



Activity 4 **Sounds about us**

Biodiversity adds to the beauty of sound in our lives. This sensory activity helps pupils to 'tune-in' to the variety of natural sounds to be heard outdoors, and supports listening and musical skills. This could be used as a 'warm-up' activity outside to get children organised into groups.

Curriculum area(s)	Resources needed	Preparatory activity
<p>Expressive arts Music.</p> <p>Literacy and English Listening and talking.</p> <p>Science Planet Earth – biodiversity and interdependence.</p>	<p>Outdoor space Preferably with natural elements and bird life.</p> <p>RSPB quick guide Identify the most common birds seen on school grounds. See the section <i>What's that bird?</i> under 'Learn' in 'Big School's Birdwatch' in the Teaching resources section. Includes sound clips for each of the species listed and a link to a video <i>Outside the classroom</i> – British birds (Teachers TV). www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork</p> <p>RSPB bird guide See the interactive 'Bird identifier' under 'Birds & wildlife' section www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife</p> <p>Forest School Scotland Resources Sound map materials – see Sources below</p> <p>Cards with bird names/images Approximately 5-7 different species (ideally those found in your school grounds) duplicated to make enough for your group.</p>	<p>Sound maps Each pupil can develop listening skills by creating a Sound Map (see resources) in your outdoor area. Each pupil finds a special listening spot and records the type, direction and distance of sounds over a short period using a pencil and index card. After the time is over, everyone can gather to share their sound maps.</p>

Main activity description

Recordings

If possible, play recordings of songs and calls, or listen and mimic the bird species around you (see top 20 common birds in 'Resources' section).

include: Lapwing – 'pee-wit'; Chiffchaff – 'chiff-chaff'; mallard – 'quack'; Cuckoo – 'cuck-oo'; Redwing – 'zeep,zeep'; Chaffinch – 'pink-pink'; Great tit – 'teacher, teacher'

They must keep the name a secret, but have to move about and find the other person with the same card by imitating the bird song or call loudly. While 'singing' or 'calling', the pupils can move around until the various flocks come together.

Find your flock

Play 'Find your flock' game outside, using cards with one of the chosen bird names and a picture of the bird on it for each pupil. Species calls could

Show the cards illustrating and naming the chosen species and describe their songs or play a recording of them. See who can imitate these sounds. Then give each of the pupils a card.

Discuss why birds have different calls and why they might use them.

Extension activities

Bird orchestra

Stand in a circle starting first with one species, then build on this by adding layers of additional calls/sound. Experiment with these sounds and musical instruments to make a 'bird orchestra'.

Composers

Research how natural sound has been mimicked by composers e.g. *The flight of the bumblebee* (Rimsky-Korsakov), or *Lark ascending* (Vaughan Williams).

Sources & further inspiration

Forest Education Initiative

Sounds about us and other outdoor activities can be found in the Forest School Scotland Resources section (section 8 – Activities). www.foresteducation.org/country.php?ctry=s

