

Migration Story



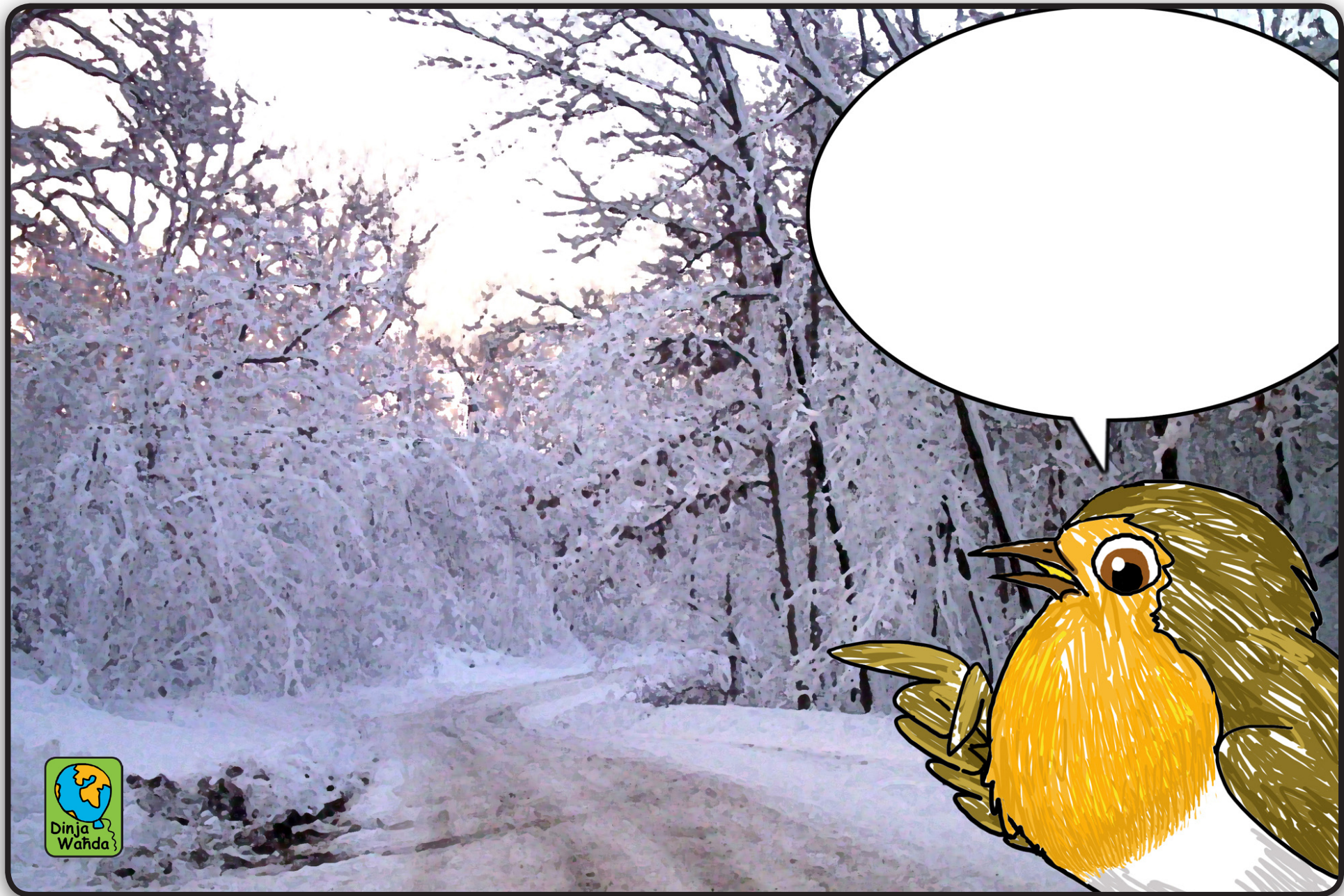
This file contains

1. Eight pictures showing bird migration situations, with speech balloons for the children to fill
2. Explanation and information about each picture situation
3. Suggestions for filling the speech balloons



Have fun!





1. Pityrross Robin



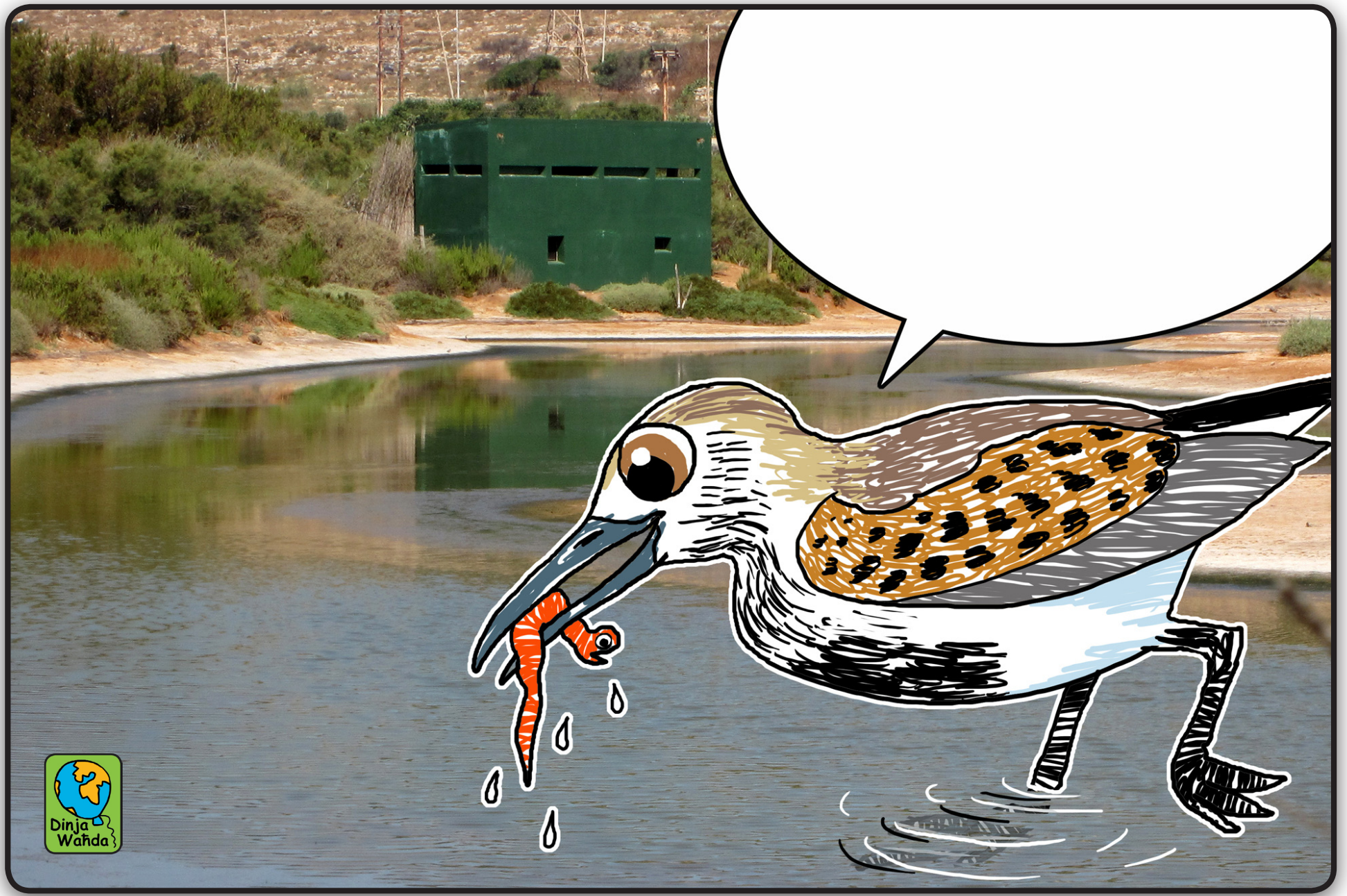
2. Zakak Abjad White Wagtail



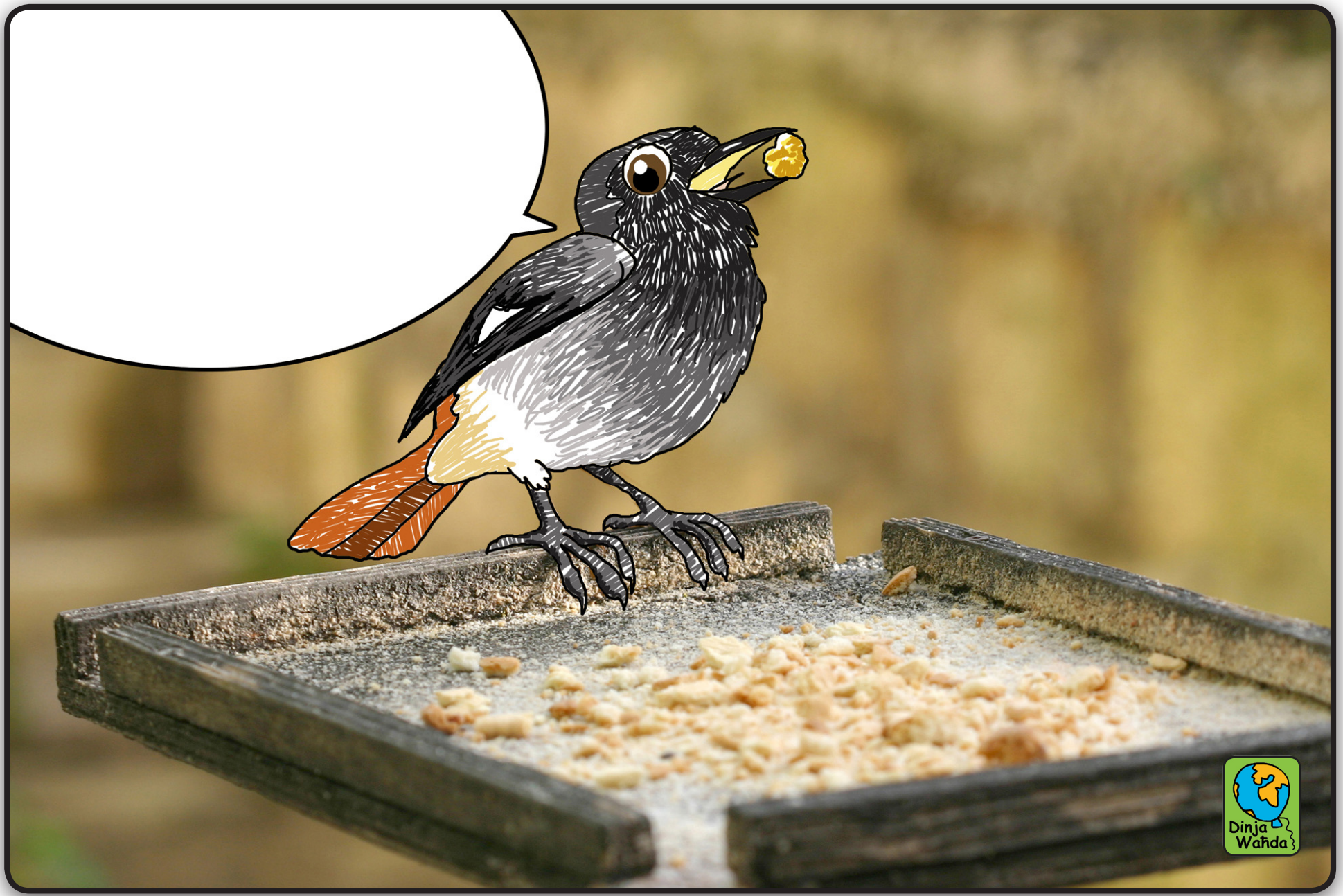
3. Arpa Osprey



4. Gamiema Turtle Dove



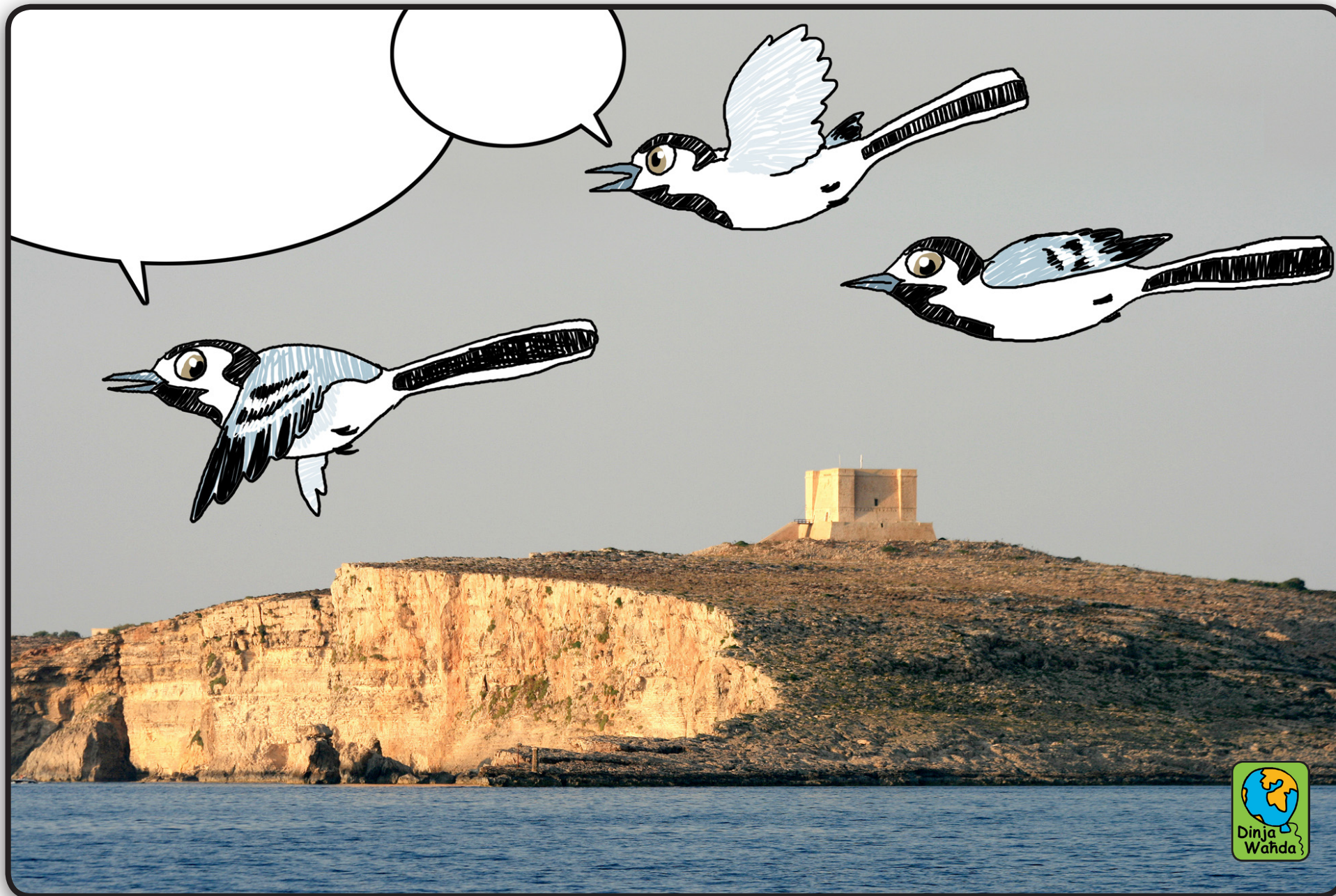
5. *Pispisella tad-Dabra* Dunlin



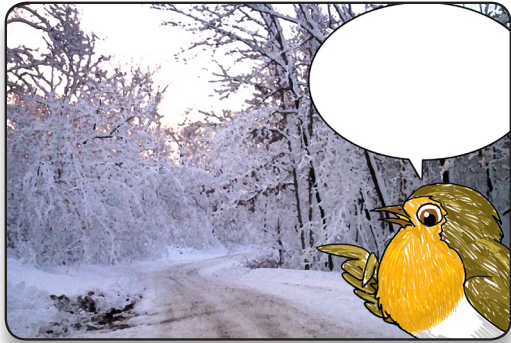
6. Fjamma Sewda Black Redstart



7. Bucaqq tax-Xitwa Stonechat



8. Zakak Abjad White Wagtail



Picture 1

This robin hatched in Finland and spent a great summer growing up and feeding on mosquitoes, caterpillars and other insects and grubs. But he is concerned that he won't survive if he stays in the same place for the winter. That's because the weather up north becomes terribly cold, there is snow everywhere and all the insects are either dead or hidden away in holes and burrows. The robin's only chance to stay alive is to fly away south where the winters are not so cold.

What he could be saying, therefore, is something like:

"If I stay here for the winter I will die!"

"My forest is nice and warm in summer but it's very cold in winter."

"I cannot find food in this snow. That's why I fly south in autumn."

"Birds migrate in autumn because winter is too cold for them here."



Picture 2

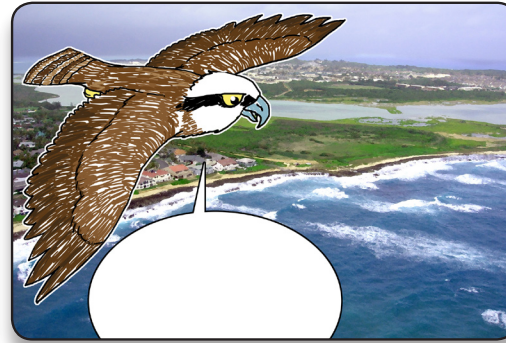
This white wagtail spent his summer up in Lithuania. But the days are starting to get shorter, and he is noticing that the leaves are turning yellow and falling from the trees. It means that it is autumn and that winter will soon arrive. He is checking his watch too, to show that it's time to fly away and go find a nice land in the Mediterranean where to spend the winter. White wagtails arrive in Malta in October and November and thousands spend the winter here.

What he could be saying, therefore, is something like:

"Uh-oh, autumn is here! Time to go!"

"It is time to fly south!"

"The leaves are falling. I must fly south before it gets too cold."



Picture 3

This osprey spent spring and summer raising a family in a forest by a lake in Scotland. But she cannot stay there in winter because the lakes will freeze and she won't be able to catch the fish that are the speciality of this species. So she flies south to spend winter in Africa. It is a very long journey, and one of her biggest problems is the sea, because she cannot land on it if she gets tired. She has to cross it in one go. She looks concerned as she leaves the shores of Sicily - there are 100km of sea before she reaches Malta. Will she be strong enough?

What she could be saying, therefore, is something like:

"Am I strong enough to fly across this sea?"

"Will I reach Malta or will I get tired and drown?"

"I hope I don't meet a storm while crossing the sea."

"Wow, what a long journey! And I can't stop on the way."



Picture 4

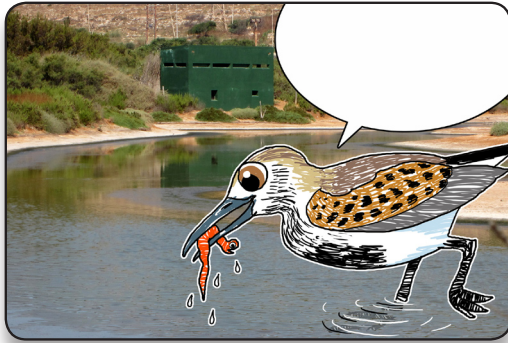
This turtle dove hatched and grew up in Germany, and is now on migration. She has just crossed the sea from Sicily and has reached Malta. In the picture, she is flying over Il-Prajjet (Anchor Bay, Popeye Village). She would love to land in some nice tree and have a good rest. But will hunters try to kill her? If she stays alive she will maybe spend a night resting in Malta. But the next day she will continue her migration, cross the sea to Libya, cross the Sahara Desert and spend the winter in Central Africa.

What she could be saying, therefore, is something like:

"Ah Malta! I hope I find a nice tree somewhere to sleep and rest."

"I am so tired. This looks like a nice place to rest."

"I hope hunters do not shoot me down. I need to rest after all that sea."



Picture 5

This dunlin spent her summer raising a family of chicks on the northern shores of Russia. There was a lot of food up there to feed her family, but she did not want to stay for the freezing winter. So when autumn came she and her grown chicks migrated south to the Mediterranean region. She stopped at Għadira nature reserve (notice the birdwatching hide in the background) and decided to spend the winter there. In that little lake she can find all the food she wants, such as worms and other minibeasts (invertebrates).

What she could be saying, therefore, is something like:

"Yum yum, after that long journey, this food tastes delicious."

"This lake at Għadira is like a restaurant for me."

"I like this place, I think I will spend all winter here."



Picture 6

This black redstart from Belgium is spending his winter in Malta. It's much less cold here than up there near the North Sea, the water is not frozen, there is no snow, and he can find food to stay alive. Also, some people and some schools have the nice habit of putting up bird tables and providing even more food for the hungry birds. This bird has found a garden with a nice bird table full of delicious food. Thanks to this regular supply, he will not need to fly around too much, and can stay all winter near this garden, and be enjoyed by everyone.

What he could be saying, therefore, is something like:

"I really love bird tables. There is so much good food for me here."

"Yummy, it's cake again! My favourite winter snack!"

"Bird tables help us birds to stay alive and strong in winter."

"Thank you for putting out food for me this winter!"



Picture 7

This little stonechat from Bulgaria has stayed all winter in the open Maltese countryside, which he loves so much. He has spent five whole months here, catching grasshoppers and slugs and other minibeasts (invertebrates). But it is now March and winter is over. The rains have stopped and the days are becoming a bit hot. This bird cannot live in a hot climate so he must soon leave and go back home, before it gets too hot and dry.

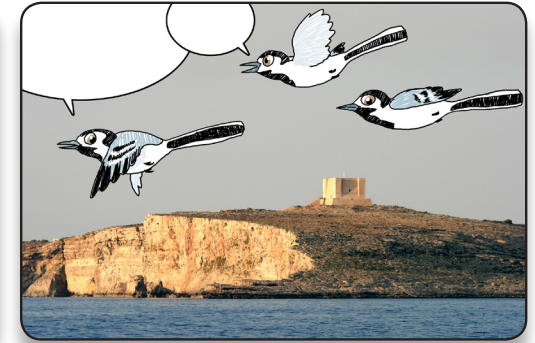
What he could be saying, therefore, is something like:

"I really loved spending winter here, but now it's getting too hot for me."

"Winter is almost over, it will soon be time for me to go back home."

"Phew! The sun is so hot. I cannot spend summer here."

"Malta is great for me in winter but it's too hot for me in summer."



Picture 8

These white wagtails from Poland have spent their winter in Malta. They stayed together all through winter and had a great time feeding in our green fields and meadows, and also visiting a school playground to hunt for titbits after lunchtime. Every evening they went to sleep in a nice big tree in a village square. Now winter is over and they are flying back home. As they fly past Kemmuna, they wonder if they can make it all the way without accident.

What they could be saying, therefore, is something like:

"Do you think we'll make it back home?"
"I hope so."

"Are we still far from home?"
"Very far!"

"Do you think the snow has melted back home?"
"I think so."

"We really enjoyed our stay in Malta, didn't we?"
"We sure did."