

Within- and between-individual variation in migration strategies: Is there a genetic basis?

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How readily birds can adapt their migration strategy to a changing environment is a longstanding inquiry in ornithology. It is firmly established that crucial behaviours, such as migration direction and departure date, are genetically hardwired. However, certain aspects, like the utilization of landmarks, may be acquired and influenced by individual experiences. In this study, we present a comprehensive dataset comprising over 100 repeatedly tracked Alpine swifts, revealing a consistent migration strategy among individuals across multiple years. Through a comparative analysis of the tracks of closely related individuals, we provide initial evidence shedding light on the aspects of the journey that might have the strongest genetic basis. Our findings contribute to the understanding of how Alpine swifts may modify their migration strategy in response to the warming global climate.