

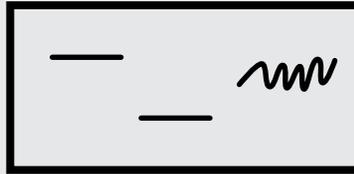
Many people enjoy learning to identify birds by the sounds they make. But you can enjoy the calls of birds, and learn a lot about their behavior, even if you don't know how to identify them! Use this nature journaling activity to help you pay attention to the different types of bird calls and behaviors around you.

Sound Mapping



Sound Map Example:

For an Eastern towhee (*which says "Drink your Teaaaa"*) you might draw the call like this:



Did you know — there have been nearly 500 species of birds recorded in North Carolina. Also, each bird species can make a variety of different calls. But for the most part, birds call for just a few purposes. Birds sing in order to attract a mate and to set up and defend a territory from other birds. Birds also call to alert each other to the presence of a predator, to beg for food when they are young, or to communicate with others in their flock or family. Can you think of other reasons why birds sing?

Materials:

Nature Journal
Pencil
Colored pens or pencils
Compass (optional)

Having fun?

Tag [@naturalsciences](#) on social media, so we can see you and your loved ones enjoying your nature neighborhood.

Instructions:

1. Go outside and find a place to sit comfortably and quietly in the middle of your yard. Try to avoid sitting against a building or other structure.
2. On a fresh sheet in your journal, draw a small "X" in the center of the page. This "X" represents you in the landscape. If you have access to a compass (*or compass app on your phone*), use it to make a note of which direction you are facing.
3. Your task is to create a map of all the sounds you hear in the landscape around you. Sounds that are closer to you should be drawn closer to the "X". Sounds that are farther away should be drawn farther from the "X". When you hear a sound, you can choose how you want to document it on your map. Here's some ideas for how you can record the sounds you hear:
 - Write words that describe the sound you hear in the location where you hear the sound — for example, a tufted titmouse singing nearby might say "Peter Peter Peter."
 - Draw the shape of the sound that you hear as if you were writing music. Create symbols for each type of sound you hear and create a legend.
4. Add notes and sketches to describe the areas from which birds are singing. For example, is the bird on the ground, in a shrub, or perched high in a treetop?
5. Add notes and symbols to describe behaviors or movements that you notice. For example, use arrows to record if a bird moved from a tree to a feeder and back again.
6. After about 15 minutes, look over the map you've created. In your notes, reflect on your observations:
 - What patterns do you notice in bird singing and behavior?
 - Did you notice any interactions between birds?
 - Did you notice anything about the landscape that might influence why you hear these sounds from this area?
 - What explanations can you come up with to explain a bird song or behavior you observed? What evidence do you have to support that explanation?