



Cuckoo km



What is a cuckoo?

- Cuckoos are dove-sized birds.
- They lay eggs in the nests of other birds. The other birds think the new egg is theirs, so they feed the chick when it hatches and until it leaves the nest.

Photo: A cuckoo.

Cuckoo Migrates Massive 26,000km

How far would you journey for your favourite meal? Well, one cuckoo travelled an epic 26,000km! That is like flying from London to New York about five times.

Scientists have been following cuckoos in Mongolia. One bird they watched made a **round trip** of 26,000km against all the odds.

Scientists in Mongolia, collected four cuckoos. They put tags on the birds. This allowed them to track where the birds travelled using a **satellite**.

They asked children at a local school to name the birds and follow where they flew.

The schoolchildren decided to call one of the birds Onon. They named it after a nearby river.

Onon set off on his journey in June last year. From Mongolia, he flew all the way to Zambia, in southern Africa. That was a distance of 12,000km.

Because the cuckoo travelled such a long way, the team were not sure Onon would survive the journey back. He had to fly long distances in bad weather and avoid **predators**.

Luckily, he winged his way back in May this year. On his journey, he travelled through 16 countries.

So, why do cuckoos travel so far? Well, according to Chris Hewson, one of the researchers on the project, they are following their stomachs.

Cuckoos like to feast on caterpillars. These can be found in warm, wet **climates**. This is the climate in Mongolia during the summer. When the weather changes, they fly to where the weather will provide more caterpillars, such as India and then later Africa.

Glossary

round trip	Travelling somewhere and then back again.
satellite	Equipment in space which can collect information.
predators	Animals that eat other animals.
climates	The average weather in a place over a long time.

Questions

1. How far did Onon travel altogether?

- 12,000km
 120km
 26,000km
 260km

2. Why did the author use the phrase 'Luckily, he winged his way back in May'?

3. In the last paragraph, find a word that means the same as 'to eat'.

4. Tick to show whether each statement is a fact or an opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
Onon flew 26,000km.		
Onon is an amazing bird.		
Onon is named after a river.		
Flying 26,000km is a hard task.		

5. How do you think the schoolchildren felt about the return of Onon?

6. Summarise the key information in the story in 20 words or fewer.

Answers

1. How far did Onon travel altogether?

- 12,000km
 120km
 26,000km
 260km

2. Why did the author use the phrase 'Luckily, he winged it back in May'?

Accept any reasonable answer that refers to the word 'winged' meaning to fly and that he was lucky to make it back because of all the dangers, e.g. I think the author means that Onon flew back in May and was lucky to get back because he could have been eaten on the way.

3. In the last paragraph, find a word that means the same as 'to eat'.

feast

4. Tick to show whether each statement is a fact or an opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
Onon flew 26,000km.	✓	
Onon is an amazing bird.		✓
Onon is named after a river.	✓	
Flying 26,000km is a hard task.		✓

5. How do you think the schoolchildren felt about the return of Onon?

Accept any reasonable answer that refers to how happy or shocked the children would have been to see the bird return safely, e.g. I think the children would have been excited to see the bird return because they had been watching his flight and knew it would be hard for him to make a return flight.

6. Summarise the key information in the story in 20 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable answer that summarises the story in 20 words or fewer, e.g. Onon the cuckoo, who was named by schoolchildren, flew an incredible 26,000km from Mongolia to Zambia and back.