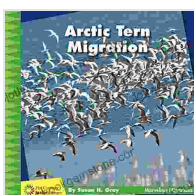


Arctic Tern Migration: The Longest Journey on Earth



The Arctic tern is the undisputed champion of long-distance migration. These birds travel up to 49,000 miles each year, from their breeding grounds in the Arctic to their wintering grounds in the Antarctic. This epic journey takes them across the globe and through some of the most extreme environments on Earth.



Arctic Tern Migration (21st Century Junior Library: Marvelous Migrations) by Susan H. Gray

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1554 KB



Arctic terns are medium-sized seabirds with a wingspan of about 30 inches. They have a distinctive black cap, white underparts, and gray wings. Arctic terns are found in all oceans around the world, but they breed only in the Arctic. During the breeding season, Arctic terns form colonies on islands and coastal areas. The female lays two or three eggs, which are incubated by both parents. The chicks hatch after about 24 days and are able to fly within a few weeks.

In late summer, Arctic terns begin their long migration to the Antarctic. They fly south along the coastlines of Europe, Africa, and South America. They then cross the Southern Ocean to Antarctica. Arctic terns spend the winter in the Antarctic, where they feed on krill and other small marine animals. In March, Arctic terns begin their return migration to the Arctic. They fly north along the same route they took in the fall. The entire migration takes about four months.

Arctic terns are able to make this epic journey thanks to their incredible endurance and their ability to navigate. Arctic terns use the sun and stars to navigate, and they can fly for days without resting. They are also able to store fat, which provides them with the energy they need for their long journey.

The Arctic tern's migration is one of the most amazing feats of nature. These birds travel farther than any other animal on Earth, and they do it year after year. Arctic terns are a testament to the incredible power of life.

Why Do Arctic Terns Migrate?

There are a few reasons why Arctic terns migrate. First, they migrate to find food. The Arctic is a harsh environment, and there is not enough food for Arctic terns to survive year-round. By migrating to the Antarctic, Arctic terns can access a more abundant food supply.

Second, Arctic terns migrate to avoid predators. Arctic terns are preyed upon by a variety of animals, including foxes, owls, and skuas. By migrating to the Antarctic, Arctic terns can escape these predators.

Finally, Arctic terns migrate to find a suitable breeding ground. Arctic terns need islands or coastal areas to breed. These areas are not available in the Arctic during the winter, so Arctic terns must migrate to find a suitable breeding ground.

The Challenges of Arctic Tern Migration

Arctic tern migration is a challenging journey. Arctic terns must fly across vast oceans and through extreme weather conditions. They must also navigate their way to their destination. Arctic terns face a number of challenges during their migration, including:

- **Predators:** Arctic terns are preyed upon by a variety of animals, including foxes, owls, and skuas. Arctic terns must be constantly vigilant for predators, and they must be able to escape if they are attacked.
- **Weather:** Arctic terns must fly through a variety of weather conditions during their migration, including storms, rain, and snow. Arctic terns

must be able to withstand these conditions, and they must be able to find food and shelter if they are forced to land.

- **Navigation:** Arctic terns must navigate their way to their destination. Arctic terns use the sun and stars to navigate, and they must be able to make course corrections if they are blown off course. Arctic terns must also be able to find food and shelter if they are lost.

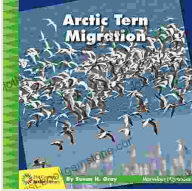
The Importance of Arctic Tern Migration

Arctic tern migration is important for a number of reasons. First, Arctic tern migration helps to distribute nutrients around the world. Arctic terns eat krill and other small marine animals in the Antarctic. When Arctic terns migrate back to the Arctic, they bring these nutrients with them. This helps to fertilize the Arctic ecosystem and support a variety of other animals.

Second, Arctic tern migration helps to control populations of krill and other small marine animals. Arctic terns are a major predator of krill. By eating krill, Arctic terns help to keep krill populations in check. This helps to maintain a healthy balance in the marine ecosystem.

Third, Arctic tern migration is a valuable source of information for scientists. By studying Arctic tern migration, scientists can learn more about the Arctic and Antarctic ecosystems. Scientists can also learn more about the effects of climate change on these ecosystems. Arctic tern migration is a fascinating phenomenon that is important for a number of reasons. Arctic terns are a resilient species that has adapted to the challenges of migration. These birds are a testament to the incredible power of life.

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Marvelous Migrations)** by Susan H. Gray

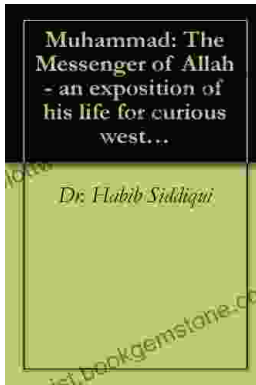


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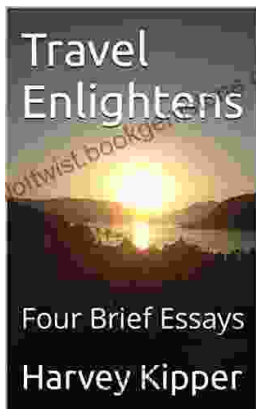
File size : 1554 KB

Print length: 13 pages



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