



Sing - Why do birds sing?

Fact

- Birds sing for the same reason you talk - to communicate.
- Birds are territorial – they have a place that they protect so they can use their song or call to warn birds in their group that an outsider has come into their territory and also to warn the intruder “this is my place – get outta here!”
- There are over 9000 different types of birds that each have their own unique way of communicating.
- Different birdsongs are like different languages so most birds from a different species can’t understand each other.
- Most birds sing at particular times of the day, especially at dawn and dusk.
- And also like us they’ll sing for enjoyment or to chatter with other birds in their community.

Do you know

- Birds can have a huge vocal range – some of the notes they sing may be too high or too low for the human ear to hear.
- Some birds sing non-stop all day from sun up to sun down.
- If you brought a bird into New Zealand, that doesn’t normally live here, the bird would soon develop a new song – different from all it’s relatives in the country it came from.
- Tiritiri Matangi is a special bird sanctuary island near Auckland that has extinct and endangered species on it.

Experiments you can do

Try copying or mimicking a bird in your back yard. Listen to the sounds the birds make and see if you can make those sounds. The better you get the more curious the bird will be and it may even fly nearer to check out what kind of bird you are.

See if there’s a bird sanctuary or bird rescue place near you. You might even be able to find an ornithologist (oar-knee-thollow-gist) near you who can help to explain the different bird sounds and habits.

Other Investigations

Make up a code of whistles or sounds with your family or friends. Different sounds could stand for different words or actions. You can even make it into a game.

A long whistle could be drawn as _____ and mean walk. A short whistle could be drawn as ____ and mean run. Clicking your tongue could be drawn as - - - - and mean hop and blowing a raspberry (a farty sound) could be drawn as **** and mean crawl along the ground.

Draw them up so you remember them and then get someone to make the sounds while you and your friends do the actions for them. Play it like “Simon Says” and every time someone gets muddled up they have to sit down until there’s only one person left.

Jokes

Knock, knock

Who's there?

Cook

Cook who?

Stop making bird noises and let me in!

From Stephen