

Cuckoo completes epic 12,000km migration

29th May, 2020



Image: Mongolia Cuckoo Project

A cuckoo has just completed one of the longest migrations ever recorded by any bird. The cuckoo left its winter home in Zambia in Southern Africa on March the 20th and has arrived at its

breeding ground in Mongolia. Ornithologists named the bird Onon after a Mongolian river. They tagged five different cuckoos in Mongolia with microchips last summer to track their migration. The satellite tags monitored the progress of the birds across the Indian Ocean and 16 countries. Onon was the quickest of the five birds to make the return journey from Mongolia to Zambia and back. The ornithologists hailed Onon's feat and described it as being "a mammoth journey".

The tagging of the birds was a joint venture between the Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia and the British Trust for Ornithology. It was facilitated by the group Birding Beijing and the Oriental Bird Club. A special blog called the Mongolia Cuckoo Project was set up so bird lovers could track the birds' progress. It reported that Onon arrived home, "as of 15:30 local time on May 27, 2020 after a round trip of about 26,000km, including 27 border crossings involving 16 countries." It called the journey: "Remarkable navigation and endurance." It added: "Onon has no time to waste as he needs to set up his territory, defend it from competing males and mate with as many females as possible."

Sources: bbc.com / sciencetimes.com / birdingbeijing.com

Writing

Everybody should go on a 26,000km journey once in their life. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

cuckoo / migration / bird / breeding / ornithologist / microchips / mammoth / journey / venture / science / conservation / club / blog / progress / round trip / endurance

True / False

- a) A cuckoo has completed the longest migration ever by a bird. T / F
- b) The cuckoo flew from Zanzibar to Outer Mongolia. T / F
- c) A total of five cuckoos were tagged and tracked by ornithologists. T / F
- d) The ornithologists said the cuckoos' feet were like a mammoth's feet. T / F
- e) The tagging project was done by Mongolian, UK and Chinese bird lovers. T / F
- f) There was a blog called the Mongolia Cuckoo Tracker. T / F
- g) The cuckoo flew across 27 borders. T / F
- h) Scientists said the cuckoo must now try to breed with many females. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. recorded | a. project |
| 2. named | b. achievement |
| 3. track | c. documented |
| 4. feat | d. area |
| 5. mammoth | e. breed |
| 6. venture | f. called |
| 7. facilitated | g. tolerance |
| 8. endurance | h. epic |
| 9. territory | i. assisted |
| 10. mate | j. follow |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you know about Zambia?
- c) How interested are you in looking at wildlife?
- d) Where would you go if you travelled to 16 countries?
- e) Would you like to go on a 26,000km journey?
- f) How much endurance do you have?
- g) What do you think of wasting time?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. one of the longest migrations ever | a. ground |
| 2. breeding | b. journey |
| 3. monitored the progress | c. and endurance |
| 4. The ornithologists hailed | d. lovers |
| 5. described it as being a mammoth | e. of the birds |
| 6. bird | f. females as possible |
| 7. 27 border | g. competing males |
| 8. remarkable navigation | h. recorded |
| 9. defend it from | i. crossings |
| 10. mate with as many | j. Onon's feat |

Discussion – Student B

- What is your favourite bird, and why?
- What do you think of migration?
- Where would you migrate to if you could?
- What do you know about Mongolia?
- Would you rather visit Mongolia or Zambia?
- What do you think of ornithology?
- What river would you like to be named after?
- What was the biggest journey you have ever been on?

Spelling

- the longest migrations ever reocerdd
- arrived at its ebdgrnei ground
- They atdgge five different cuckoos
- monitored the gsoerpsr of the birds
- make the return yrojneu
- described it as being a ommtahm journey
- The tagging of the birds was a joint rtveeun
- It was afilcettiad by the group
- Remarkable vatgninaoi and endurance
- he needs to set up his rotyirre
- ednedf it from competing males
- as many emaelfs as possible

Answers – Synonym Match

1. c	2. f	3. j	4. b	5. h
6. a	7. i	8. g	9. d	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Ornithology

You think ornithology is the most interesting ~ology. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ~ologies. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these ~ologies (and why): virology, psychology or etymology.

Role B – Virology

You think virology is the most interesting ~ology. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ~ologies. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these ~ologies (and why): ornithology, psychology or etymology.

Role C – Psychology

You think psychology is the most interesting ~ology. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ~ologies. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these ~ologies (and why): virology, ornithology or etymology.

Role D – Etymology

You think etymology is the most interesting ~ology. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ~ologies. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these ~ologies (and why): virology, psychology or ornithology.

Speaking – Ornithology

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ~ologies at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| • Virology | • Ornithology |
| • Pathology | • Biology |
| • Zoology | • Epidemiology |
| • Etymology | • Psychology |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.