

# NATURE ACTIVITIES

## BIRD CALL

Would you like to interact more with the birds of the summer with a bird call you handmade yourself? Take part in making this simple wooden bird call inspired by the Audubon Bird Call style.

### PART ONE - MAKE THE WOODEN BIRD CALL

**Resources/materials needed:** Drill with drill bit set (electric or hand crank), block of hard wood at least 3/4" (deep) X 2.5" (long) X 4" (wide) OR dowel rod 1" diameter and at least 2-3" long, hand saw, clamps, vice, pencil, ruler, screw eye, rosin, and markers

**Skills:** Cognitive, Motor Skills, Environmental Appreciation, Hand-Eye Coordination, Technical Skills, Art Making Process, Creative Reuse, Bird ID, Woodworking

### DIRECTIONS:

**Step 1:** Gather all of your materials. If you happen to have a piece of scrap hardwood (birch, soft maple, green ash, etc.) you can cut it down with a handsaw to 4" long. Use a ruler to measure out the where the length you want to cut off is. Use a L or T square to create a straight cut line by aligning the edge of the L or T to the long ways edge so that it creates a 90 degree angle.

Once the line is drawn, get a work station table ready and use a vice or clamps to securely place the piece of hardwood so that the 4" or so that you are cutting off is hanging off of the edge of the table. If you have a miter box all the better. Dowel rods will be made of hardwood if you find that more accessible. Secure the dowel rod in the vice or with the clamps and prepare to cut.

**Step 2:** When the wood is clamped securely, an adult should carry out the rest of the woodworking for safety, unless your child is old enough and has prior experience woodworking with your supervision. Use your best judgement. Safety is of the utmost importance when working with wood and sharp tools even if they are hand tools and not moving fast. Wear safety glasses too.

Your writing hand should hold the saw. So position your body so your other hand is holding down the wood by the clamp directly with the palm. Make sure this hand is a safe amount of distance from the saw so that no fingers extend into the cutting area.



Photo Credit: Layers of Learning



Photo Credit: Dengarden



Photo Credit: Rockler



Photo Credit: The English Woodworker

Another safety measure is to position your body so that it is to the side of where you are sawing so that you don't have kickbacks (this is more necessary for when you are using a table saw, but a good practice to have when working with wood at all times)

Align the saw on top of the line and gently make a light notch. Position the hand saw so it is aligned with the notch at a 45 degree angle facing downward. This is a cross-cut because the cutting is against the grain. Opposed to the rip saw, the cross-cut saw has teeth that work for both forward and backward movements. Make sure that your saw is kept straight with the line at all times and does not angle to the side to prevent binding. Using a miter box prevents any angling and keeps the cutting process pretty safe.

**Step 3:** Continue to cut back and forth without being too forceful or fast. Keep steady. Make sure you do not ever hold the end piece being cut off. Just continue to cut through until it gets to the final pass. Slow down on the last pass so it doesn't splinter. Let it fall to the ground and then pick it up.

**Step 4:** Now take your piece of wood for the bird call and secure it in a vice facing upward (the cross cut part should be facing up-width X depth) and secure it. Measure out the very center with a ruler and make a mark with a pencil. The height of where the top of the wood is should be accessible by standing beside with a drill looking down. Measure the length of the screw eye threaded part and make a mark length wise down the piece of wood.

Take the screw eye and and make an indent with the tip. Take it out then find a drill bit the slightly smaller than the screw eye. Attach to your hand drill or battery operated drill and make sure the bit is tightly secured. Compare the length of the drill bit to the mark you made of how deep the screw eye will go into the wood. Make note or make a mark with a marker/chalk on the drill bit. Place it aligned with the center mark and start slowly drilling. If you are using a hand crank drill slowly start to turn the wheel clock wise and start to speed up. If you are using a battery operated drill, make sure the button is pushed for going forward and align with the mark. Keep straight and push down holding the trigger halfway then you can go fully. Keep drilling until you get to the line that you made on the drill bit. Then start to pull out while you are turning the wheel or pushing the trigger. You can also push the button in reverse once you get to the bottom. It will work both ways to get the drill out. Blow out the sawdust.

**Step 4:** Start twisting in the screw eye into the hole going clockwise. It might take some muscle if your drill bit was a little too small compared to the size. You can always drill again with a bigger bit if you cannot get the screw eye in. Once to the end start twisting counter clockwise to get out.



Photo Credit: Better Homes and Gardens



Photo Credit: Atomic Climbing Holds Farm and Fleet



Photo Credit :JTPD+Outcome Driven Innovation

Photo Credit:Home Guides



Photo Credit: El Salvador



Photo Credit: Wood Lark Blog

**Step 5:** Gather your powdered rosin. If it didn't come in powder form. Wear a dust mask and grind it in a mortar and pestle. Place a small amount into the hole. Now screw the screw eye in and go back and forth in the hole very slowly. You will start to hear a chirp chirp!

**Reflection:** Talk about your experience. Did you learn any new skills? What was challenging? Would you do anything different next time? Do you enjoy working with wood? Did your bird call make chirps?

## PART TWO - GO OUT IN NATURE AND BIRD CALL!

**Resources/materials needed:** Bird Call, internet device, notebook, bird ID book, nature area, camera

**Skills:** Cognitive, Motor, Hand-Eye Coordination, Sensory, Environmental Appreciation, Bird ID

### DIRECTIONS:

**Step 1:** Start studying local bird calls. Your homemade device will mimic the sounds of robins nicely. You can do this by looking on the internet first and listening and practicing before you go out. Make note of how to make the sounds according to what bird. You can also start out in the natural environment. But a little bit of prior knowledge only helps. You can also download an app that can tell you bird calls and see what it comes up with when you make sound. As well as finding local birds and mimicking their calls.

**Step 2:** Go outdoors with your bird call, bird ID field guide, notebook, pencil, binoculars, and camera. Avoid making the bird calls by nests because this will stress out the birds.

**Step 3:** Start making the sounds that you practiced. If you didn't study up prior, just start experimenting and mimicking sounds that you are hearing birds make. See if you have any "conversations" with the birds! When a bird approaches, take note of their call and what they look like and how they move. Use your field guide to look up the bird and see if you can identify it. Use your binoculars if the birds are too high up in the trees! If you need more rosin you can always add more.

**Reflection:** Talk about your experience. What birds did you see and hear. What bird sounds do you mimic well? Did you have any back and forth? How do you feel about your experience?

#### Resources:

[retiredscouter.com/crafts/cubs\\_crafts\\_wb56398.html](http://retiredscouter.com/crafts/cubs_crafts_wb56398.html)  
[bhg.com/home-improvement/remodeling/carpentry/how-to-use-a-hand-saw/](http://bhg.com/home-improvement/remodeling/carpentry/how-to-use-a-hand-saw/)



**American Robin**  
Photo Credit:Wikipedia



**Blue Jay**  
Photo Credit:National Audubon Society



**Northern Cardinal**  
Photo Credit: National Audubon Society



**Song Sparrow**  
Photo Credit: Scientific American Blogs

[gonebirdwatching.com/equipment/bird/callers/audubon/](http://gonebirdwatching.com/equipment/bird/callers/audubon/)  
[powertooladdict.com/drilling-tips-for-drilling-better-holes/audubon.org](http://powertooladdict.com/drilling-tips-for-drilling-better-holes/audubon.org)