

Dawn Chorus



Introduction

In the book *Noisy Birds*, the author introduces students to the sounds of 12 different birds. In this activity, students imitate the sounds of the birds as you “conduct” them

Note: This activity is adapted from Bird Sleuth’s Feathered Friends Activities, a collection of monthly lessons about birds. You can download an entire year of activities at www.birdsleuth.org/pennington

Materials Needed

- ◆ The book *Noisy Birds*
 - Handout: “About the birds in this book,” included in this pdf
 - Handout: “Bird Sounds”, one copy to post or write on the board
- ◆ Overhead projector or white board
- ◆ Computer access to play the online sounds of birds from http://www.dawnpub.com/downloadable_activities_book/

Common Core Standards (ELA K-3)

- ◆ Reading: Informational Text
 - Craft and Structure (K.5, 1.5, 2.5, 3.5)
 - Integration and Knowledge of Ideas (K.7, 1.7, 2.7, 3.7)
- ◆ Speaking and Listening
 - Comprehension and Collaboration (K.1, 1.1, 2.1, 3.1)

Teacher Prep

Cut apart the handout so that each bird is on a separate slip of paper

Procedure

1. Read aloud *Noisy Birds*. Have students imitate the sound on each page. Point out that some birds have melodious songs, others have calls, and the woodpecker makes a noise called “drumming.” The additional information on the page refers to the habitat and feeding behavior of each bird.

2. Discuss the reasons why birds sing and reread the book again, but this time play the recording of the actual bird, which is available under the title *Noisy Birds* on the Dawn Publications website. http://www.dawnpub.com/downloadable_activities_book/

Listen for the sounds as they are written in the book; for example, ask students if they can hear “cheery up, cheerio” in the actual robin’s song.

3. Explain that birds are active singers in the early morning as they’re waking up and establishing territory or singing to attract mates. The sound of many birds singing in the morning is called the “dawn chorus.”

4. Tell the class that you’re going to conduct them in a dawn chorus. Divide the class into small groups and assign each of them a bird. Give each group a slip of paper with information about their bird. Choose one student to read it aloud to the entire class.

5. Refer to the list of “Bird Sounds” (either projected or written on the board). Give groups a few moments to rehearse their sounds. When they’re ready, point to one group at a time and have them “sing” for the others. You may go in the same order as presented in the book, or you may choose to have the woodpeckers begin tapping to set the rhythm for other groups to join in.

6. Now they’re ready for the dawn chorus! Point to a group and have them make their sound and keep singing as you point to the other groups. Let the entire chorus resound for several seconds. If possible, make a recording of the performance to play back to the class.

Optional Extension

Challenge students to go outside and listen to the actual dawn chorus.

Ask them if they recognized any of the birds from the book. Springtime is the best time to hear the dawn chorus.

Next Generation Science Standards (DCI K-3)

- ◆ LS1: From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes
 - A: Structure and Function
 - B: Growth and Development of Organisms
 - C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms
 - D: Information Processing

Fun Facts About the Birds

Birds make all kinds of sounds. Sometimes males sing songs to attract females. Other times they sing to keep other males out of the area. Females and males make sounds so they know where each other is while they are looking for food. Many birds make noises to scare off predators.



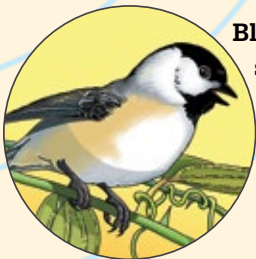
When **American Robins** hunt for food, they tip their head sideways. Are they listening for worms? No! One eye looks up for hawks. The other looks down for worms. One robin may eat 14 feet of earthworms a day.

Most birds sing in spring. But **White-throated Sparrows** also sing in winter. Look for the patch of white on the chin.



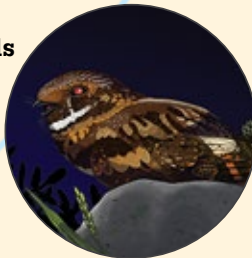
Yellow Warblers are small songbirds. They weigh less than a quarter. Sometimes they even get caught in an orb spider's web.

Barred Owls are nicknamed "Monkey Owls" because they make loud, monkey-like calls. They swallow small mammals whole. Then they cough up the bones and fur in a hard pellet. You can find the pellets at the bottom of a tree where they roost.



Black-capped Chickadees stash seeds to eat later. Each chickadee can remember thousands of hiding places. They like to come to bird feeders. You can even train them to take seeds from your hand!

Eastern Whip-poor-wills call at night. They can be hard to see. But in the beam of a flashlight you can see their eyes glow like fire. They hunt flying insects at dawn and dusk, catching them with their big, wide mouths.



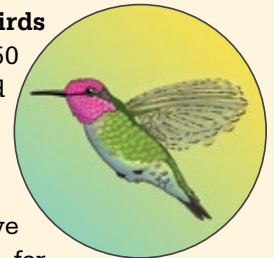
You can find **Mallards** paddling in lakes, rivers, puddles, and ponds. Look for the male's bright green head. And listen for the female's loud quack. The males make a quieter call.

Male American Woodcocks show off for females by doing a sky dance. In the spring they circle high in the air. The wind in their feathers makes a twittering sound. They end their dance with a steep dive to the ground.



White-breasted Nuthatches run up and down the sides of trees. Pinch your nose shut when you sing along with them in this book. You'll sound more like them!

Anna's Hummingbirds beat their wings 30-50 times per second. Hang a feeder filled with sugar water outside your window to get a close look.



House Sparrows have lived near people for hundreds of years. You'll see them wherever there are buildings. But you won't find them in natural places like forests.

Downy Woodpeckers are little birds that make a big sound. When they tap on hollow trees it's called drumming. The loud noise attracts females and warns other males to stay away.



Handout: Bird Sounds

American Robin: Cheery up, Cheerio! Cheery up, Cheerio!

White-throated Sparrow: Oh Sweet Canada, Canada, Canada

Yellow Warbler: Sweet, sweet, sweet—I'm so sweet.

Barred Owl: Who Cooks For You? Who Cooks For Yooou-Allll?

Black-capped Chickadee: Chick-a-dee-dee-dee. Chick-a-dee-dee-dee”

Eastern Whip-poor-will: Whip-poor-WILL-whip-poor; WILL-whip-poor-WILL

Mallard: Quack. Quack. Quack-quack. Quack. Quack.

American Woodcock: Peeent..... Peeent.....Peeent.....

White-breasted Nuthatch: Yank...yank...yank-yank...yank...

Anna's Hummingbird: HMMMMmmmmMMMMMMmmmmmm...

House Sparrow: Cheerp Cheerp Cheerp

Downy Woodpecker: tap...tap....tap....tap...