

Text 1

Narrator: The seasonal movement of animals is a fascinating part of the natural environment. You have probably heard of birds flying away for the winter. However, did you know that many insects, fish, and mammals — from small butterflies to giant whales — also travel between one habitat and another depending on the time of year? This long-distance movement on a seasonal basis is known as animal migration.

Animals, including birds, migrate for various reasons. Often, they migrate before winter to warmer countries, before returning to their original home in spring and summer. They migrate in search of better food, or to find a safe place for their young ones. How do they know when to migrate? Different signals such as a change in weather, the length of the days, or the availability of food may signal to animals that it is time to move.

Across air, water, and land — animals find their way over long and complex routes. Scientists are yet to fully understand how they do this. However, researchers believe that birds and some other animal species have a kind of internal compass. The animals use this internal compass to navigate, in combination with external signals, such as the sun, stars, or landmarks like mountains and rivers.

Some animals migrate thousands of kilometres. Let's look at some examples. The longest migration of any animal is that of the Arctic tern. These birds make an annual round trip of approximately 40 000 kilometres from Greenland to Antarctica and back. In the ocean, the record for the longest ocean migration belongs to the gray whale, which travels an average 22 000 kilometres each year. On land, North American reindeer, or caribou, have the longest migration — a 1200 kilometre annual return journey.

Migration often means that animals are travelling through human habitats. How can humans help migrating animals in an increasingly urban world? In some areas, tunnels and bridges have been built to help animals get across roads safely. Bright lights can confuse or disturb migrating animals, but we can reduce light pollution to stop this. One way is to install streetlights that tightly focus light only where it is needed and not into unwanted areas. Around our neighbourhoods, we can also create protected areas of bushland and vegetation to help animals with nesting or feeding. Finally, we can restrict or carefully control new developments, like houses and roads, so that we do not disturb the areas that are visited by animals along their migratory routes.

Text 3

Speaker: Good morning, staff and fellow students.

The Year 12 fundraising committee has decided that we want to raise money for a good cause by holding a casual clothes day on Wombat Day on 22 October. On this day, we won't wear our uniforms to school, and we will bring a donation for the opportunity of wearing our everyday clothing instead. Why raise money to help wombats? Well, the wombat is a key Australian animal which is facing increasing threats from habitat loss, disease, and other factors.

Wombats are the closest relative to the koala, and they are amazing animals. Furry and short, they walk with a waddle. However, when they need to, they can run at 40 kilometres per hour — fast enough to beat the men's sprint world record over 100 metres. They are also surprisingly good at jumping, with some known to have cleared fences one-metre high.

They protect themselves by digging large networks of burrows, which offer shelter to other animals during bushfire season.

However wombats themselves are facing serious environmental threats. Their habitat is shrinking as trees are cut down and more houses are built. They also face the risk of mange, a skin disease that can affect their fur and even their sight and hearing.

In some parts of Tasmania, populations of wombats have been significantly impacted by mange and subsequent illness. Luckily, this horrible condition is treatable with your generous support. The medication to treat mange is expensive, but our fundraiser will make sure that volunteers have the right equipment to treat affected animals.

The money we raise on our casual clothes day will also help with further research into the issue. It will fund the rehabilitation and conservation work done to help wombats survive. Your money will go towards rebuilding safe places for wombats to live when their habitat and food sources are destroyed by human activity. Your money will help volunteers look after adorable, cute baby wombats, who need to learn how to survive in the wild.

We hope by raising awareness here at school that you might keep learning more about these lovable creatures and think about how else we can protect their homes.

All native Australian animals need protection and a decent quality of life where their habitat is preserved. So, what are you waiting for? Remember to wear casual clothes on 22 October and bring a generous donation to help our wandering, wild friends — the wombats! Thank you.