Teacher Resource

Bird Call Olympics

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What is the Bournda Bird Olympics?
2. Why did bird calling begin?
3. What sorts of things are the judges looking for?
4. What was your favourite bird call? Why?
5. Have a go at mimicking native birds in your area and record your bird calls.

Activity: Class Discussion

Students will discuss the BTN Bird Call Olympics story in pairs and then share their thoughts with the class.

- What do you THINK about what you saw in this video?
- What does this video make you WONDER?
- What did you LEARN watching the the story?
- Think of three questions you have about the BTN story.



Activity: Q&A

All scientific discoveries start with a question! As a class, come up with some questions you think ORNITHOLOGISTS ask and solve about BIRDS.

Organise the questions into common themes. As a class, make a list of questions that you would like to ask an ornithologist. Use the internet to find answers to your class questions.

An *ORNITHOLOGIST* is a scientist or researcher who studies birds!

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KEY LEARNING
Students will explore birds in their school yard. Students will investigate where birds live and the songs and calls they make.

CURRICULUM
Science – Year 4
Living things have life cycles.

Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive.

Science – Year 5
Examine how particular structural features and behaviours of living things enable their survival in specific habitats.

Science – Year 6
Investigate the physical conditions of a habitat and analyse how the growth and survival of living things is affected by changing physical conditions.

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Activity: Bird Study

Provide students with the opportunity to think and behave like an ornithologist, a person who studies and observes birds. In this activity students will explore a natural habitat in their local area, identify birds in the area and document what they find.

Class Discussion

- Have you stopped to notice and listen to the birds in your area?
- What birds have you seen or heard in your school yard or near your home?
- Why do you think birds make sounds?

School Yard Bird study

Students can work individually, in pairs or small groups, using the following as a guide.

Step 1: Plan

Plan a visit to a local nature reserve or your own school yard to explore and identify birds. You will need to write a list of tools you may need for the investigation, for example: pen and paper for taking notes, camera and binoculars. Predict what you might see and find. Think about what you would need for your bird study investigation.

Step 2: Explore

Visit the habitat and carry out an exploration of the area. Choose a spot in the environment to sit and listen for birds. Consider exploring the area from different angles, closeup or far away. Look and listen for evidence that birds live in the area.

Step 3: Collect

Once you have found a bird in the area, begin to study the bird and its environment in more detail. Collect as much data as you can about it and record what you hear and see. You may write notes and sketch what you see to help in your investigation. Record what you see with a stills or video camera.

- Can you hear any bird calls or songs? What does it sound like? Can you identify the bird based on the bird sounds you hear?
- What does the species look like? Take photos and draw pictures. Describe its characteristics.
- What else is the bird doing? How does it interact with the environment? Record the behaviour of the bird.
- What does the environment look like? Describe the bird's habitat and identify any trees or plants in the area.
- Ask one "how" and one "why" question about what you see and hear.
- Return to the classroom and share/compare your findings.

Step 4: Analyse

Analyse your findings and write a short summary of your investigation.

- Did you find any birds during your investigation? If yes, identify and describe what you found. If you didn't see any, did you find any evidence that birds live in the area?
- How could you help protect this habitat?

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Step 5: Research

Choose one bird species found in your school yard or one featured in the BTN Bird Call Olympics story. Respond to one or more of the following research questions:

- What is the difference between bird calls and bird song?
- How can bird songs help us identify different bird species?
- Explore the taxonomy of the species and categorise the information you find using the classification system.
- What might you notice if you visit this bird's habitat at different times of the day or year?
- How has this species adapted over time to survive in their environment? Research some specific adaptations they have made to survive in their habitat.
- Where is this species on the food chain? Predict what might happen if they are removed from the food chain.
- Are there any examples of a conservation project helping this species? Investigate what citizen science projects are happening to help monitor or protect this species.

Students will gather information using a range of reliable sources.

Step 6: Reflect

Reflect on the investigation by responding to one or more of the following questions:

- What did you enjoy about this investigation?
- What did you find surprising?
- What would you do differently next time?

Useful Websites

- Dying art of bird calling roars back at 2026 Bournda Bird Olympics – ABC News
- Bird Call Olympics – BTN
- Bird of the Century – BTN
- The Birds of Australia STORYBOX – Australian Museum
- Birds Story Box: First Nations storytelling – Australian Museum

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