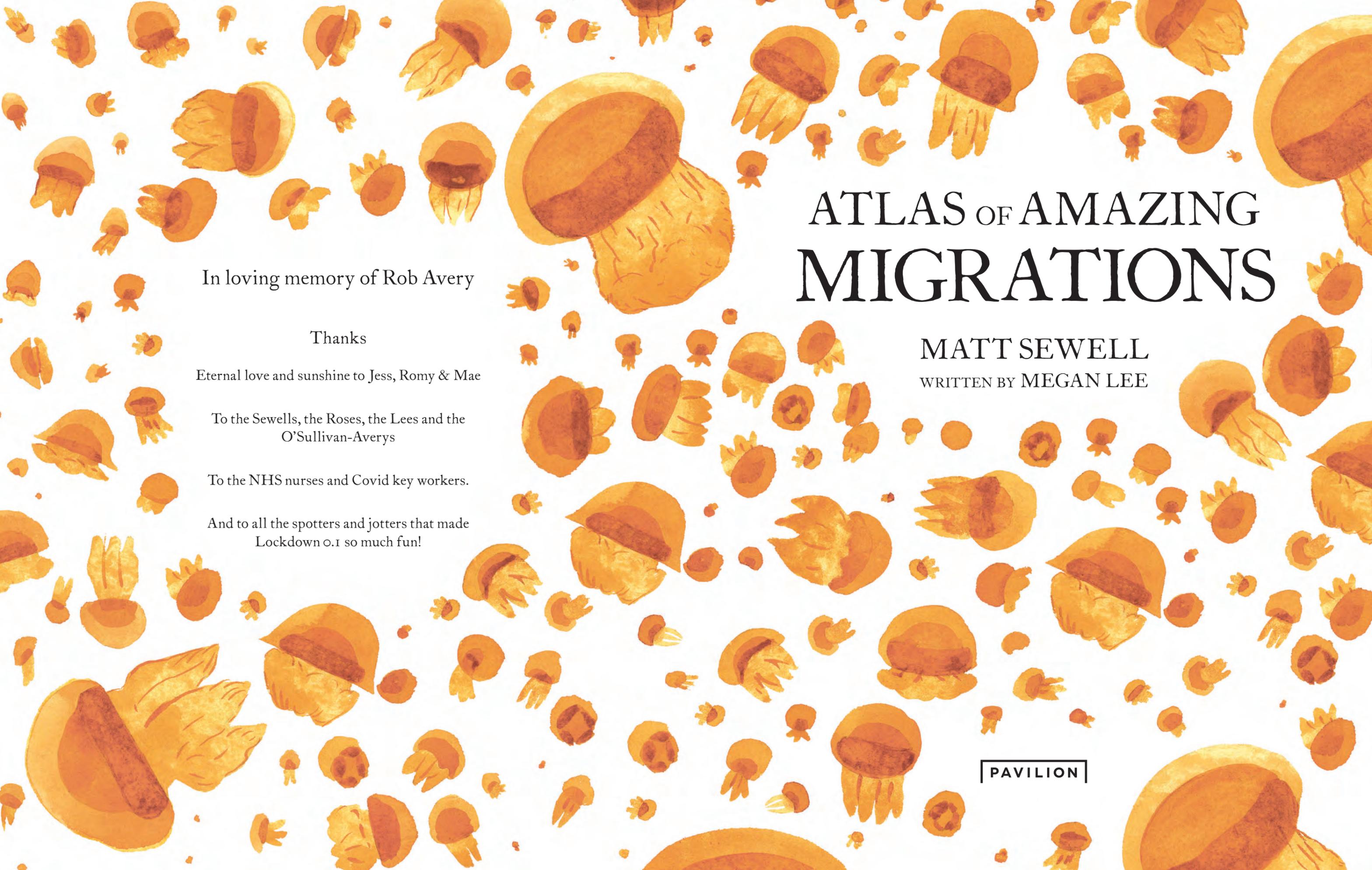


ATLAS OF AMAZING MIGRATIONS

Extract





ATLAS OF AMAZING MIGRATIONS

MATT SEWELL
WRITTEN BY MEGAN LEE

In loving memory of Rob Avery

Thanks

Eternal love and sunshine to Jess, Romy & Mae

To the Sewells, the Roses, the Lees and the
O'Sullivan-Averys

To the NHS nurses and Covid key workers.

And to all the spotters and jotters that made
Lockdown 0.1 so much fun!

PAVILION

Contents

Introduction	6	Short-eared owl	48	Osprey	90	Bornean bearded pig	124
Cougar	8	Northern elephant seal	50	Burdock	92	Caribou	126
Basking shark	10	Bohemian waxwing	52	Mapping migrations	94	Grey wolf	130
Wildebeest	12	Painted lady butterfly	54	Humpback whale	96	Canada warbler	132
Zebra	16	Wandering albatross	58	Arctic tern	98	Dandelion	134
Swift parrot	18	Mule deer	60	Golden jellyfish	100	Common toad	136
Orange-bellied parrot	19	Redstart	62	Wild cherry	102	Saltwater crocodile	138
Sockeye salmon	20	Leatherback sea turtle	64	European eel	104	Sea lamprey	140
Adélie penguin	22	Green darner dragonfly	66	Barn swallow	106	Mapping migrations	142
Violet	24	Mapping migrations	68	Monarch butterfly	108	Cownose ray	144
Amur falcon	26	Christmas Island red crab	70	Bar-tailed godwit	110	Desert locust	146
Wandering glider	28	Alpine ibex	74	Nathusius' pipistrelle bat	112	Eurasian curlew	148
Wild Bactrian camel	30	Eurasian cuckoo	76	Blue whale	114	Saiga antelope	150
Pronghorn	32	Bluefin tuna	78	Cerulean warbler	116	Sacred kingfisher	152
Straw-coloured fruit bat	34	Pacific walrus	80	Mapping migrations	118	Coconut	154
Lemming	38	Bar-headed goose	82	Great white shark	120	Rufous hummingbird	156
Red knot	40	Burrowing owl	86	Hen harrier	122	Zooplankton	158
Bornean elephant	42	Cottonmouth snake	88				
Corn leaf aphid	44						
Mapping migrations	46						





Introduction

This book looks at some of the most amazing, arduous and downright clever migrations of creatures ranging from birds to mammals, insects to fish, and even some plants. Creatures migrate from one part of the planet to another mainly to find food or warmth, or to reproduce, or sometimes for some other mysterious reason we're yet to discover.

Their journeys range from treks of thousands of kilometres across continents and oceans, to crossing the road (which might sound simple to us, but is an ordeal in itself if you're a snake or a toad, and the road is packed with speeding cars (see pages 88 and 136). In the case of the painted lady and monarch butterflies (pages 54 and 108), migration can take up to five generations, as parent gets replaced by child then grandchild and so on, as the journey continues.

Migration seems to be written into the genes of animals, so that they know when to travel and where to. Without the sat navs we lucky humans have, creatures use a variety of methods to navigate their routes, including magnetic fields, temperature and light. One study found that some birds seem to use the stars to navigate, just like sailors of old. In the book, we have also mapped some of the most amazing migrations, showing the approximate routes. Not all of the migrations in this book have been mapped and those that are may sometimes have diversions from the journeys we've shown, but we wanted to give a sense of how stunning many of these migrations really are.

We all know that nature is an amazing thing, but just read some of these stories and you'll be stunned by the stamina, strength and smartness of these creatures and the lengths they go to in their migrations. And once you've seen what these animals and plants go through, I hope you won't start complaining next time your trip to the shops takes longer than usual!

Wildebeest

Connochaetes taurinus

This is the blue wildebeest, although if you'd like you can simply call it the gnu. It's no wonder its name translates to "wild beast". As far as antelope go, this guy looks rather intimidating, with two sharp, curved horns jutting out of its massive head and a dark, shaggy mane running down its hunched back. It grazes constantly on Africa's grassy plains, munching away through the day and night.

Living in such a hot place means the wildebeest relies on rainfall for enough grass to eat, and changes in the weather push it to migrate in a massive, clockwise loop each year. It sets off with hearty numbers of zebra, gazelle and impala, but the wildebeest is undoubtedly the star of this show.

As the wet season ends around May or June, some 1.5 million hungry and thirsty wildebeest put on a mind-blowing performance, chasing the rain north around the Serengeti towards Masai Mara. They form a big clan, as up to 500,000 of their calves are born just months before this event. Unlike human babies that flail around on their backs for months, wildebeest calves can walk within minutes of being born! It's a good job too, as they need to be able to keep up with the herd. The wildebeest charge together in a chaotic, swirling mass of muscle, pelt and pure drive, thundering over the land on a dangerous journey. Although their huge numbers provide them with some safety, this doesn't stop many of them from dying along the way. Each year more than 250,000 gnu are taken out by predators like lions and hyenas, or caught by cattle fences that are popping up more and more across Africa.

Many will also drown or be pulled down into water by lurking crocodiles as they attempt to cross the Mara River. This is one of the most incredible parts of the wildebeest's journey. The herd moves in unison, scoping out and crossing the river all as one. This kind of teamwork is known as "swarm intelligence", and helps them tackle the obstacle more efficiently. Even though thousands of them won't survive these croc-infested waters, the wildebeest cross the Mara anyway. The sight of distant rainstorms promising lots of fresh grass is just too tempting. They will have to do it all again as they follow the rain back towards Tanzania around November. Altogether, their mighty loop covers almost 650km.

