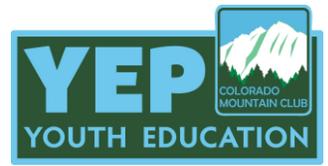


Bird Song: Activity Guide



Part 1: Find Your Bird Mate!

Let's play a game to help you learn about why bird species have such different songs. If all animals sounded the same, it would be very difficult to identify each other, and find a mate. In this activity, we will use items around your house to create a bird song, and then use your sense of sound to find a mate, like birds do in courtship duets.

Suggested: watch [Why Birds Sing video](#) before playing this game.

Grades: K and up

Time: 40 mins to 1.5 hours

Materials:

- Plastic eggs (or film canisters, or non-clear plastic cups taped together)
- 2 sets of random household objects:
 - Paperclips, marbles, rocks, cotton balls, rubber bands, beads, coins, etc.

Set-up:

- Create your bird song makers by placing a few random objects in a plastic egg. To make a song a little more complex, try wrapping a rubber band around another object like a marble to muffle the sound, or place a coin with a cotton ball.
- Each plastic egg should have a matching pair. Don't forget to make a small mark on your eggs to help you keep track of the pairs.
- Make as many pairs as you would like (at least 3 pairs, or 6 eggs suggested)

Playing the Game:

Option 1 (works best with fewer players (1-3) or younger ages):

1. Hide eggs all throughout your house or backyard.
2. Players go around try the find the eggs, and using their sense of sound, match the eggs to their bird song mate (matching egg sound).

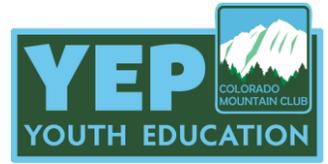
*Try to match as many bird songs as you can, or get as many as possible within a certain time limit.

Option 2 (works best with more players (4+):

This version is a little bit like marco polo plus hide and go seek.

1. You will need one adult or player to act as a moderator. You will need an even number of players (birds)
2. Give each bird an egg song sound. Make sure all of the eggs in play have a matching pair that another bird has.
3. The moderator will count to 20-30 seconds. With their egg (bird song), players/birds will have 20-30 seconds to hide in a room or yard. After this time, the moderator will yell "bird!" at this time, birds can sing (shake egg) to their mates.

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4. After this time, the moderator will yell “stop.” Birds must stop singing and will have 15 seconds to get as close to who they think their bird mate as possible.
5. After the moderator finishes counting to 15, birds must freeze.
6. Repeat again until birds have found their mate. First pair wins or keep playing until all bird pairs are found.

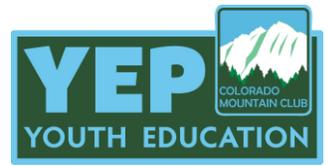
*If you want the game to last longer, you can have birds pick up more eggs (bird songs) once they find their mates. In this version, keep playing until all bird songs have been picked up and matched. The goal if for birds/players is collect the most pairs.

Option 3: Add a predator

Remember while bird songs are beautiful, and have their benefits, they can also attract predators.

1. In this version, you will play with similar instructions to Option 2, but instead of a moderator, you will have a predator. After each round, birds will have a chance to get closer to other birds and find their mate.
2. However, after the predator counts to 15 seconds, birds must try to hide and freeze.
3. At this point, the predator can identify by name any birds (players) the predator can see out in the open or not well camouflaged. They will then be out (eaten) and sit with the predator in the middle.
4. The game will continue, with predators counting until 15 seconds, yelling “bird,” with players making their bird songs (egg shakers), and hiding/freezing until birds have found their mate or have been “eaten”.
5. The goals is for birds to stay as hidden as possible while trying to find their bird mate. The goal for predators is to use your sharp vision to spot out bird prey! Birds (players) win when they find their mate safely. Predators win when there are not enough birds to successfully find a mate.

Bird Song: Activity Guide



Part 2: Do You Hear What I Hear?

Have you ever listened closely to a bird? If so, you might be familiar with some of the things they say. While birds don't actually talk to us, bird watchers use phrases like these to represent the songs of various birds. This practice is called bird song mnemonics. Bird song mnemonics match the calls of birds with a phrase. The phrase rhythmically sounds like the bird's song. When bird watchers memorize these phrases, they can use them to identify types of birds they hear.

So go out in the morning and listen to the dawn chorus or bird songs. Open your ears and maybe even close your eyes to pinpoint different animal sounds. Write down what you hear. Listen to bird sounds at www.allaboutbirds.org. Some birds may have more than one sound.

Bird Song: Activity Guide

After clicking on each bird below and listening, try to match the following birds with their songs or calls:



[Black Capped Chickadee \(call\)](#)

“caw, caw, caw”



[American Crow](#)

“cheer-up, cheer-up”



[Mourning Dove](#)

“o-ka-lee, o-ka-lee”



[American Robin](#)

“kyeeyer”

“wick-a, wick-a”



[American Goldfinch](#)

“chicka-dee-dee-dee”



[Red-winged Blackbird \(song\)](#)

“wock, wock wock-a-wock”



[Black-billed Magpie](#)

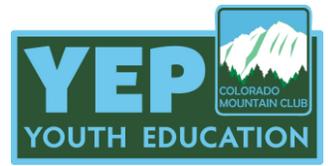
“hoo-oo, hoo-hoo”



[Northern Flicker](#)

“potato-chip, potato-chip”

Bird Song: Activity Guide



Answer Key:

Black Capped Chickadee (call)- chicka-dee-dee-dee

American Crow- caw, caw, caw

Mourning Dove- hoo-oo, hoo-hoo

American Robin- cheer-up, cheer-up

American Goldfinch- potato-chip, potato-chip

Red-winged Blackbird (song)- o-ka-lee, o-ka-lee

Black billed Magpie- wock, wock wock-a-wock

Northern Flicker- klyeeyer; wick-a, wick-a