

What's This? Seeing with Sound

This text is provided courtesy of OLogy, the American Museum of Natural History's website for kids.



Photo by Lip Kee (CC BY-SA 2.0 license)

During the day, **swiftlets** hunt insects in the forests and fields across Southeast Asia. But at night, they nest inside pitch-black caves.

How do they fly in complete darkness? Like bats, these birds have the ability to echolocate — to “see” with sound. To find their way in the dark, they make two clicks and listen for the echo. They can tell how far away something is by how long it takes the sound to bounce back.

Other animals that can echolocate include dolphins, toothed whales, and shrews.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Where do swiftlets nest at night?

2. Describe how swiftlets are able to fly in complete darkness.

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

3. What is the main idea of this text?