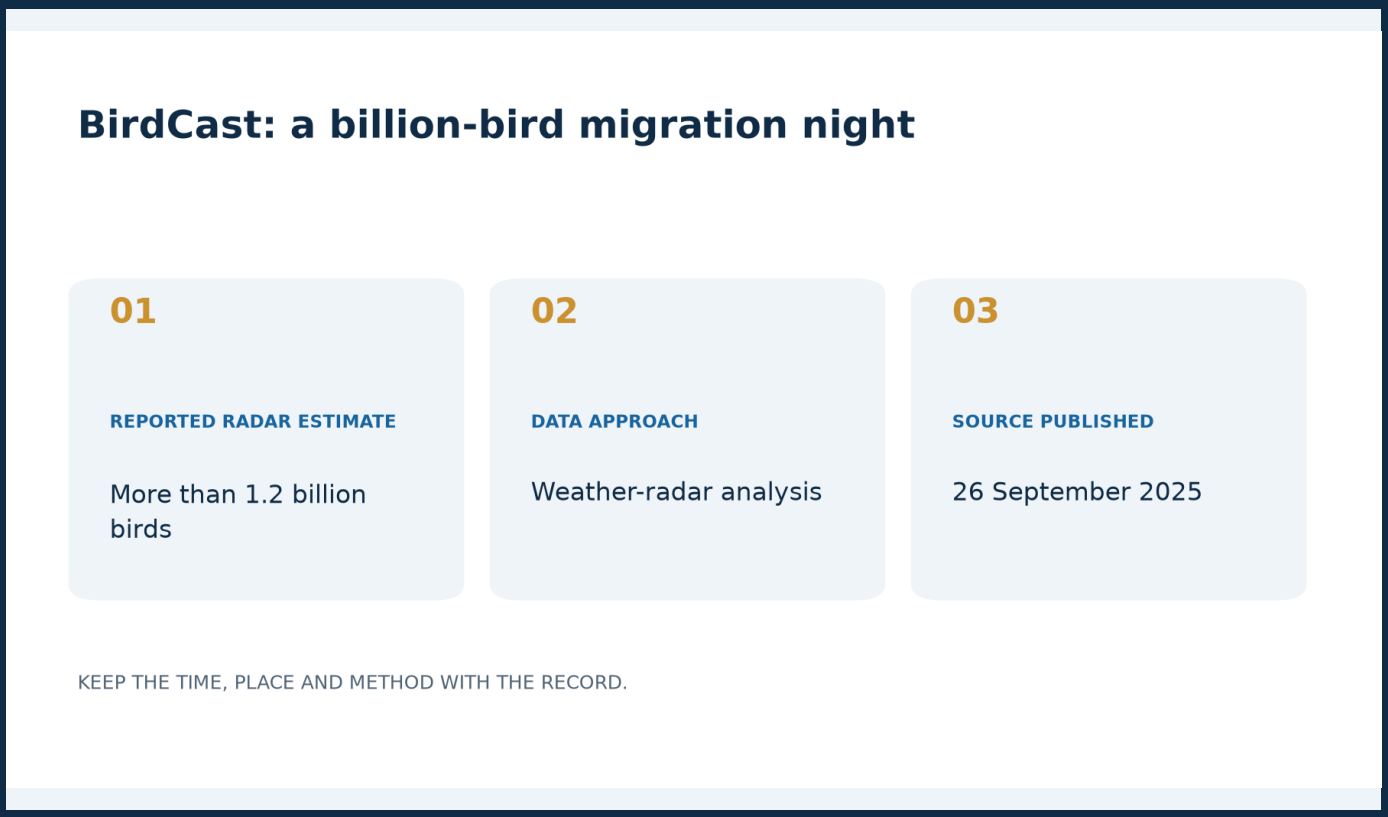
Migration in motion

From one remarkable bird to a sky full of movement.



Dattle reference diagram; labels summarize the cited source. Not an event photograph or measured time series. Credit: Dattle; original graphic from the cited reference.

Historical evidence. Better questions. Useful records.

Radar estimates, satellite-tag tracks, shore counts and complete checklists measure different parts of migration. This collection keeps those differences visible.

What the records reveal

SCOPE AND METHOD

Two historical migration examples and two monitoring methods. Numbers retain their geographic scope and method. Sensitive wildlife locations should be generalized before public sharing.

A COMPARISON WORTH MAKING

One bird’s journey is not a population trend. A radar estimate is not a species checklist. Keep effort and detection method beside every observation.

IMAGES AND UNCERTAINTY

Photographs and satellite views carry their original credits. Quantitative charts use cited values; conceptual diagrams are explicitly labeled and contain no invented measurements. AI assisted research and drafting; references were checked and limitations retained. A picture shows a place and moment; it does not prove an entire event boundary, impact or cause. This is a historical reference, not a live warning service.

IN THIS COLLECTION

01 BirdCast: a billion-bird migration night 3

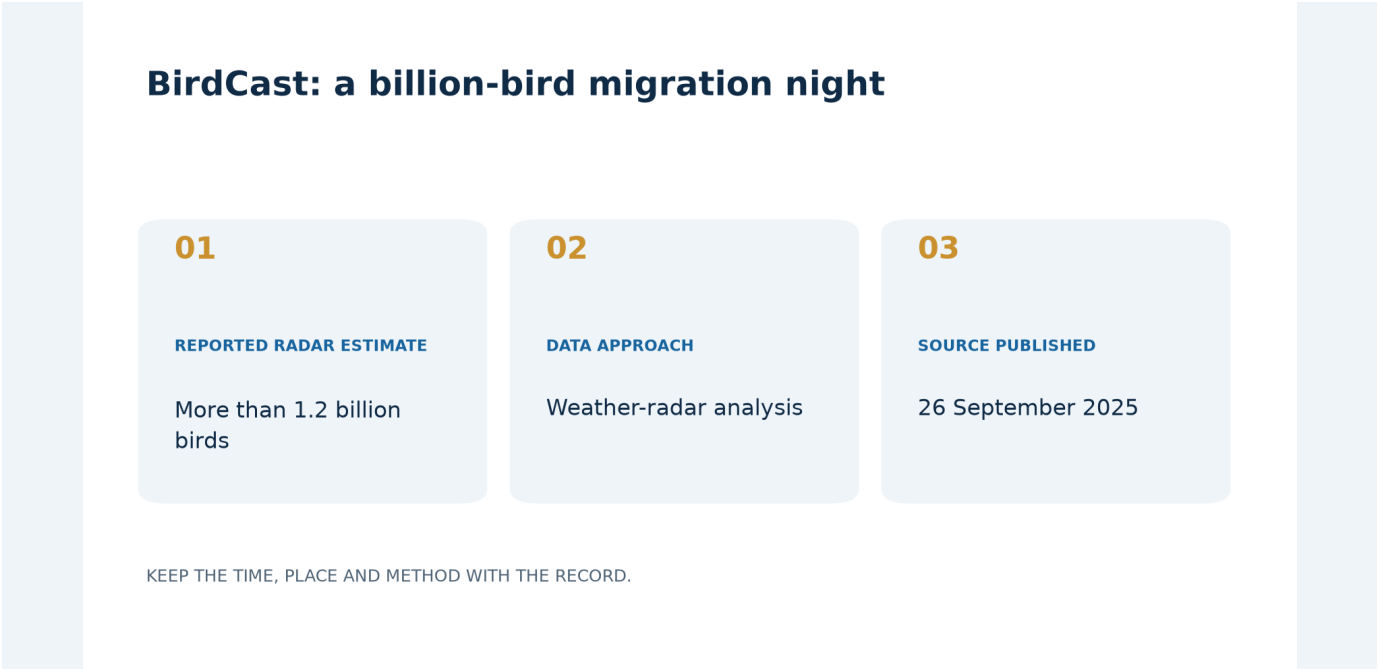
02 Godwit 4BWWY: one extraordinary journey 4

03 Gray whales: counting a passing population 5

04 Complete checklists: absence needs effort 6

BirdCast: a billion-bird migration night

Night of 25 September 2025 | United States radar coverage



Dattle reference diagram; labels summarize the cited source. Not an event photograph or measured time series. Credit: Dattle; original graphic from the cited reference.

Reported radar estimate
More than 1.2 billion birds

Data approach
Weather-radar analysis

Source published
26 September 2025

Not measured here
Species-by-species totals

WHAT HAPPENED

Cornell reported a migration night with more than 1.2 billion birds on BirdCast's live migration map. The figure came from radar-based analysis, rather than individual visual counts.

WHAT THE DATA REVEALS

Save the model product and time window with a headline number. The same night can look very different in a local checklist and a continent-scale estimate.

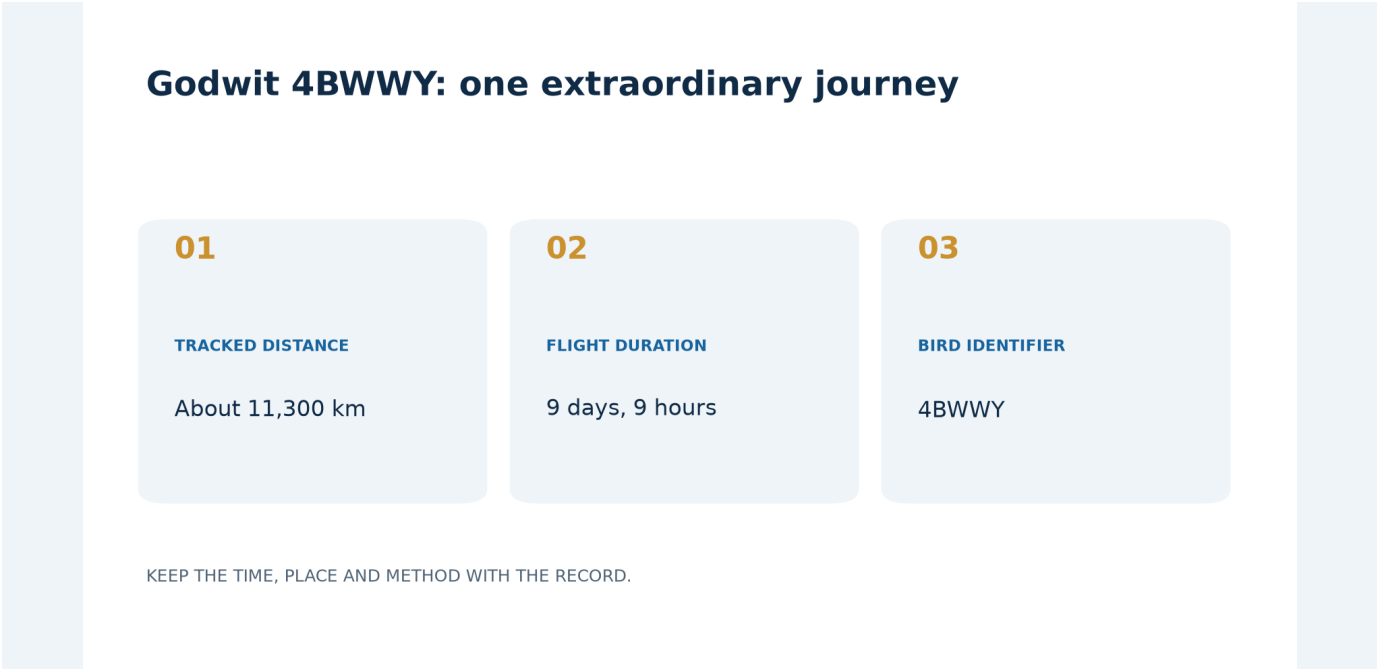
READ WITH CARE

This is Cornell's reported estimate, not a new calculation. It cannot identify how many birds of a particular species passed a particular garden.

Source 1 > **Visual / data >**

Godwit 4BWWY: one extraordinary journey

September 2020; report published 23 September | Alaska to Pūkorokoro-Miranda, New Zealand



Dattle reference diagram; labels summarize the cited source. Not an event photograph or measured time series. Credit: Dattle; original graphic from the cited reference.

Tracked distance
About 11,300 km

Flight duration
9 days, 9 hours

Bird identifier
4BWWY

Method
Satellite transmitter

WHAT HAPPENED

Massey University described a tagged bar-tailed godwit's approximately 11,300 km flight from Alaska to New Zealand. Its transmitter made one bird's journey visible in time and space.

WHAT THE DATA REVEALS

Keep the individual identifier and tracking method. They distinguish a measured animal track from a general migration-route illustration.

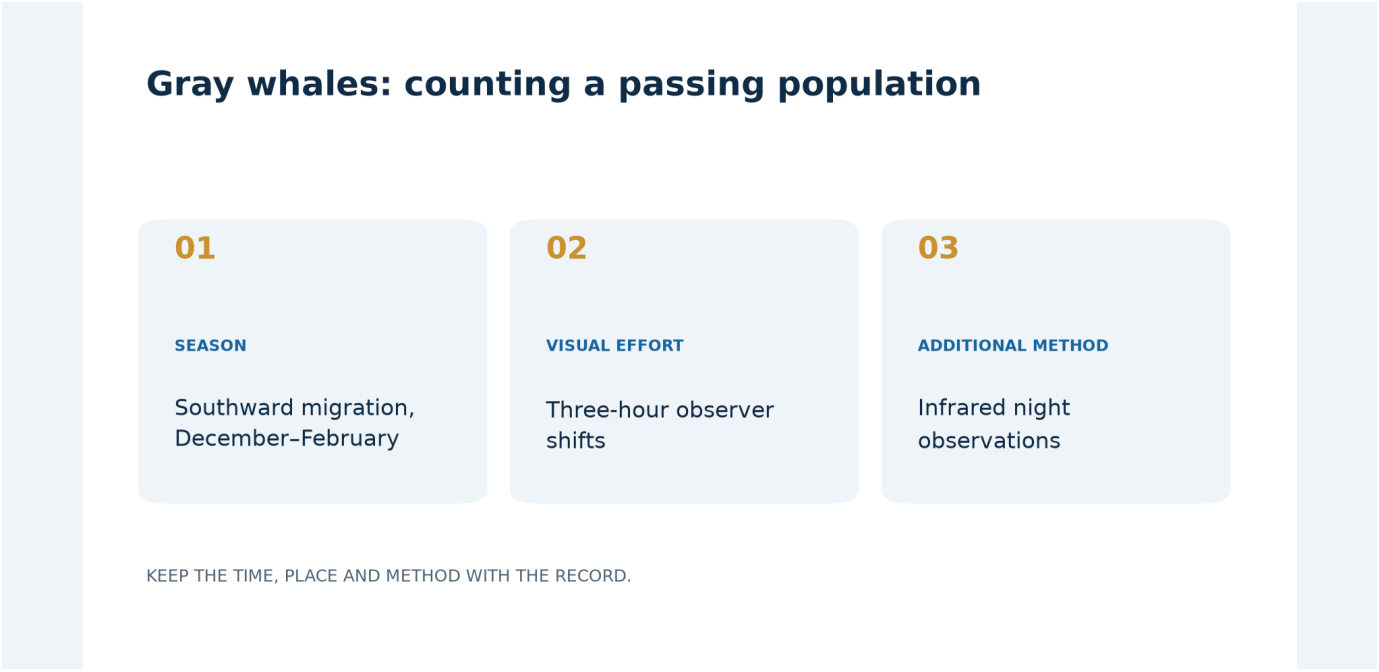
READ WITH CARE

The diagram summarizes endpoints and elapsed time; it is not a GPS route. One individual does not establish the typical distance for the population.

Source 1 > **Visual / data >**

Gray whales: counting a passing population

Monitoring method; NOAA page updated 23 October 2026 | Granite Canyon, near Monterey, California



Dattle reference diagram; labels summarize the cited source. Not an event photograph or measured time series. Credit: Dattle; original graphic from the cited reference.

Season
Southward migration, December-February

Visual effort
Three-hour observer shifts

Additional method
Infrared night observations

Purpose
Population abundance estimation

WHAT HAPPENED

NOAA’s shore-based surveys combine visual observations with other methods, including infrared observations at night, to estimate migrating gray-whale abundance.

WHAT THE DATA REVEALS

Detection conditions and effort matter. A count needs corrections for animals missed, viewing conditions and the part of the migration sampled.

READ WITH CARE

This record describes the method, not a current whale-population estimate. Nearby whale sightings are not interchangeable with the survey’s standardized data.

Source 1 >

Visual / data >

Complete checklists: absence needs effort

Monitoring method; checked 12 November 2026 | A defined birding location and date



Dattle reference diagram; labels summarize the cited source. Not an event photograph or measured time series. Credit: Dattle; original graphic from the cited reference.

Checklist scope
One date, location and protocol

Complete means
All identified birds seen or heard

Keep with the list
Effort and observation context

Missing species
Not necessarily truly absent

WHAT HAPPENED

eBird explains that a complete checklist reports all birds the observer identified during that birding activity. The protocol and location define what the checklist represents.

WHAT THE DATA REVEALS

A species left off a complete checklist is different from one left off a casual list. Preserve checklist completeness before interpreting non-detections.

READ WITH CARE

Dattle does not submit an eBird checklist automatically. Follow eBird’s own rules and link the official checklist when one exists.

Source 1 > **Visual / data >**

From examples to observations

A USEFUL RECORD KEEPS ITS EVIDENCE

Keep the time, place, measurement method, unit, source and uncertainty with every observation. Separate what you saw from an estimate or interpretation. Repeat observations consistently, and retain the original evidence when updating a record.

SUGGESTED DATTLE FIELDS

- Species or group; identification confidence
- Time, location and sensitive-location flag
- Count and unit; estimated or observed
- Duration, distance and observer effort
- Radar, tag, visual or acoustic method
- Weather, source dataset and official checklist URL

AI AS AN ACCELERATOR

Use this prompt to draft a collection structure, then review it. AI can organize the questions and fields; it cannot supply missing observations or replace source verification.

> Create a Dattle for migration in motion. Include Species or group; identification confidence, Time, location and sensitive-location flag, Count and unit; estimated or observed, Duration, distance and observer effort, Radar, tag, visual or acoustic method, Weather, source dataset and official checklist URL. Start with an empty collection. Separate observations, estimates and interpretations. Do not invent measurements, dates, locations or sources. Retain units, uncertainty and source links; flag missing information for review.

Explore Dattle at dattle.com. Availability, features and plan limits are described on the website.

Sources and image credits

Primary references checked November 12, 2026. Records and estimates can be revised. Every case page links to its evidence; full addresses are retained here for reuse.

01. BirdCast: a billion-bird migration night - primary reference
https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/record-breaking-night-of-bird-migration

02. Godwit 4BWWY: one extraordinary journey - primary reference
https://www.massey.ac.nz/about/news/no-quarantine-for-this-international-visitor/

03. Gray whales: counting a passing population - primary reference
https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/science-data/gray-whale-population-abundance

04. Complete checklists: absence needs effort - primary reference
https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000795623-birding-as-your-primary-purpose-and-complete-checklists