

EARTHFLIGHT GIANT SCREEN RECORDED SCRIPT

00:14	What would it feel like to fly like a bird?
00:21	To soar on feathered wings to faraway lands.
00:27	Or defy gravity and effortlessly float on air
00:38	Once we could only dream of such freedom....
00:42	...but now new techniques allow us to fly with birds and share their secrets.
00:50	If you dream of flying, hold onto your seat. You are about to experience “life on the wing”.
	<i>EARTHFLIGHT</i>
01:18	To know what it’s like to be a bird, the filmmakers became foster parents to some tiny hatchlings.

01:26	They created a bond so strong the chicks would follow wherever they went.
01:44	After months of training, they took to the air....
01:54	...to show us a bird's eye view.
02:04	Some even became eyes in the sky... ...taking cameras where none had gone before.
02:23	They soon revealed what it was truly like to be a bird.
02:31	Our story begins with one of America's greatest travellers...
02:36	– the snow goose.
02:42	Each spring, parents take their young on a breathtaking journey to their arctic breeding grounds.

02:53	They join thousands of other families making the same incredible migration.
03:13	Sensing bad weather ahead, an astonishing 2 million birds assemble, waiting for winter to finally depart.
03:52	But where flocks gather, so do predators...
03:58	A bald eagle. Soon, he too will head north, but first he needs a hearty meal...
04:53	For the snow geese, flight is the best defence...
05:04	For the eagle, this blizzard of birds creates confusion stopping him singling out a victim
05:13	Bewildered, he takes the easy option...
05:21	Fuel for his long journey north

05:27	<p>For the geese, a 3000-mile flight lies ahead.</p> <p>But how do birds make such incredible journeys...?</p>
05:42	<p>A family of common cranes crossing Venice in Italy provides some of the answers...</p>
05:51	<p>Their stamina is remarkable - they've already flown a 1000-miles from Africa and to reach their nest sites in Sweden, they must travel 2000 more.</p>
06:12	<p>Hot air rising from the sunbaked rooftops below gives them a free lift - letting them rest on the wing.</p>
06:39	<p>They also save energy by flying in formation. Each wing flap creates turbulent air that slightly lifts those behind.</p>

06:51	Some birds take formation flying to a whole other level...
06:59	In spring, 10 million starlings that overwintered in Rome prepare to leave for Northern Europe.
07:18	Before they depart, their precision flying creates Nature's greatest aerial display - a murmuration of starlings.
07:52	The flocks are as fluid as the air itself. Each bird shadows seven of its nearest neighbours...so the flock moves like a single organism.
08:25	Their reflexes are ten times faster than any human pilot...
08:31	They need to be...!
08:34	A peregrine falcon - the fastest predator on the planet.

08:57	The falcon dives at over 200 miles per hour!
09:08	But he's taking on the world's best aerobatic team.
09:34	The peregrine concedes defeat...
09:36	...outperformed by the collective synchrony of the flock.
09:49	The starlings also use teamwork to migrate north. No leader decides. When enough feel the urge to leave...the rest follow....
10:02	But for many travellers, leadership is everything...
10:12	As a family of Brent geese leave their wintering grounds around Mont St. Michele in France, the most experienced birds make the decisions.

10:36	But there's trouble on the horizon...
10:40	The older and wiser geese must now decide whether to land or face the storm
10:58	It helps that they are equipped with the ultimate wet-weather gear.
11:07	Their feathers interlock creating a watertight seal that repels every drop.
11:35	They made the right decision - crossing the English Channel without losing time.
11:51	As the family heads onwards to the arctic, experience will be their guide.
12:05	Off the southern tip of Africa, birds share their knowledge with other creatures too.
12:21	Cape gannets often fly 300 miles a day in their search for shoals of fish... ...but they rarely work alone...
12:36	The gannets search above the waves

12:39	Common dolphins search below.
13:20	When a shoal is found, the gannets arrow downwards at 70 miles per hour.
13:28	Hard skulls cushion the impact and their throats inflate like airbags.
13:52	Sixty feet down they reach their goal – vast shoals of migrating sardines.
14:17	At this depth, the fish are tricky to catch.
14:23	But help is on its way!
14:36	The dolphins split the shoal, driving fish to the surface.
14:45	The feast begins.
14:55	But every party has its uninvited guest.
15:02	A Bryde's whale leaves little to share.
15:21	In Baja California, brown pelicans take a more laidback approach to fishing...

15:30	<p>They save energy by riding the cushion of denser air that forms between their wings and the sea.</p> <p>It's so efficient they rarely even flap their wings.</p>
16:18	<p>But here, birds aren't the only creatures that fly...!</p>
16:32	<p>Devil rays - fish that seem to want to be birds!</p>
17:00	<p>Why they fly is a mystery.</p>
17:10	<p>Some say it's a courtship display ...</p>
17:15	<p>...others say it shows where food can be found.</p>
17:22	<p>It's tempting to think they do it just for fun!</p>
17:32	<p>Whatever the reason, wherever rays are feeding...</p>

	...there's fish for pelicans too!
17:58	For many travellers, food and water isn't so easy to come by.
18:13	As snow geese cross Monument valley in Arizona, they face a grueling challenge.
18:22	They've already flown a thousand miles and exhaustion is taking its toll.
18:50	The youngsters are weakening.... ...the family is losing height.
19:02	But if they land in this desolate place, their chances of survival are slim.
19:30	To help their desperate plight, the parents take the lead so their young can save energy riding their wake.
19:41	Then, rising on wind pushed upwards by the rocks, they gain enough height to

	safely cross the desert.
20:02	The bald eagle is a master at riding these updrafts of air... ...and the Grand Canyon provides all the lift he could wish for.
20:18	With broad wings and a seven-foot span he can float on gusts that swirl upwards from the canyon walls.
20:35	Instead of flapping, he soars...
21:22 21:32	Surfing on air he can cover 200 miles in a single day... ...if hungry he just grabs some “take-out”!
21:53	Back in Europe, the younger members of the crane family are learning how to avoid getting lost!
22:01	Wisely, they stick close to their parents!

22:17	They are learning to set their direction according to the sun – even adjusting for its ever-changing position in the sky.
22:34	They also use the earth's magnetic field as a compass. Incredibly, it's superimposed over their normal vision!
22:48	The youngsters memorize landmarks too – they just need to see them once to remember them for a lifetime!
23:10	River valleys are popular migration routes – with plenty of meals on offer...
23:28	This osprey is refueling on her remarkable 6,000-mile journey from Southern Africa.
23:39	There's always one that gets away...
23:42	...but he soon gets his catch of the day!

24:41	The osprey is heading for Sweden where the longer summer days will give plenty more of time for fishing.
24:57	Near the equator, the seasons have less influence on bird's journeys, but African vultures still spend many hours on the wing.
25:10	They spiral upwards on bubbles of hot air rising from the ground below - then glide between these "thermals" to cross the plains.
25:39	The vulture's feathers react to the slightest breeze, adjusting their angle to smooth her flight.
25:54	Her splayed wingtip feathers reduce drag...
25:59	...and she uses her tail as a rudder, steering her to a meal.

26:16	Today she's in luck...
26:21	...the Great Migration is underway – the largest movement of land mammals on the planet.
26:38	As the wildebeest cross a crocodile-infested river, their ordeal becomes her opportunity.
27:29	For the vulture, it couldn't be easier - the river provides the perfect food delivery service.
27:55	Vultures think nothing of travelling 150 miles a day searching for a meal. But birds that migrate with the seasons make even these distances seem small.
28:13	Snow geese passing through New York are following the traditional 3000-mile route taken by their ancestors

28:45	<p>The city once had extensive marshlands where weary birds could rest and feed.</p> <p>But now the geese must keep travelling on...</p>
28:58	<p>...the human monuments are just landmarks on their journey.</p>
29:17	<p>And the geese still have hundreds of miles to go!</p>
29:39	<p>In Canada, a bald eagle is already reaching journey's end.</p>
30:00	<p>It's perfect timing...</p>
30:03	<p>Salmon are heading in from the sea - a feast not just for eagles.</p>
30:14	<p>For grizzly bears it's party time.</p>
30:20	<p>But the eagle must wait...</p> <p>...even bears find these huge salmon tricky to catch...</p>

30:32	...and they're aggressive too!
31:08	For the grizzlies, it's an "all-you-can-eat" buffet.
31:19	But, after hours of bingeing, even a bear can't fit another morsel.
31:27	The eagle seizes the moment...
31:45	But he'll need to keep an eye on those grizzlies...
31:55	Even a well-stuffed bear doesn't like sharing his breakfast!
32:07	The eagle will eat his fill, playing dare with the bears, then mate and set up home.
32:18	As summer beckons, birds are nesting across Europe too.

32:35	Barn swallows flew 6000 miles from South Africa just to return to their birthplace on an English farm.
32:51	First they wash off the dust from their epic journey
33:04	Then a drink to celebrate.
33:18	The male's job is to repair the nest before the female returns.
33:31	A few soft furnishings will make the perfect finishing touch...
33:50	His mate arrives to inspect his handiwork
34:04	Luckily, she approves.
34:11	The house-proud couple will spend the summer here, rearing their chicks, before returning to Africa in the fall.

34:29	As the cranes cross the tulip fields of Holland, they are on the homestretch of their 3,000-mile flight.
34:57	Two days later, they reach their marshland destination in Sweden, joining 18-thousand others for the biggest event in the cranes' social calendar.
35:20	They have just one thing on their minds...
35:23	...dancing.
35:32	The parents dance to renew lifelong VOWS...
35:39	...the youngsters dance to attract a mate.
35:53	Cranes can live for over forty years, making their faithful partnerships amongst the most enduring of any bird.

36:07	The relationships that birds have with each other, allow them to travel to every corner of the globe.
36:17	Together they make the epic flights that will ensure the success of the next generation.
36:28	In the arctic, the snow geese are enjoying the fruits of their own remarkable journey.
36:36	It was well worth the effort!
36:47	But the chicks must grow up fast and learn to use their tiny wings, for in a few months they must head south with their parents...
36:58	...learning the secrets that allow them to cross entire continents.
37:07	They will pass the knowledge they gain to their own offspring - and the whole

	incredible story will begin all over again.
37:19	We dream of flying ... birds merely spread their feathered wings!!