
The exceptional performance of swifts in flight

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Abstract

Swifts are among the fastest migratory birds known, reaching speeds of over 100 Km/h in horizontal flight, 200 Km/h in a dive, and they can even fly on their back. They live an average of ten years, and some as long as twenty. At the age of three months, they fly from their nest and never land again, except to incubate and raise their chicks for a few months. In the course of their lives, swifts can travel up to four million kilometers -ten times the distance between the Earth and the Moon. We will present the results of some articles studying their aerodynamic properties, using models and live birds observed in the laboratory and wind tunnel.

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