

Long-distance flyers arriving earlier

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European researchers have found that birds who migrate long distances are arriving at their summer breeding grounds earlier.

Reporting in the journal *Science*, the group says that long-distance migrants appear to be adapting to warmer temperature changes as quickly as short-distance ones. Scientists had assumed that birds that do not travel far would change patterns more quickly.

In an interview with the BBC, Nils Christian Stenseth of the University of Oslo called the long-distance shift a "surprising and interesting evolutionary response to climate change."

The team compared the times of birds' arrival in Europe using information going back more than 20 years from banding stations in Italy and Scandinavia. They compared changes in arrival times for birds that migrate a few miles north with those migrating from Africa to Europe.

Stenseth said that because most birds start breeding when they are only a year old, genetic adaptations happen relatively quickly.

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