

"Honey Where Are You?"

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Audubon at the Francis Beidler Forest

Overview: With all the noise in the forest, how do birds of a species find each other? To many humans, all but the most distinctive bird calls sound alike. However, with over 6 billion humans on the planet, almost all could recognize the voice of a close relative if they called. This activity demonstrates how birds of a species locate each other within their breeding range by limiting students to their sense of hearing.

Connection to the Curriculum:

K-1.1 Identify observed objects or events by using the senses.

Suggested Grade Range: K

Time: 30 minutes

Materials Needed:

1. Calling toy birds (in pairs)
2. Small paper or opaque plastic bags

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to use their sense of hearing to locate their classmate whose bird is making the same call.

Procedures:

1. Prior to class, place matching pairs of birds in individual paper or plastic bags. There should be a sufficient number of birds so that each student will have a bird. The bags must prevent the students from seeing the birds inside.
2. Ask students to share what they know of the physical characteristics of birds (feathers, bills, wings, various types of feet, lay eggs, etc.). If not volunteered, note that birds also have songs and calls that they use in different situations. Ask students to suggest situations in which birds would use their vocalization abilities (to locate members of their species; to attract mates; to communicate danger; to defend territory).
3. Randomly give each student a bird that is covered by a bag and instruct them not to cause their bird to call.
4. In a safe and open area, have the students use their sense of hearing to locate a "mate" by listening to their bird's call and then by listening for the matching call in the crowd of students. Students may not speak to each other or peek at the bird in their bag.
5. Once a pair of students has located each other, they may move to the side of the activity area until all pairs have finished.
6. Once all pairs believe that they are matched with a member of their bird's species, have students, one pair at a time, reveal their bird and their bird's call. If a pair is mismatched, ask students to describe how the two bird calls are similar (causing the confusion) and how the two bird calls are different (allowing the two species to be differentiated).
7. Have students return all birds and bags.

Suggested Evaluation:

1. Teacher observation during the activity.

Extending the Lesson:

1. Address science standard *K-2.3 Match parents with their offspring to show that plants and animals closely resemble their parents* by providing students with images of adult birds and young birds in order for the students to match the appropriate pairs.

Resources:

1. Wild Republic's Audubon toy calling birds at <http://www.wildrepublic.com/audubon/home/default.asp>
2. Audubon Center at Francis Beidler Forest, bird species list and images at http://sc.audubon.org/Centers_FBF_Educators_Species-Birds.html.
3. Cornell Lab of Ornithology at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/>