

Create Art with Bird Calls

An activity of "The Wonderful World of Waterbirds".

Read the article, "The Wonderful World of Waterbirds". (page 22, *What's Up* July 2025). The sightings and calls of birds have inspired great artworks. This activity challenges you to create art but not based on what you see. Rather, let your artwork be in response to what you hear!

1a) Watch the following video to see how one artist creates art inspired by bird calls.

Andy Thomas: his art at The Unreal Garden

➤ <https://youtu.be/hTb9Zv5mpZE?si=tVk4VKKN04GWWJrU>
(Onedome, 22 Nov 2018)

1b) Jot down what you notice about Mr Thomas's art. Are there observable patterns? How do sounds and visuals interact with each other? Do the colours reflect his subject matter well? Any other observations?

As you can see, Mr Thomas did not draw the birds themselves. His art captures emotions and movements of their sounds. His style of art is known as abstract art. Abstract art does not have to look like something real. Instead, it tries to communicate feelings, sound, or energy through the choice of colours, lines, and textures.

2a) Now, listen to this audio clip of different bird species in their natural habitats.

WATER BIRDS Sounds - Shore Birds, Sea Birds, Aquatic Birds and Waterfowls Identification Video

➤ https://youtu.be/yZpqZmfwvv4?si=FgppfrNTk0JqV0X_
(Kiddopedia, 26 Oct 2018)

2b) Close your eyes and imagine:

- What colours match each bird call?
- How does the call look or feel to you? E.g Rounded or sharp? Flowy or jumpy? Bright and colourful or muted and soft?
- What kinds of shapes or lines would show that?
- What kinds of colours would you use to express the mood related to the bird call?
- You can try to sketch the sound you hear below. Don't let the actual appearance of the bird affect how you draw the sound.

<i>Bird species:</i>	<i>Bird species:</i>
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2c) Now, try creating your own abstract art piece, based on at least two different bird calls you heard. Colour the sounds!

- Use any medium (e.g. crayons, colour pencils, markers, pastels, paint, etc).
- Use a variety of shapes, lines or patterns in your art. For instance, use soft wavy lines and circles for calm calls, or dots and jagged lines for fast, sharp calls.
- Use colour to show the loudness or softness of the bird calls. Express what you feel when you hear the calls. For instance, use specific shades of colour to differentiate each bird species or distinct call.



3) Share your abstract art with your class. Get your classmates to guess which bird calls inspired your art. Share why you used certain colours and shapes. Have fun guessing the bird calls that inspired their art!