



Sound landscapes

Type of activity: Exploring outside



Who is it for? All the family

What do I need?

- Listening ears, attention
- Pencil and paper
- Blanket
- Atlas book about local flora and fauna (optional)

Introduction

During the last few weeks, some of us experienced change of our daily rhythm and pattern of activities. We hear about increased sightings of wild animals who reclaim spaces free from human activity.

Whether there are more animals or whether we are more attentive to the world around us, this time might be a good opportunity to think about the balance between different species and biodiversity. Perhaps you had the opportunity to look around, spend more time outdoors, take more notice of the animal and plant world and witness the Spring abundance. If not, maybe this activity can be relaxing, quiet time out this weekend for you and your family.

Here's how to...

1. If you can go out, take a picnic blanket; if you stay in your backyard or garden you can find something comfortable to sit on.
2. Close your eyes, and take a deep breath in:
 - First turn your attention inwards, listen to your own breath.
 - After a minute tune your ear to the sounds surrounding you.
 - After 5 minutes, take a break and share with other family members the sounds you heard.
 - Next close your eyes again. This time try to distinguish between human made sounds (car traffic, grass mower and so on) and those made by elements or animals (for example birds, insects, wind blowing, rustle of leaves etc.)
 - After 5 minutes of listening, make notes of what you heard; perhaps you are able to identify sounds of certain species you've heard. Share with your family.

Some questions that can help you:

- How many sounds has everyone heard?
- What were the sounds? Was there a sound you particularly liked or disliked? Why?
- What was the source of the sounds?
- Were there more human-made or natural sounds?

- Why is that? What influences that?
- Where could you go that would have a different sound landscape?
- How many different animal sounds or species sounds could you hear?
- Do older family members can recall whether there was same sound landscape when they were little? What changed?

What now?

If time allows find another spot, where you think there will be a different sound landscape, perhaps you can stay in the same place but repeat the activity at a different time of the day. You can also use a bird atlas, or local species atlas to try and match sounds with pictures.

Go to wild bird identifier and see if you can recognize/match the sounds you heard with the birds <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-songs/what-bird-is-that/>

Also take a look at this nature sound map here, which will take you to different nature sounds around the world https://www.naturesoundmap.com/?fbclid=IwAR0KkD-TThKjSzYcggvjRRaeL0gFhwcOVLseo8Y4W74n5-cilqNL_Xbz9HQ

You can try to chart your findings using graphs and play with making statistics graphs.