

Outdoor & Woodland Learning Activity Sheet

Activity:	Bird Theatre							
Habitat:	Woodland	Season:	S	✓	S	✓	A	W

Level	
Early	
First	✓
Second	✓
Third and Fourth	✓
Senior Phase	

Curriculum topics			
Expressive Arts	✓	Health and Wellbeing	✓
Languages	✓	Mathematics	
Religious & Moral Ed		Sciences	✓
Social Studies		Technology	

Equipment*
Bird Theatre Sheets Bird picture and name cards (laminated sets available from Culag office)

Time
30 minutes

Key outcomes
Understand different call birds make to communicate. Understand bird behaviour.

*Items depicted in bold are available from CALLP

Activity description
<p>Use bird picture and names to learn some of the common woodland/garden birds in the area. Listen to the sounds they make, try to mimic etc.</p> <p>Talk about different type of calls: Song – guarding territory, attracting a mate Contact – keeping tabs on where each other are Alarm and mobbing – Warning of danger and driving off predators Fighting calls – territorial/mate disputes Juvenile begging – young demanding food!</p> <p>Bird theatre is about beginning to act these out and become the birds. Shuffle the “role” cards and hand them out. There are colour coded families, with mum, dad and baby bird roles. Each family goes and finds their nest area.</p> <p>During the “live” time, the parents are searching for food (can use sticker dots/sticks/imagination) for their young. The parents: keep in contact with each other (contact calls), the “dad” sings from his singing perch, potentially has territorial disputes with the other “dad”, and the parents keep an eye out for the predator. When sighted, an adult bird calls “predator” and the rest of the adults have to repeat “predator” loudly (while the young go still and silent as possible). The parents chase the predator out of the area, or hide. When the parents take food to the nest, the young start beginning, but must be silent and still otherwise to stay safe.</p>

Notes
<p>Has the potential to grow arms and legs!</p> <p>Can be linked in with the Camouflage Game, to learn about food chains and invertebrates trying to avoid becoming dinner!</p> <p>Can also be linked to the Bird Nests in the Woods activity, finding out about nesting and eating habits of different bird species, and finding suitable locations and feeding sites, with an optional mapping element.</p>



Additional aspects to explore:

Why might birds argue over territory and a mate? Explore resources and making sure there is enough in an area to support a family. Can bring our behaviour into it... where do we go when we need food (supermarket). Where do birds go? The area they guard. They need to make sure they have enough food to support themselves and their families (note: in winter, many birds flock together to share warmth and resources, and in spring they become more competitive and territorial).

Each species of bird has their own specific song, which is quite distinctive from other bird species. However, when it comes to alarm calls, these often sound more similar between species. Why might this be? Explore how different species eat different foods and have slightly different requirements for nest locations (i.e. they occupy different “niches”), so they will be in direct competition with birds of the same species, but less so with birds of a different species. Therefore having different songs, allows them to listen out for the direct competition and ignore the rest.

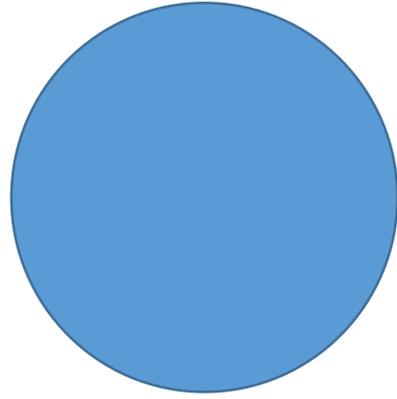
However, there is a benefit to alarm calls being similar. If one species spots a predator, and starts alarming, other species benefit from knowing this information (or they might get eaten!), and they can then also join in with the alarm calls.

What is the benefit of baby birds being quiet while their parents are out searching for food, and only begging when a parent appears at the nest? Baby birds can't fly and are very vulnerable. If they were always making lots of noises, they would be more likely to be spotted by a predator and eaten. It's safer to stay still and quiet as much as possible. They are in direct competition with their siblings for food (when food is scarce, only the strongest will survive), so they make a lot of noise when a parent appears with food to try and get it before their siblings do!

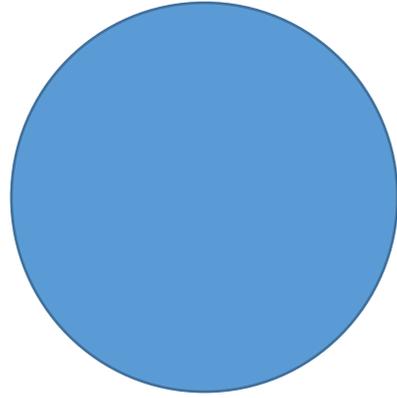
Which bird sounds like...

“tea-cher tea-cher”	Great Tit
a squeaky trolley	Dunnock
“eeee ee ee ee”	Blue tit
“go go go go teeeaaaammmmm” (in a cheery up beat way – i.e. their team is winning!)	Chaffinch
“go go go teammmmm” (in a downhearted, sad way – i.e. their team is losing!)	Willow Warbler
a leaky tap (kind of “drip drip drop”)	Chiffchaff
phrases repeated three times each	Song Thrush
a lyrical song that starts at a high pitch	Robin
a lyrical song, slow and wistful, that starts at a low pitch	Blackbird

To hear recordings of these birds singing, visit <https://pin.it/5Ce0hJm>

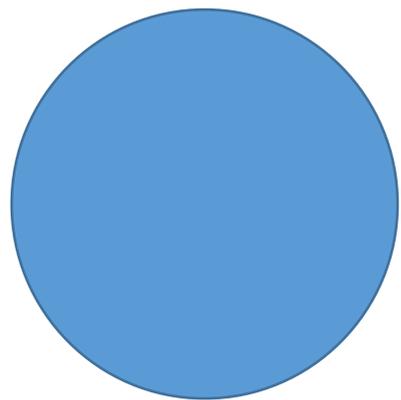


Baby bird



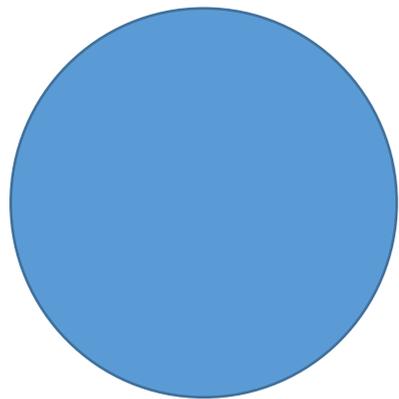
Baby bird

Female bird



(mum)

Male bird

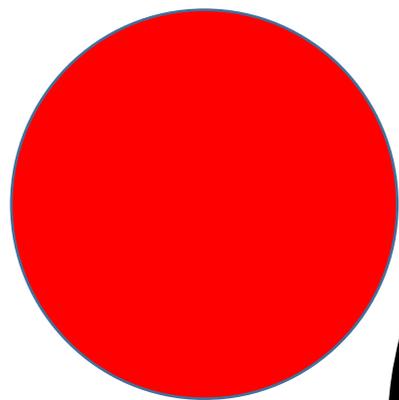


(dad)

Predatory

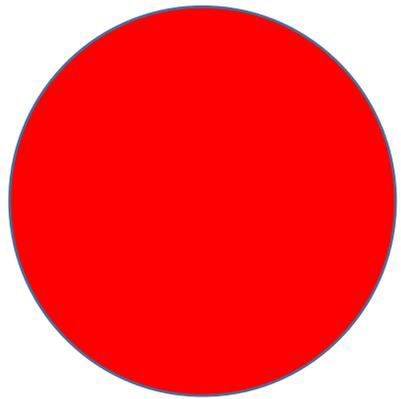
bird

Female bird

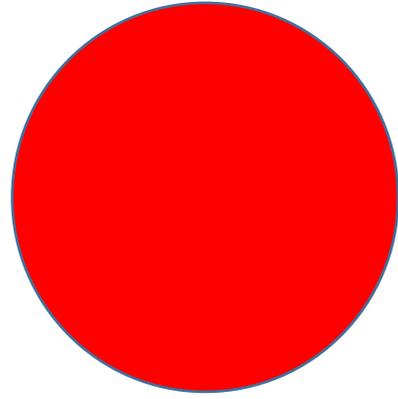


(mum)

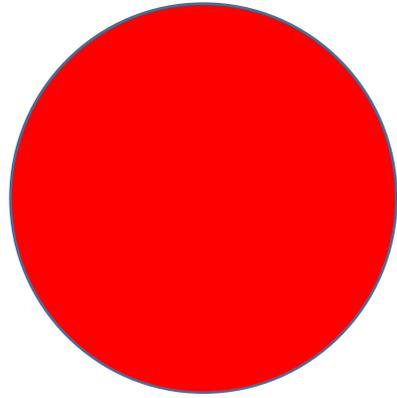
Male bird



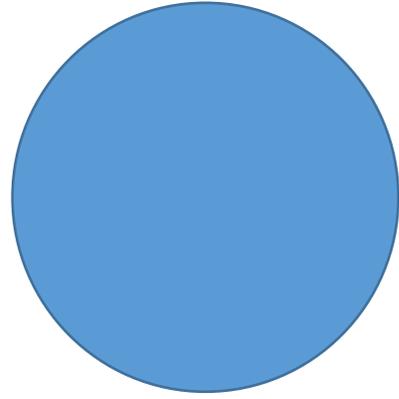
(dad)



Baby bird



Territory



Territory

Fighting

Calls

“Argue”

Song

“Singing”

Juvenile

Begging

“Feed Me”

Contact

Calls

“Where are you?”

“I’m over here!”

Alarm & Mobbing

“PREDATOR!”