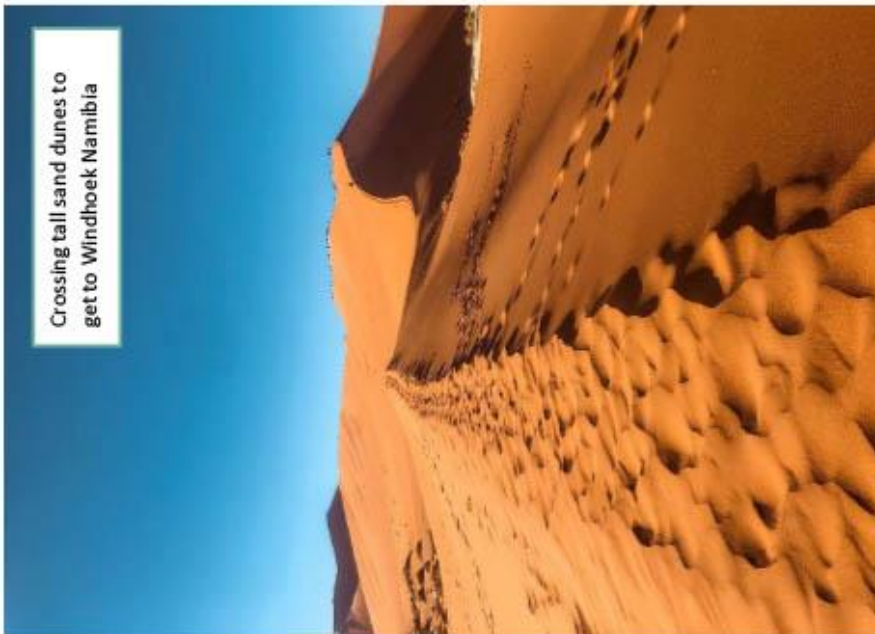
Yaounde - Cameroon



Málaga - Spain



Crossing tall sand dunes to
get to Windhoek Namibia



Cape of Good Hope



Swallow Migration Route

Journey		Distance	Danger
Wales (Cardiff)	Pyrenees (Céret)	680	Pesticides
Pyrenees (Céret)	Spain (Málaga)	551	Bad Weather
Spain (Málaga)	Morocco (Marrakesh)	1155	Lighthouses and Oil rigs
Morocco (Marrakesh)	Timbuktu (Mali)	2531	Sahara Desert
Timbuktu (Mali)	Abuja (Nigeria)	884	
Abuja (Nigeria)	Yaounde (Cameroon)	453	Caught for food
Yaounde (Cameroon)	Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo)	622	
Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo)	Windhoek (Namibia)	1323	Tall sand dunes
Windhoek (Namibia)	Cape of Good Hope	818	

Swallow Facts

Length: 17-19cm

Wingspan: 32-35cm

Weight: 16-25g

Diet: small flying insects caught on the wing

Migration Distance 6000 miles

Flight speed 20-30mph



cadwch keep
gymru'n wales
daclus tidy

33-35 Heol yr Eglwys Gadeiriol, Caerdydd, CF11 9HB | 33-35 Cathedral Rd, Cardiff, CF11 9HB
029 2025 6767 keepwalestidy.cymru info@keepwalestidy.cymru

Cadwch Gymru'n Daclus yn gwmni wedi ei gyfyngu trwy warant. Rhif Cwmni: 4011164 Rhif Elusen: 1082058 Rhif TAW: 850 3958 13
Keep Wales Tidy is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Company Registration Number: 4011164 Charity Registration Number: 1082058 VAT Registration Number: 850 3958 13

