

Swans with names

At first sight, one swan looks much like another. If we look at them more closely, however, there is a sure way to tell them apart.

The method of identifying swans was discovered at The Wildfowl Trust, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, in the west of England. Sir Peter Scott, the famous naturalist, found that he could recognise individual Bewick's swans by the patterns on their bills. He gave the birds names. From then on, it was possible to follow their family life when the swans came back from their breeding-grounds in Siberia every autumn.

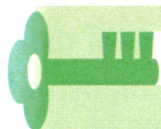
Now we know that the pairs stay together for life, and that they live at least 25 years. The parents bring the young swans with them when they leave Siberia.

The family stays together during the first winter. In February they return together to Siberia, flying across Europe. On the way, the swans meet others which have spent the winter in Ireland, or elsewhere in Britain. They gather in favourite stopping-places, where they can rest and feed before flying on to Siberia.

As they fly from the Netherlands to West Germany and onwards across Eastern Europe, the swans become the responsibility of one country after another. The birds themselves are protected by law everywhere they go, but it is just as important to protect the estuaries and marshes which they need as resting-places on the way.



There are other swans which migrate in a similar way in North America, and they probably share a similar family life. So far, however, nobody has found out how to tell them apart in the same way as is used for the Bewick's swans at the Wildfowl Trust in Slimbridge.



Write out the sentences that are true.

- 1 Bewick's swans stay with the same partner all their life.
- 2 Bewick's swans can live for more than twenty-five years.
- 3 Nobody can tell one Bewick's swan from another just by looking at it.
- 4 Peter Scott discovered that no two Bewick's swans look exactly alike.
- 5 Bewick's swans fly all the way to Siberia in February without stopping.
- 6 It is a crime to injure a swan.
- 7 Every Bewick's swan in the world spends the winter at Slimbridge.
- 8 Britain is the only place where swans are protected by law.
- 9 Bewick's swan eggs hatch out in Siberia.
- 10 No two Bewick's swans have the same pattern on their beaks.
- 11 Some swans in North America fly away to spend the winter in a different place.
- 12 The swans go back to Slimbridge every year because they like to see Sir Peter Scott.
- 13 Bewick's swans stay with their parents for their first winter.
- 14 Peter Scott knew the Bewick's swans at Slimbridge well enough to give them names.
- 15 Bewick's swans spend every summer in Siberia.