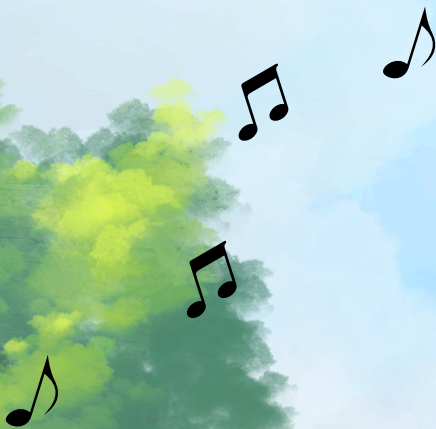




Find Your Flock!

An activity in careful listening and bird call recognition.

Supplemental Information Handout





What bird is that ?

This section provides information about the birds behind the calls. It includes pictures and key information to help teachers and students identify and learn more about each bird.

Red Whiskered Bulbul

The Red-whiskered Bulbul is a common garden bird, easily recognised by the red patch near its eyes and its cheerful call. It is often seen in pairs or small groups. Bulbuls feed on fruits, insects, and nectar, and play an important role in seed dispersal. Their calls are often heard early in the morning.



White-Throated Kingfisher

This brightly coloured bird is found near water bodies as well as in fields and towns. It feeds on insects, frogs, and small reptiles, and is also a skilled hunter of fish. Its loud, sharp call is often heard before it is seen. Interestingly, it does not build a traditional nest; it lays its eggs in a burrow dug in a vertical cut of earth along a riverbank, stream, or roadside.



Coppersmith Barbet

The Coppersmith Barbet gets its name from its hammer-like “kuk-kuk-kuk” call, which sounds like a hammer striking metal. Though common, it is often heard before it is seen. It is found in urban areas and orchards and feeds mainly on fruits such as figs and berries. Its call is especially noticeable during hot summer afternoons.





What bird is that ?

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher is a small forest bird known for its bright blue colouring and slender body. It is usually seen alone or in pairs, quietly perching to catch flies and other insects in quick flights. This bird prefers shaded woodland areas and is known to feed even after dusk, often active in the early morning and evening with a melodious call.



Purple Rumped Sunbird

Purple-rumped Sunbird is a tiny, colourful bird commonly seen in gardens, parks, and wooded areas across India, with the male showing a bright shiny green crown. The female is olive-brown above and yellowish in the belly. This lively bird hovers near flowers to sip nectar and also eats insects, especially when feeding its young. It usually moves quickly from flower to flower and may be seen alone or in pairs.



Greater Coucal

Greater Coucal is a large, crow-sized bird with glossy black feathers and rich chestnut wings. Its red eyes are a prominent feature. It is often seen walking slowly through bushes and tall grass and feeds on insects, frogs, small reptiles, and even snakes on the ground. Its call sounds like a deep "coop-coop-coop," which can be heard especially during the monsoon.





What bird is that ?

Indian Grey Hornbill

Indian Grey Hornbill is a large bird with grey feathers and a long, curved yellow beak with a casque on top. It mostly eats fruits like figs and berries, but it can also eat insects. During nesting, the female Indian Grey Hornbill stays inside a tree hole, sealing it with mud and droppings, to lay eggs and raise her chicks, while the male feeds her through a small opening.



House Sparrow

House Sparrow is a small bird with brown and grey feathers, a short, stout beak, and a chirpy, lively call. The females lack the black colour that is present in the males. Sparrows mostly eat grains, seeds, and crumbs, but they can also catch small insects. This bird is found in towns, villages, farms, and cities all across India. House Sparrows are very social and often gather in flocks, especially when looking for food.



Indian Pond Heron

The Indian Pond Heron is a medium-sized, stocky wading bird commonly found near ponds, lakes, rivers, and wetlands across India. Its brown, streaked body blends perfectly with its surroundings, while the bright white patches on its wings are visible when it takes flight. During the breeding season, both parents build a nest in trees and care for 3–5 green coloured eggs.





Follow Up Prompts

Use these questions, along with the suggested points, to guide discussion with students after the activity. They help encourage observation, reflection, and conversation about bird communication.

What kinds of messages can birds communicate through their calls?

Suggested Points: Warnings about predators or danger, attracting mates or signaling readiness to breed, defending territory from other birds.

Can birds of different species understand each other's calls? Why or why not?

Suggested Points: Generally, calls are species-specific. Some alarm calls may be recognized by other species (e.g., predator warnings).

How can human activities affect communication between birds?

Suggested Points: Noise pollution (traffic, construction) can make it harder for birds to hear each other. Habitat destruction reduces safe spaces for calling and listening. Excessive use of playback recordings by wildlife enthusiasts can also disrupt bird communication. Birds may become stressed or waste energy responding to artificial calls, which can interfere with normal behaviours like feeding, nesting, or defending territory.

Why do scientists listen to and study bird calls?

Suggested Points: Identify and monitor bird species in an area, track migration and population changes, study the effects of environmental changes on birds, draw patterns between communication and behaviour.

Selected References

1. Palkar, S. B., & Gokhale, P. (2008). Breeding biology of the White-breasted Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*). *Indian Birds*, 4(3), 86–89.
2. Birda. Tickell's blue flycatcher (*Cyornis tickelliae*). Retrieved March 10, 2026, from https://app.birda.org/speciesguide/30591/Tickell%27s_Blue_Flycatcher
3. Garcia, V. (2025). *Centropus sinensis*. Animal Diversity Web. Retrieved March 10, 2026, from https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Centropus_sinensis/
4. Mitra, A. (2025). Things you didn't know about Indian grey hornbill. Wildlife SOS. Retrieved March 10, 2026, from <https://news.wildlifesos.org/things-you-didnt-know-about-indian-grey-hornbill/>
5. Azeez, P. A., Seedikkoya, K., & Abdul-Shukkur, E. A. (2012). Breeding biology of the Pond Heron (*Ardeola grayii*) in Kerala, South India. *Scientific Journal of Zoology*, 1(3), 42–51.
6. Duffy, M., & Waitt, G. (2013). Home sounds: experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14(4), 466–481.
7. Ratcliffe, E., Gatersleben, B., & Sowden, P. T. (2016). Associations with bird sounds: How do they relate to perceived restorative potential?. *Journal of environmental psychology*, 47, 136–144.
8. Ha, J., Kim, H. J., & Alam, M. M. L. (2025). Linking Visual–Auditory Cues to Restoration: The Mediating Role of Perceived Biodiversity. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 22(8), 1267.
9. Härtel, T., Vanhöfen, J., Trautmann, S., Kamp, J., & Randler, C. (2025). Declining bird populations are associated with loss of species identification skills in students. *Ecosystems and People*, 21(1), 2530104.

Photo Credits

Red Whiskered Bulbul : pixabay/ TheOtherKev / Free Use

White Throated Kingfisher : Wikimedia commons/ Shantanu Kuveskar/
Creative commons 4.0

Coppersmith Barbet : pexels/ Rajukhan Pathan/ Free Use

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher : Adithi Muralidhar

Purple Rumped Sunbird : Wikimedia commons/ Anton Croos/ Creative
commons 4.0

Greater Coucal : Wikimedia commons/ Davidvraju/ Creative commons 4.0

Indian Grey Hornbill : pexels/ Sharath G. / Free Use

House Sparrow : pixabay/ artsehn / Free Use

Indian Pond Heron : pixabay/ sarangib / Free Use

