



Campbell Creek Science Center

Tuning into Birds

Recognizing birds by ear is helpful because often it is easier to hear a bird than to see it. Use this activity to help you learn to recognize birds by sound.

Directions

1. Head outside to a quiet, safe place. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. How many different birds songs do you hear?
2. Tune into just one bird. What sounds is it making? Listen for both songs and calls (see below). Notice the pitch and length of the song or call.
3. To help you remember bird calls and songs, try to link words or other sounds to what you hear. Does the song or call remind you of anything? Does it sound like certain words? Record your notes in the Sound Chart (page 2). With a little practice, you will be able to identify familiar bird sounds all around you.

Materials

- Bird field guide (book, website, or app)
- Binoculars (optional)

Question

- How many different bird sounds did you hear?
- How do birds use sounds to communicate?

Songs vs. Calls

Songbirds **sing** to attract mates and defend their territories. They **call** to keep in contact with each other and to warn each other about potential dangers.

Calls are usually shorter than songs and **songs** are often more melodic.

Call: "Chickadee-dee-dee."
Song: "Hey, sweetie!"

Black-capped Chickadee



NPS photo

Call: "Kew, kew, kew"
Song: A ringing telephone

Dark-eyed Junco



NPS photo

Varied Thrush



NPS photo

Call: "Chup, chup, giph"
Song: A referee whistle





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Sound Chart

Use this chart to take notes about the bird calls and songs that you hear. You can use a field guide or an app to help identify the birds that you find. Refer back to this chart each time you hear a call to help train your brain to quickly identify birds by their sounds.

	Sounds Like	Name of Bird
Bird 1		
Bird 2		
Bird 3		
Bird 4		
Bird 5		
Bird 6		
Bird 7		
Bird 8		



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