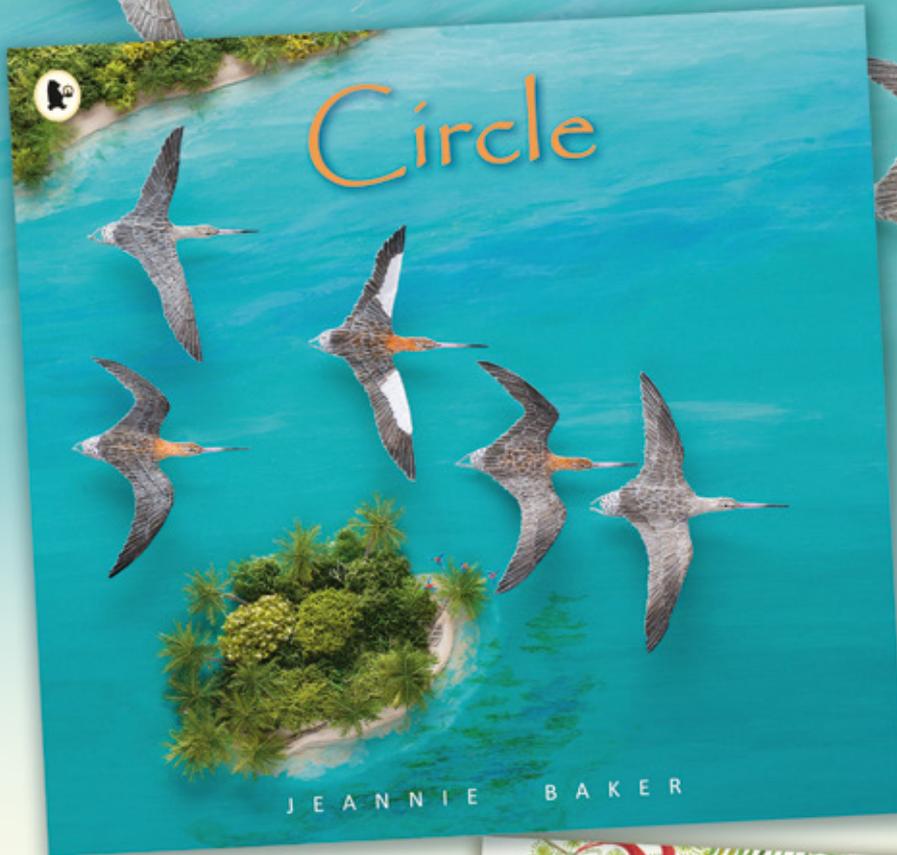


TEACHERS' NOTES



Circle

by Jeannie Baker

9781406382907

£8.99 • Paperback • 5 years+

Hummingbird

by Nicola Davies

illustrated by Jane Ray

9781406391336

£7.99 • Paperback • 3 years+




WALKER
BOOKS

 giving
nature
a home

These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.

Reading aloud and key talking points for *Circle* by Jeannie Baker:

- Look at the front cover of the book and read the title. Now, open the book out flat to reveal the back cover as well. What does this make you think about? How does it make you feel? Now focus on what is happening in this image. What can you see? What are the birds doing? Where might they be going? Think about the view we see here. Why do you think we are looking down from above as the birds would?
- Now, take some time to explore what the children already know about the subject matter. Do you know or think you know anything about birds like this and why they might be travelling? Now come back to reflect on the title. Why do you think the book might be called **Circle**? Note these ideas down, to come back to after reading the book.
- Open the book to reveal the blue endpapers. What do the children think the blue represents? Turn the page to reveal the half-title page in which a boy lies reading on his bed, surrounded by a globe, tablet and wheelchair. Take some time to reflect on the image of the boy and his thoughts. What do you think you might know about him? Why do you think he might want to fly? Look again at the image – can you see anything that might represent the circle of the title? Does this give you any more ideas as to what the story might be about?
- Now, look at the title page and read the information about the godwit. Have you heard the word **godwit** before? What do you think this is? Show the children how to look this up to check, using a dictionary or by searching online. What do you learn about these birds from this statement? Turn back to the birds on the front cover and discuss how this makes the children feel about them now. Now think back to the boy on his bed. Do you think he knows this amazing fact? How might he know this? Some children may notice the book next to him on the bed; sharing the image under a visualiser might help them see this more clearly. What more does this tell us about him?
- Turn to the first double page spread, where the boy is on the beach looking at the flock of birds through binoculars. Hide the text, perhaps using a post-it note, so that the children can focus on exploring this illustration in more depth. What kind of place is this? How would they describe it? Why do they think the boy has come here? Encourage the children to look closely at the smaller details in the illustration, including the sign: **NATURE RESERVE. Dogs, horses, vehicles prohibited.** Discuss the term **nature reserve**. Do you know what this is? Have you ever visited one? What was it like? Now, encourage the children to look in greater detail at the animals they see in the reserve. As well as the flocks of birds, what other animals can you see? Come back to the word on the sign: **prohibited**. Do the children know what this means? Why might dogs, horses and vehicles be prohibited here? How do you feel about the person walking a dog on this beach? How might this decision affect the animals that live in this habitat? Do you think they are safe here?
- Look back at the birds in flight and consider where they might be heading. What do you think the boy is thinking as he looks at them? You could note the children's ideas around a copy of the illustration.
- Now reveal the text on the page and read this aloud. Follow the birds' flight path on to the next spread, reading the text aloud and exploring the illustration. How does it make you feel to see the flock sweeping towards you? Does the boy see the same thing from his view? Take a moment to picture what he can see from where he is looking. How do you think it makes him feel to see the backs of the birds, leaving? Now think back to the words you heard about this moment from the birds' perspective: **the moment is right**. What does this mean? How might the birds know this? What might be changing around them right now? Revisit the previous scene and consider what time of year this might be. What tells us this? Think more about why the birds might be leaving and introduce the word migrate. What does this mean? Do you know why birds migrate from one place to another? Record the children's thinking around a copy of this illustration.



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- Follow the journey of the flock on to the next spread and read the text aloud. What is happening now? Where is this? What kinds of things are the godwits doing to help them stay together and stay strong? You could make a note of these behaviours on a large class sheet entitled 'Godwit Migration'; for example, 'they chatter to keep everyone close', 'they takes turns to lead the way'. What do you think the phrase ***an ancient invisible pathway*** means? Looking back at what you have read so far, is there anything else you could infer from the book about godwit migration? What knowledge, skills or abilities do the godwits seem to have? Do the children have any other questions about the godwits? For example: 'How do godwits fly for so long?', 'Do they sleep?', or 'What do they eat?' Do they think they will find answers to their questions in this book? Would they say this is a story book or an information book? What makes them think that?
- Look carefully at the illustration on this spread. What do you think the curve shows us about the godwits' journey? How would you describe the environment you can see here? Do the children recognise the coral reefs or know where these might be found? Where in the world do you think this is? What makes you think that? Where might it be on the boy's globe? If you have access to a globe or world map, you could begin to introduce terms like Southern and Northern Hemisphere, the curvature of the Earth, and discuss the names of oceans and seas that might relate to this illustration.
- Follow the land north around the edge of the globe with your finger, and turn the page to reveal the coastal city. What kind of place is this? Compare and contrast this new location with the place they saw on the previous spread. What is this place like? How does it make them feel? Would they like to go there? Look carefully at what is happening in the city. What is changing? Why might this be happening? Do you think the city has always been there? What might have been there before?
- Now, read the text aloud and discuss what is happening at this point in the godwits' journey. How does the text also share how the environment here is changing? Why do they want to land? What might the godwits be searching for that might have been here before? What do you think will happen if they can't find anywhere to feed? How do you think they are feeling as they search in wider and wider circles? Encourage the children to look closely at the illustration; can you help them find a safe stretch of coast to rest? Come back together to discuss the impact this change in the landscape might have on the birds. Summarise the children's thinking in notes around a copy of the illustration.
- Turn the page to reveal where the godwits landed. Are they completely safe here? As well as the human reclamation of land, what other potential dangers are there? You might want to draw attention to the pollution from the chimneys being blown towards them and the litter left on the mudflats. What impact could more construction have in the future? What would you like to say to the people of this city about the godwits? Think about where in the world this might be – are there any clues in the illustration? You might draw attention to the signage and sampan boats, indicating this is in East Asia. Take the globe or world atlas and start to look at where this is and try to predict where the godwits' journey might have started, if we know they have flown north from the Nature Reserve and the boy's home.
- Turn to the next spread, reading it aloud and exploring the illustration. How do you think the godwits feel to have finally found a place to land? Look carefully at the details in the illustration. Can you see any more evidence of human impact here? What dangers might this pose to the birds? Continue reading the next spread, up to ***on with another flock...*** Focus on the people as well as the birds in the illustration. What are they both doing? What are they both searching for? What is interesting about the way the godwits are finding food? What is special about their beaks? How does this compare with what the people are doing? Do you feel these people pose a threat to the birds? Do you think there is enough food for everyone here? What do you think about the relationship between the humans and animals? How might they think or feel about each other? Now, look at the way the child is separated. What might they be thinking? You could note ideas around a copy of this illustration.
- Think about the environment you see here. How is it similar to the habitat of the Nature Reserve at the start of the godwits' migration? How is it different? How do you think the godwit with white patches knows it is time to move on again? What has changed about his body? What will this feeding session allow him to do? Where do you think he will journey next? What do you think he will do there?



- Turn the page to move on with the godwits, reading the text aloud. Were any of their predictions correct? Think about the repetition in this part of the text: **and it's time to move on... on with another flock... on and on...** What does this make you think or feel about the journey? Is there anything that strikes the children as different about this spread? What effect does it have to lay the two illustrations side by side in this way? Why do you think they have chosen to show the birds and aeroplane side by side? If you were to describe these birds in flight, what words would you use? How do they make you feel? What is special about them? Revisit the repeated refrain, 'following the ancient invisible pathway'. What does this repetition tell us about the godwits and their journey?
- Turn the page to reveal the next spread. Before reading the text, give the children an opportunity to respond to the illustration. How does it make them feel? What is particularly striking about this place? How would you describe it? Where do you think this is on the globe? What makes you think that? The children might remember the phrase **their northern home** from the previous spread, which might support their thinking. Now read the text. Look at the way the godwit with white patches separates from the group. Why do you think this has happened after staying with the group for so long? Look at the way this place is described as **his remembered place**. What does this mean? Where do you think he is going now?
- Follow the direction of the birds' flight path and the curve of the horizon to the page turn, then read aloud and explore what happens to the godwit with white patches. How would you describe him now? What is a mate? Why might he be trying to attract a mate? How long do you think he stays in this place? What tells you this in the illustration and text? Look at the last image of the chicks in the nest. What do we learn about the way godwits parent their offspring? Think about the way the author has used the word **guard**. What might the parents be guarding them from?
- Turn the page, read the text aloud and explore the illustration. What is happening here? How does this make you feel? Why do the foxes hunt the godwit chicks? You may wish to create an explanatory diagram to explore the food chain of this habitat in more detail. How do the godwits manage to survive as a species? What more do you learn about them from these spreads? What does camouflage mean and why is it important?
- Continue to follow the directionality of the land and the animals and turn the page. Read the text aloud and explore the illustration. How have things changed in the weeks that have passed? Think about what this new environment might offer for the godwits. What are the opportunities for them? Are there any potential threats? Consider how the godwits **know it is time to move on** again. What is changing around them? Why do you think the mother godwit and the godwit with white patches fly off first and leave their chick? What does this tell us about the chick? Turn the page and read the next spread. How are things continuing to change – for both the godwits themselves and in the environment around them? What do we know that tells us they are all ready to make another journey? How do you feel watching them take flight? What makes you feel this way?
- Turn the page to follow the flock back on their **ancient invisible pathway**. How do you think the birds know the way from above the clouds? What else do they have to guide them? What skills and abilities will the youngest birds learn from older generations within the flock? Allow the children to think about this concept from their own experience. Have they ever learned how to do something from someone older than them? What was it? What did the older person do to support them? Think about how **each bird takes a turn to lead the way**. What does this tell us about the birds? What might we learn from this kind of behaviour?
- Turn the page to reveal the next spread, and read on to **until they reach the other side of the world**. Does this spread remind the children of any others they have seen in the book so far? How? Read the text and allow the children to reflect on what they have heard and seen. How is this different to the migration north? How does the language the author has used and the illustrations on the page make you feel about this journey? How does the final line make you feel? How do you think the godwit with white patches feels? What do you think he will do now?



- Turn the page to find the birds searching for a safe place to settle on the shore. Were any of your predictions correct? Does this remind you of anything else you've seen in the book? Encourage the children to look at the small details, such as the signs, the people and what they are doing. Where do you think **a safe place to settle** might be? What might the godwits be looking for here?
- Turn the page to show a close-up of the godwit with white patches resting at last. How must it feel to be able to close its eyes and sleep alongside its companions? Are all the birds able to rest? Why do you think the other godwit is behaving differently?
- Turn the page and read the next spread. Where is this? How do you know? What is happening here? Does it tell you more about the behaviour of the bird on the previous page? Focus carefully on the boy – who is this? What is he doing? Why do you think he did this? What does this tell us about his character? In what way has the boy changed since we started this story? How much time do you think has passed since they left?
- Support the children in looking back through the book and summarising the stages of the godwits' journey. Can you recall the key events? Note these down in a circular fashion to mirror the journey of the birds. Now come back to the boy. What do you think he might have been doing in that time? Overlay the children's ideas in a different colour around the circle.
- Turn the page to see the boy still dreaming of flying with the godwits. What is different about this illustration from the first one? Does it make us feel differently about the boy? How do you think he feels now compared to the start of the story? Why might this be?
- Come back to the book again and re-read the entire story as a whole. Allow the children to begin to explore their responses to it through book talk with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls 'the four basic questions'. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:
 - Was there anything you liked about this story?
 - Was there anything that you particularly disliked?
 - Was there anything that puzzled you?
 - Were there any patterns / any connections that you noticed? Did it remind you of anything else you've read or seen?
- The openness of these questions, unlike the more interrogative 'Why?' question, encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the 'wrong' answer.
- Asking these questions will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion than using more general questions. You may, for example, ask the children if they had favourite parts of the story, and why this was. Return to the front cover and ask the children to consider why they think Jeannie Baker has called the book **Circle**. How does this relate to this story? As well as reflecting on the geographical shapes of the migration path and the circumference of the Earth, you could discuss other themes explored in the book that one might link to circles, such as life cycles and food chains. You could re-read the story and look at the circular structure of the story and the use of repetitive language.
- Extend the children's thinking through more evaluative questions, for example:
- Why do you think Jeannie Baker chose to write this book? Would you class this as an information book? Why? Why not?
- Should we always follow rules? Do we always see the consequences of our actions? Revisit the book and look at the way in which human actions in one part of the world can impact something or somewhere on the other side of the world; that everything is linked.



- Now explore the information spread at the end of the book and encourage the children to relate it to their understanding of the author and her story, and to summarise what they have learned about the extraordinary nature of the godwit migration, particularly the record-breaking unbroken journey south. What questions do they still have? How could they find answers to these? Who would they like to share their findings with? How could they help protect birds like the godwit?
- Leave multiple copies of the book alongside a globe, map or atlas in the book corner for the children to refer to, revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group. Encourage them to identify and research the migratory animals featured in **Circle**, which are listed on the final information spread. What is special about animal migration and these animals in particular?

Reading aloud and key talking points for *Hummingbird*, written by Nicola Davies and illustrated by Jane Ray:

- Show the children the front cover and read the title, allowing time for the children to explore the illustration. What do they notice about these hummingbirds? How does the illustration provide a sense of their size? Turn to the endpapers and look at all the different hummingbirds you can see. How would you describe them? Help the children to use scientific language to describe the features of the birds, as well as more descriptive language for their appearance. What do all these pictures tell us about hummingbirds? You could go on to find out more about the many kinds of hummingbirds there are, how they live and how they have evolved.
- Turn to the spread that follows and read the information text, referring to the map to support the children's understanding. Do they know where these places are? Has anyone visited them? Look at these places in a wider context on a world map or globe, including where they are in relation to where the children are. Ask the children to discuss and summarise what they have learned already about the ruby-throated hummingbird. Compare this with the godwit they read about in **Circle**. What makes these birds so extraordinary?
- Hand a penny around the group and ask the children to imagine a bird so tiny it weighs about the same. How does this make them feel about the bird? Now turn to the title page. Do they have any questions inspired by what they have seen or heard so far? What do they think they will find out about in this picture book?
- Read the first spread of the story and give the children time to respond to the text and the illustration. What do you notice about this place? How would you describe it? What do you think the hummingbirds like about it? Would you like to be there? Why or why not? Now think about the people you can see. What do we know about Granny and her granddaughter? How do they feel about each other? How do they feel about the hummingbirds? How do you know? Do you think the little girl has ever experienced this before? How do you think she feels when the hummingbirds come? How would it make you feel? Compare this scene to the boy's experience at the start of **Circle**. What is similar about them? What is different about the girl's experience?
- Continue reading the next spread. What do you like about this description? Which words or phrases do you find particularly vivid? Why is language such as *flying fast as thought* so effective for imagining the movement of these birds? Can you think of other ways to describe the birds using language like this? What else could be as fast as a thought? Now read the factual text. Which name do you prefer: **Tz-unun**, **zun-zun** or **hummingbird**? What does each of the names make you think about the birds? Now, read the text on the opposite page. Why do you think the girl is sad? What does Granny know about these ruby-throated hummingbirds that we have also learned here? What do we find out about Granny and the girl, when Granny says, "**Maybe they'll visit you in New York City?**"



- Read aloud the next spread showing the sailor at sea. Take time to consider the girl's question, **How can something lighter than a penny fly so far?** What clues can we see in this spread and the previous one that might begin to answer this big question? What helps them navigate through night and day? How is this similar to the godwits we saw in **Circle**? How do the flowers in Mexico help to fuel the one long journey across the Gulf of Mexico? If we know they **lose half their body weight** on this part of the journey, what might the hummingbird need to do next?
- Read the next spread, where the hummingbirds are feeding in someone else's garden. How do they achieve a varied diet and why is it so important that they do? Why do we need a varied diet as humans? Compare this scene to the scene at the start with the girl and Granny. How is it similar? How are the sisters feeling? How do they know when and how to provide for the hummingbirds? What is so special about the hummingbirds' visit that continues to make impact through generations of this family? What connections are being formed between people as well as between people and nature?
- Turn the page to reveal the far-reaching landscape scene. Before reading the text, give the children ample time to explore this illustration. How does it make them feel? How is it different from the scenes in the book so far? What do they notice about it? How does it help us to understand the distance travelled by these tiny birds? What geographical features can you see as they journey from the southern states of America to southern Canada? How long do you think the journey takes? Look closely at the details in the illustration and the text on the page. Why do you think the illustrator Jane Ray has chosen to weave snippets of map into the landscape?
- Invite the children to follow the flight paths of the hummingbirds and talk together about the journey they make. Where would make good feeding grounds? Now read aloud the text, including the factual text. What more do we find out about the hummingbirds' senses and skills? Think about the final sentence **The hummingbirds ride the green wave, zig-zagging from one pool of blossom to the next.** What does this sentence make you think about the way they move and what they are doing? If you have access to a map of Central and North America, the children could refer to it and track the hummingbirds' journey as they revisit and explore this spread in more depth.
- Revisit the flower names: **bee balm, scarlet sage, trumpet honeysuckle** and **cardinal flower**. Have they heard these names before? Look at how the flowers are represented in the illustration; do the names give any clues to their identity? Which name do you think matches each flower? Look back at the flowers featured earlier in the book and on the front cover. What do the children notice about them? Are they a particular colour or shape? How might they attract the hummingbirds? How might the size of the ruby-throated hummingbird help it to draw nectar from these flowers better than larger hummingbirds?
- Turn the page to reveal the further interactions between the hummingbirds and humans along the way. How do they reinforce the connection between humans and nature from generation to generation? How does this make you feel? What further insights does it provide us about these tiny birds?
- Turn the page to find the hummingbirds at their final destination, setting up home. How do they know exactly where they are going? How does this spread compare to the one in **Circle** in which the godwit reached his **remembered place** in the breeding ground of Alaska? What is the same and what is different about the habitat, the events and the birds' behaviour? What do you find out about these hummingbirds and their nests? Provide the children with a walnut to look at for reference (being aware of any potential allergies). Can the children imagine the size of the eggs if the nest is the size of just half of the walnut? Look at how the author and illustrator have chosen to portray these moments. What is most significant to them? How does this compare with the way Jeannie Baker portrays these moments in the godwits' migration in **Circle**?
- Turn the page and explore the illustration, covering the text with a post-it note. Where is this? What is happening here? Do the children recognise the little girl and remember where she lives? Help them to refer back to the text to support their thinking. What could she be pointing at? Read the text and discuss what has happened. Why might this be so exciting for her? What might she tell Granny about this discovery?



- Turn the page to view the cityscape and empty nest in the foreground. How does this spread contrast with the previous ones? What impact does this kind of urban settlement have on the hummingbirds? How does this compare with the human interaction we have witnessed so far? What might this say about the relationship between humans and wildlife? Read the text and invite the children to share how it makes them feel. What might prevent some of the hummingbirds from returning to Mexico safely? Invite the children to trace the zig-zagging of the hummingbirds as they navigate their way through the skyscrapers. What are they looking for? How does this compare to their journey across the rural areas? Read the factual text and discuss the conservation themes raised in this spread. Does this remind the children of anything they read about in **Circle**?
- Turn the page to reveal Granny in her garden enjoying the contents of her granddaughter's parcel and the safe return of one of the hummingbirds. How do you think Granny is feeling here? How does this scene make you feel? How does it demonstrate the way in which the ruby-throated hummingbird creates connections between generations? Why is the fact that hummingbirds have nested for the first time in Central Park so significant? How does it give us hope of their survival?

Read the whole story from beginning to end again and invite the children to respond through book talk as before:

Tell me:

- Was there anything you liked about this story?
- Was there anything that you particularly disliked?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Were there any patterns / any connections that you noticed? Did it remind you of anything else you've read or seen?
- Read the information spread at the end of the book, encouraging the children to summarise what it confirms and what they learn from it. You might want to read it several times or encourage the children to revisit it for themselves as they re-read the story together. Show them how to find an area of interest in the index provided, and how to find the information that will help answer their questions efficiently.
- Engage the children in deeper, evaluative response and reflection. For example:
- Why do you think Nicola Davies might have chosen to write about the ruby-throated hummingbird in particular?
- Do you think humans are capable of living harmoniously with nature? Is it possible to attend to the needs of both people and animals? Shouldn't we put people first?
- Can humans harm nature even when they think they are helping? Engage the children in debate around the benefits to birds and humans in making nectar-feeders for the hummingbirds and the adverse impact this may have on plant pollination.
- Consider the overall structure and storytelling techniques employed by the authors of **Circle** and **Hummingbird** to engage and inspire their young readers. What kind of language is used to inspire awe and wonder? What impact does it have to continue to reinforce the diminutive size of these birds alongside their outstanding achievements in stamina and endurance? How is our own connection with each of the birds created? What impact does it have to focus on one particular bird rather than the whole flock? How do the human stories and subplots mirror those of the birds and their migration? How does the child character encourage awe and wonder and strengthen reader empathy for the plight of the birds?



After reading, you could also:

- Use the migratory animals listed in **Circle** as the starting point to inspire the children's own research and writing. What can they find out about migration and the mechanisms animals might use to navigate their **ancient invisible pathways**? What clues were offered in both **Circle** and **Hummingbird**, and what questions did both books inspire? Can they find the special feature of their chosen species' migration, such as the length of the godwits' unbroken journey or the unbelievably tiny size of the ruby-throated hummingbird? Children could prepare an argument to prove to their classmates that their bird features in the most incredible of all migration stories.
- Both books provide ample opportunity to explore the geography of the terrains traversed by the godwit and ruby-throated hummingbird. Children can investigate physical and human geography and the impact of human settlement and land reclamation on migratory animals. They can use their geographical knowledge to better understand the importance of global ecological co-operation and why it is vital that we take responsibility for local conservation as well as that of places on the other side of the globe. Research migration patterns and investigate whether humans have impacted on vital feeding and breeding grounds, causing unnecessary threat to a particular species. Design posters to encourage people to care for local areas of natural interest, detailing warnings about how human behaviour is damaging to wildlife.
- Consider different ways to share research information with others and discuss how children can best inspire others to take an active interest in global conservation. This might include explanation diagrams, posters, leaflets or articles for the school website or newsletter. They could take inspiration from the picture book spreads of **Circle** and **Hummingbird**, drawing on Jeannie Baker's collage techniques or Jane Ray's intricate paintings to create a picture book telling the story of their chosen bird's migration. They might create a class alphabet book of migratory animals.

Other suggested titles to support the exploration of themes arising from *Circle* and *Hummingbird*

A First Book of Nature by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Mark Hearld

Lots: The Diversity of Life on Earth by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Emily Sutton

Big Blue Whale by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Mick Maland

One Tiny Turtle by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Jane Chapman

White Owl, Barn Owl by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Michael Foreman

Surprising Sharks by Nicola Davies, illustrated by James Croft

Mirror by Jeannie Baker (Walker)

Window by Jeannie Baker (Walker)

Belonging by Jeannie Baker (Walker)

The Hidden Forest by Jeannie Baker (Walker)

Where the Forest Meets the Sea by Jeannie Baker (Walker)

North: The Greatest Animal Journey on Earth by Nick Dowson, illustrated by Patrick Benson

Magnificent Birds by Narisa Togo (Walker Studio)

10 Things I Can Do to Help My World by Melanie Walsh (Walker)

Dear Greenpeace by Simon James (Walker)

In the final information spread in **Hummingbird**, Nicola Davies has created a bibliography.

Show the children what this means by encouraging them to engage with her recommendations.



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