

# RAMSEY READER



## THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES:

Learn about echolocation

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Take a trip to the park

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Do a word search

## *Fabulous Flyers*

When you think about flying animals, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Most people think of birds, but there are many other types of animals that can fly. How many can you think of? In this Ramsey Reader we will introduce you to some other types of Fabulous Flyers.

# *All about bats*

One local flyer is an insect-eating mammal that frequently becomes active around sunset. Bats are frequently misunderstood, and many people are afraid of them. However, just one bat can eat thousands of mosquitos in one evening! If you would like to encourage bats to live around your home, there are many do-it-yourself bat house instructions available online.

In order to fly and hunt in the dark, bats use sound waves and a process called echolocation. Bats emit sounds and when those soundwaves hit an object, such as a tree or house, the soundwaves bounce back to the bat. These echoes return to the bats' ears at different times and volumes, which the animal can use to determine direction and size of the object that the sound waves hit! This activity will give you a feel for how echolocation works.



## **TEST OUT ECHOLOCATION**

Is there an echo? This activity is similar to the game "Marco Polo." Play this activity in an open area with plenty of space to safely move around in with other participants.

**Materials** – a blindfold (like a bandana), 2 or more noisemakers (shakers, maracas or you can even just clap your hands.)

1. Have one person put on a blindfold. They are now the bat and they are going to try and tag the other participants who are now the bat's food.
2. Give everyone a noisemaker.
3. The players who are the "food" spread out and stand still.
4. When the bat shakes their noisemaker, the other players must shake theirs in response (like Marco Polo).
5. Have the bat keep shaking and listening to the responses as they try to walk towards their food.
6. Can the bat find some food without peeking?

# *Fly by the park*



Any Ramsey County park can be a great place to find some fabulous flyers. Here are some helpful tips that can increase your chance to see some interesting wildlife. Friendly reminder: please do not touch or take any animals you come across for your safety and theirs.

- Move as little and as quietly as possible. Try to find a comfortable spot and stay still.
- Blend in, wear earth tone colors and scent-free products.
- Leave your pets at home, the smell of your dog will scare wildlife and they will stay away.
- Do your homework. Research the types of birds and animals that you will see in that specific habitat, time of day and season.



## **VISIT THE PARK**

**Keller Regional Park** One of the great flyers to observe are swallows. They turn and dive like jet fighters, and they catch insects while flying so their flight acrobatics helps them catch a meal.

Head to the parking lot at 2166 Maplewood Drive in Maplewood and walk directly toward Keller Lake. Once you get to the lakeshore, look for the walking bridge just to the south. Swallows like to nest under the bridge and you can watch them hunt insects over the water.

**Battle Creek Regional Park** You can find the trailhead at the intersection of Upper Afton Road and Ferndale Street. in Maplewood. The hike leads to a beautiful prairie with plenty of opportunities to observe some flying animals such as insects and birds.



# Flying fun



## SEARCH FOR THESE WORDS

Can you find all the words hidden below? Search up, down, diagonally and backwards. Answers can be found on the last page of this activity guide.

BATS	W	R	X	C	O	B	D	U	W	B	B	I	D	B	P
BUMBLEBEE	G	O	C	D	T	N	L	C	U	G	A	H	R	U	A
BUTTERFLY	T	B	O	P	O	R	Y	M	L	N	T	V	F	T	Z
DRAGONFLY	M	K	M	D	E	T	B	H	M	I	S	V	D	T	P
EAGLE	X	B	L	L	P	L	I	C	N	B	Y	V	D	E	A
LOON	W	F	G	W	E	E	N	U	M	O	T	H	Q	R	F
MOSQUITO	L	A	F	B	S	Q	C	S	Q	R	G	X	F	F	U
MOTH	E	O	E	T	N	I	R	K	T	S	X	K	D	L	S
ROBIN	D	E	O	L	B	W	G	P	E	G	O	N	U	Y	P
WOODPECKER	Y	L	F	N	O	G	A	R	D	R	O	M	Z	L	S
	E	N	A	Y	F	Q	N	J	M	N	V	S	S	Y	F
	M	T	L	T	E	L	W	X	C	Y	U	Z	I	E	N
	T	P	T	W	V	G	N	S	Z	X	H	G	W	T	M
	W	W	R	E	V	H	Y	I	T	O	A	J	Y	F	Q
	Y	B	M	D	X	E	N	Z	N	X	X	S	E	U	B

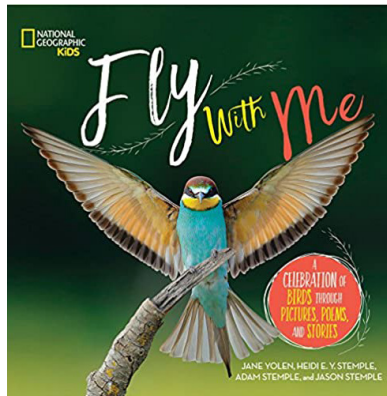
## Fun facts about fabulous flyers

- Over 300 species of fruit, like bananas and mangoes, depend on bats for pollination.
- Newborn loons spend most of their first week of life riding around on their parents' backs. This helps keep them warm, and safe from large fish and other aquatic predators like snapping turtles. By the way, the loon became the Minnesota state bird in 1961.
- Eagles have amazing eyesight and can detect prey up to two miles away.
- Some moths are notorious for their ability to impersonate other animals to avoid being eaten by their predators. Some moths have evolved to look like less tasty insects, such as wasps, tarantulas and the praying mantis. Some moths even mimic bird droppings.

# Ramsey readers

Here are some interesting books to get your little learners interested in fabulous flyers. All of these books are available through Ramsey County Library.

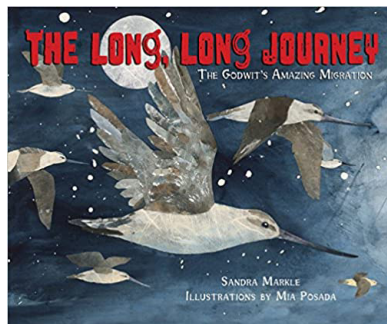
## → DIVE INTO A GOOD BOOK



### **Fly With Me: A Celebration of Birds through Pictures, Poems, and Stories**

by Jane Yolen

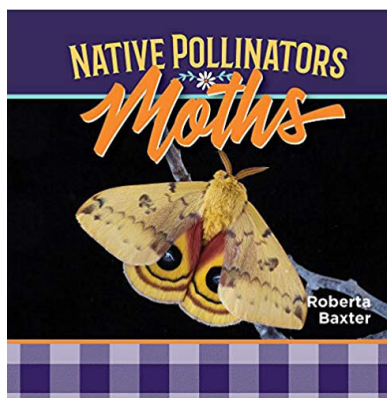
This thoughtful and beautifully curated collection of our flying, feathery friends highlights the role birds play in human life from centuries ago to present day. While it's beautiful, it's also full of valuable real science about these wondrous creatures. From history and behavior to spotting and photographing, there's sure to be something for every bird fan in your flock.



### **The Long, Long Journey: The Godwit's Amazing Migration**

by Sandra Markle

A godwit hatches, evades predators, and learns to hunt and fly. Then, she sets off on her first migration - 7,200 nonstop miles, from Alaska to New Zealand! Follow along on her amazing voyage!



### **Moths: Native Pollinators**

by Roberta Baxter

Butterflies get songs and poems written about them. Hardly anyone swoons over moths. But moths deserve our respect and attention. Moths are pollinators, and many are native to America. While most insect pollinators work during the day, moths take the night shift. They visit flowers that bloom under the light of the moon. Moths play a vital role in the life cycle of plants.

# Learn more

There's so much more to learn about fabulous flyers. Check out this resource to continue exploring and discovering.

## PBS Supernature Wild Flyers

Watch this innovative, visually stunning series showing how animals take to the skies, master the air and out-fly each other.

[pbs.org/show/supernature-wild-flyers/](https://pbs.org/show/supernature-wild-flyers/)

## Word search answers

W	R	X	C	O	B	D	U	W	B	B	I	D	B	P
G	O	C	D	T	N	L	C	U	G	A	H	R	U	A
T	B	O	P	O	R	Y	M	L	N	T	V	F	T	Z
M	K	M	D	E	T	B	H	M	I	S	V	D	T	P
X	B	L	L	P	L	I	C	N	B	Y	V	D	E	A
W	F	G	W	E	E	N	U	M	O	T	H	Q	R	F
L	A	F	B	S	Q	C	S	Q	R	G	X	F	F	U
E	O	E	T	N	I	R	K	T	S	X	K	D	L	S
D	E	O	L	B	W	G	P	E	G	O	N	U	Y	P
Y	L	F	N	O	G	A	R	D	R	O	M	Z	L	S
E	N	A	Y	F	Q	N	J	M	N	V	S	S	Y	F
M	T	L	T	E	L	W	X	C	Y	U	Z	I	E	N
T	P	T	W	V	G	N	S	Z	X	H	G	W	T	M
W	W	R	E	V	H	Y	I	T	O	A	J	Y	F	Q
Y	B	M	D	X	E	N	Z	N	X	X	S	E	U	B



### Did you know?

Minnesota is also home to another “flying” mammal, the flying squirrel! Although they can travel up to 150 feet from tree to tree, they don’t actually fly, they glide. Using a flap of skin that extends from their front leg to their back leg, they spread their legs out to make a large surface that allows them to glide with full control. About the size of a chipmunk, flying squirrels eat fruits, nuts, insects, fungi and some small birds.