



A Barefoot
Discussion
Guide

Follow the Flyway: The Marvel of Bird Migration Discussion Guide

By Sarah Nelson

BEFORE READING...

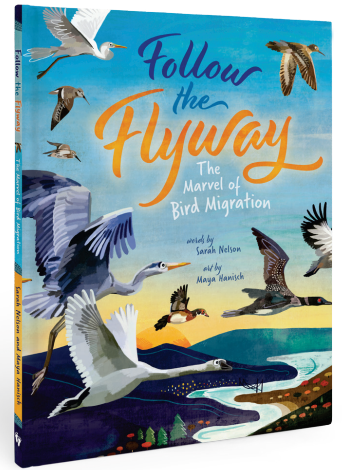
Explore the book cover. Do you recognize any of these birds? Where do you think the birds are going? Read the title together. What do you already know about bird migration? Do you have any guesses about what a “flyway” is?

EXPLORING THE STORY AND PICTURES...

- Look at the first pages. Where do the birds make their nest and lay their eggs?
- How many nests can you find? How many eggs?
- After hatching, what things do the baby birds need to learn to do? Why?
- How do the birds in the story know that it is time to fly south?
- How do the birds find their way while they are traveling?
- Why do you think the birds like following and stopping at the river?
- What other adventures do the birds have along their journey?
- Why do you think the birds stay in the south for the winter?

EXPLORING THE BACK MATTER...

- What is migration? Why do birds migrate?
- Why do some birds like to travel in flocks?
- What are three ways that birds navigate their long journeys?
- What are habitats? What kinds of habitats do birds like? Why?
- What is a flyway? Why do birds follow flyways?
- Look at the map of the four North American flyways (or look online for global flyway routes). Find the region where you live. Which flyway route do birds in your area follow?
- Explore the twelve featured bird species on the final pages. Can you find each of these birds within the story? Can you find their babies?
- What is one cool fact you learned about baby birds?
- What is something exciting you discovered about how birds fly?



Follow the Flyway

Written by Sarah Nelson
Illustrated by Maya Hanisch



Illustration © Maya Hanisch
from *Follow the Flyway*



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Follow the Flyway: The Marvel of Bird Migration Playing with Language

By Sarah Nelson

WHAT IS POETRY?

Poetry is a kind of writing that plays with the sounds and rhythms of words. The story of *Follow the Flyway* is written in poetry and plays with words and sounds in many different ways.

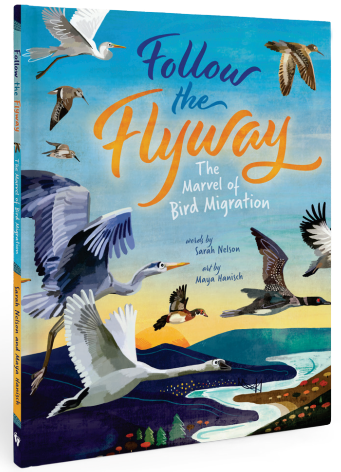
WHAT IS ONOMATOPOEIA?

Follow the Flyway uses **onomatopoeia**—one very fun way of playing with words in poems and stories. Onomatopoeia is a word that names a noise and also *sounds like* the noise. Beep, fizz, quack and meow are examples of onomatopoeia that we hear all the time.

In *Follow the Flyway*, several bird calls are written in onomatopoeia. The Great Blue Heron says, “Grronk!” A Trumpeter Swan calls, “Hoop! Hoop!” These are made-up words that sound kind of like the real birds do. Can you find more bird calls and other onomatopoeia in the book?

Onomatopoeia in Action

Invent a funny bird call onomatopoeia of your own. Think of a bird you know from your neighborhood or region. What kind of sound does it make? Go outside and listen if you can. Try to mimic the sound. What letters would help you make that sound? Use those letters to create your own word (or a grown-up can help you). Then draw a picture of your bird and insert your onomatopoeia.



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WHAT IS ALLITERATION?

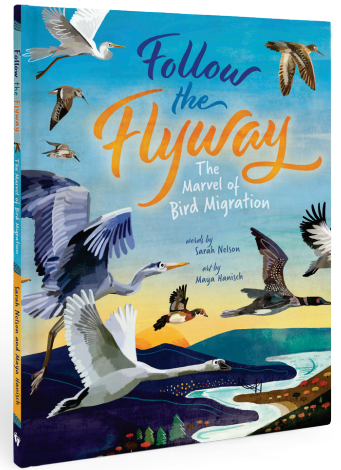
Alliteration is another way that *Follow the Flyway* plays with words. Alliteration is created when words with the same beginning letter are placed near one another. Out loud, these repeated letter sounds are musical to our ears. Here is an example of alliteration from the book.

“And eventually, always... / **feathers fill** in, / wings **unfurl** / and every baby learns to **fly!**”

Do these fun, fluttery lines make you want to flap your wings?

Alliteration in Action

Read *Follow the Flyway* again and listen for alliteration. There is a lot! Wiggle your fingers and toes when you think you hear it. Then pause and listen again. What letter sound is repeated? If you are in a small group, can you spot that letter on the page? If you are in a large group, draw the letter together in the air. Say or listen to the lines again. How do the sounds make you feel? Silly? Slow and dreamy? Excited?



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Follow the Flyway: The Marvel of Bird Migration Outdoor Inquiries

By Sarah Nelson

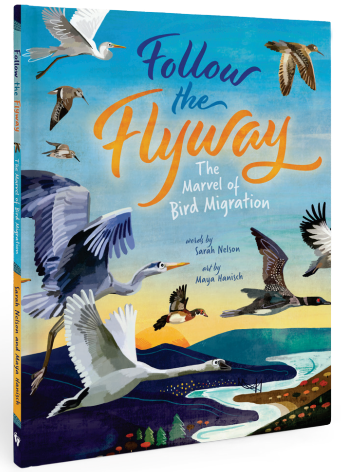
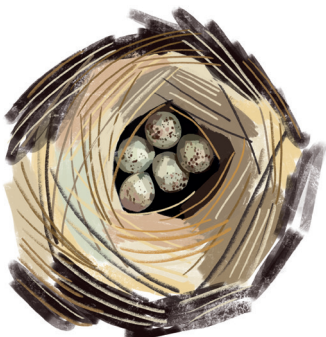
THINK LIKE A BIRD

Take a walk around your neighborhood or a favorite local park. Where do you see or hear birds? Use your eyes, ears and imagination to help you think like a bird.

- If you were a bird, where would you build a nest? What materials could you use to make your nest? Look for grasses, reeds, twigs, mud, mosses...
- If you were a bird, what kind of food could you eat? Do you see any nuts, seeds, berries or fruits? Where could you hunt insects or fish?
- If you were a bird, where would you find water? Is there a pond or lake where birds swim? Is there a bird bath or fountain where birds clean their feathers?
- If you were a bird, where would you hide from bigger animals, like foxes or snapping turtles? Where could you take a quiet nap? Where would you like to fly?

BIRDING TIPS

If you want to see and hear more birds in your region, do some reading and thinking about the best local bird habitats. Places with water and plenty of vegetation are likely homes for birds. Head outside in the morning or early evening when birds are most active. Take binoculars if you can. Walk quietly or sit patiently in a safe, comfortable spot and wait for the birds to find you.



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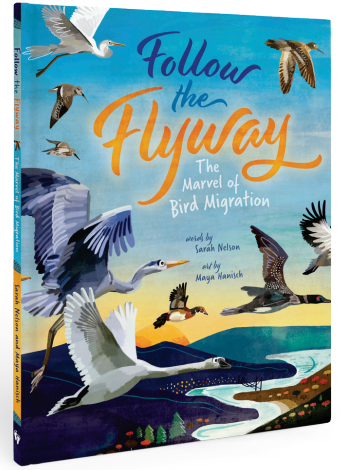
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IDENTIFYING BIRDS

If you and your kids would like to learn to identify specific bird species, Jane Yolen and Adam Stemple's *Crow Not Crow* method of bird identification is perfect for the littlest birders. The Audubon's *Birding Adventures for Kids* is a great first field guide. Many bird enthusiasts also enjoy using a birding app like eBird or Merlin.

FOR MORE IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES...

- Audubon for Kids | <https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/activities/audubon-for-kids>
- The Cornell Lab: K-12 Education | <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/>



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Across the cool, green north in springtime,
nests are crafted, cushioned, hidden
among the trees, between the reeds
in marshes, bogs, and sandy beaches.

Then mamas lay
their pretty eggs
and nestle softly on them.



Follow the Flyway Coloring Sheet

Illustration © Maya Hanisch



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