

# Stories for Lipreading

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## **MURMURATION by Barrie Wickens.**

[This text is read aloud at the beginning of this video:]  
Welcome to Stories for Lipreading. If you haven't used our website before, we suggest you look at our 'How to Use' page before you begin. We hope you enjoy this short, factual piece, which is called 'Murmuration' by Barrie Wickens.

### **Murmuration by Barrie Wickens.**

Do you know which birds create a murmuration? Starlings.

Like so many other birds, starlings group together in flocks, but their flocks are exceptional.

In the early evening, just before dusk, they form into a huge flock over their roosting place. This flock is called a murmuration. There can be up to 100,000 birds in a murmuration. This huge mass of birds moves as one, creating fascinating, swirling, liquid shapes in the sky. In this large group they find safety. Sometimes the movement is sparked by the presence of a predator such as a hawk or a peregrine falcon. Each bird appears to be trying to avoid being on the outside edge in case a predator strikes.

But how do they communicate the sudden changes of direction throughout the whole flock?

By studying the velocity of these birds, scientists discovered that each bird's movement only affects its seven closest neighbours. That's how they move in different directions at differing speeds, and yet appear to us as one dark, swirling cloud.

Starlings can fly up to twenty miles to join a murmuration.

Murmurations can be seen at Brighton and Eastbourne Piers, on the Somerset Levels, at Aberystwyth and at many other locations across the country.