

Birding Activity Guide for Kids

Kids are natural explorers who enjoy learning through investigation and discovery. This guide includes suggested games and activities to engage children in the bird-watching experience.

Did you know?

You can find birds almost anywhere; in OPEN AREAS like fields or yards, in FORESTED AREAS with lots of trees, and near WATER HABITATS like streams or lakes.

1. Birdie Says (Simon Says)

The goals of this game are to encourage movement, reinforce information about birds, and have fun!

Birdie Says Commands:

- Swoop like an owl.
- Hop like a sparrow.
- Tap on a tree like a hummingbird.
- Dive for prey like a hawk.
- Soar like an eagle.
- Flap your wings like a Canada Goose.
- Strut like a peacock.
- Waddle like a duck.
- Stand like a flamingo.
- Shuffle like a penguin.
- Run fast like an ostrich.

2. Lead the Way

Kids love being the leader and being outdoors is a great opportunity to let them take charge. For this activity, let them choose a park, trail, or green space to explore. Encourage children to lead the investigation by offering options and asking open-ended questions.

Options/Questions:

- Would you like to go for a walk or find a place to sit while looking and listening for birds?
- Would you like to look for birds or their nests?
- Which way would you like to go?
- If you locate a nest: What items did the bird use to make it? Was it high in a tree or low to the ground?
- Do you see any signs that a bird was here? Items such as cracked seeds, tracks, whitewash (poop), owl pellets, and feathers are all signs a bird was in the area.
- Close your eyes and listen. If you hear a bird call, point to where you think it is coming from.
- How many different types of birds can you find?

3. Bird Calls

There are many ways to describe or identify a bird, but one aspect of bird identification that cannot easily be described in words is the call or song a bird makes. Below are some tricks you can use to remember their sounds:

- Robin ~ Cheerio, cheery-me.
- Black-capped Chickadee ~ Cheeeeeese burger, chicka-dee-dee-dee.
- Gold Finch ~ Po-ta-to-chip, po-ta-to-chip.
- Downy Woodpecker ~ Peeeeeeeeek.
- Barred Owl ~ Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you?
- Sparrow ~ Oh, dear, Canada, Canada, Canada.
- Nuthatch ~ yank, yank, yank.
- Blue Jay ~ queedle, queedle, queedle.

4. Old MacDonald Had a Park

Old MacDonald had a park;

E-I-E-I-O.

And in his park, he had a **crow**;

E-I-E-I-O.

With a **caw, caw** here; and a **caw, caw** there.

Here a **caw**, there a **caw**;

Everywhere a **caw, caw**.

Old MacDonald had a park;

E-I-E-I-O.

*Repeat the verse, replacing the **bold words** above with the suggestions below:

- Owl – hoot, hoot
- Robin – tweet, tweet
- Magpie – wock, wock
- Goose – honk, honk
- Duck – quack, quack

5. Let's Pretend

Birds are amazing nest builders! They build incredible homes with items they find in nature.

Pretend you are a bird and build a nest of your own.

- First, find an open area to build your nest.
- Next, wander around gathering items such as sticks, grass, dried leaves, mud/snow, and other bits of things to use to make the nest.
- Then, carry the materials in your “beak” (two hands near your mouth) back to your chosen area for nest building.
- Once you have collected all your items, decide what shape you want your nest to be.
- Then, work together to create an outline of that shape on the ground.
- Continue adding materials to the shape to build a thick outline and fill in the middle of the nest with soft and light materials.
- Finally, it's time to play! Encourage children to use their imaginations to become birds. They may choose to be a mommy or daddy bird, sitting on eggs in their nest. Or maybe they will be baby birds chirping for a snack or learning how to fly. The sky is the limit!