



More about Geese

Geese fly in a V formation to conserve energy and go further together.

The geese behind the lead bird fly in the upwash of the bird in front which naturally lifts them so that they use less energy to stay aloft. They regularly swap positions to share the workload and give the lead bird a rest.

Each bird responds to the one in front. If a bird is flying a full wavelength behind another it will flap its wings in phase with the one in front to match the upwash flow. Whereas if it is only a half wave length behind it will flap in an anti-phase so that it meets the upwash just at the right time. This is why if you look closely geese do not appear to be 'synchronised' as each bird is timing its flap according to the conditions it is under.

If you see two or three geese some way behind the main flock, this is usually because one has fallen behind and two others have gone back to help it catch up. If they can't catch up then they will fly the injured bird to the ground to die before they fly on and rejoin the flock. They honk to encourage each other to go faster.

Geese whose migration route takes them over the Himalayas fly up and over each peak to conserve energy rather than climbing to the highest point and trying to fly in a straight line where the air is thinner.

Geese don't have a natural in-built GPS to direct them so they learn from the birds that have done it before. To maximise their survival they practice flying in formation before they set off on their long journey.

For me, there is much we can learn about leadership, teamwork, realising potential and resilience from nature and the journey of geese.

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