

# NATURE CONNECTION: Recognising Birds and Bird Song

Wild in the Park's outdoor learning specialist, Katie Mills has created a series of short films packed with fun, and inspiring activities to connect with nature whilst at home or taking exercise outside. This worksheet provides supporting information for teachers, parents and guardians, including safety information, fun facts, teaching tips, activities and games - we hope you enjoy!

# WRITTEN BY

## Katie Mills

Katie Mills is a passionate nature connector, speaker, National Park City Ranger, Forest School Leader and Forest Bathing Guide. In 2018, she founded Forest & Family, a social enterprise promoting nature connection for children and families. She designs and delivers a wide range of outdoor learning programmes for schools, businesses, green space custodians and cultural organisations such as Alexandra Palace.



## Wild in the Park...

Wild In The Park enables children and young people to access leading outdoor learning facilitators and environmental specialists to become responsible park users and treasure

community spaces. More information about the programme including other resources available for download can be found on our [www.alexandrapalace.com](http://www.alexandrapalace.com)



# Recording 1: Overview

Birds are wonderful ways to introduce children to nature. In this session children will meet four fantastic British birds, and learn a little about each of them by getting to know their distinctive physical features, calls and song.

By the end of the session, children will be able to impress their friends and family by identifying some different birds by sight and sound.



# Recognising Birds – Fun facts

## Green woodpecker

### Did you know?

- Are very easy to recognize with red heads and green and yellow bodies
- Have tongues that are 1/3 the length of their body (10cm)
- Actually spend most of its time on the ground where they can find ants to eat
- Are shy birds and don't often 'drum' on trees like other woodpeckers
- Have protection around their skulls like other woodpeckers to protect their brains when they do tap on trees
- Can attach themselves to any surface as they have two front pointing toes and two back pointing ones.



# Recognising Birds – Fun facts

## Blackbird

### Did you know?

- Males can be recognized by their black feathers and females can be recognized by their brown feathers.
- Use their strong beak to pull out insects and caterpillars hidden in the soil
- Young males start to sing at the end of January, or at the beginning of February while older birds sing from March to June/July.
- Farmers do not like blackbirds because they eat sunflowers, corn and other crops which is why you'll see so many scarecrows in fields
- Send out alarm class to other members of their group about upcoming danger
- During cold weather blackbirds shakes their feathers so that cold does not affect them



# Recognising Birds – Fun facts

## Robin

### Did you know?

- Do not go far from where they were born and are very territorial so are quick to drive away intruders
- Love to be heard and sing nearly all year round
- Build their round nests in trees and lay light blue eggs
- Baby robins are born without the red feathers, which only grow after their first molt
- Have up to three broods of young each year however many don't survive
- Robins roost together in trees and some can have as many as 200,000 robins inside



# Recognising Birds – Fun facts

## Nightingale

### Did you know?

- Considered to have one of the most beautiful songs with an impressive range of almost 1,000 different whistles, trills and gurgles
- Song is particularly noticeable at night because few other birds are singing.
- Sadly 90% of the nightingales have been lost over the past 50 years due to climate change, habitat loss and the loss of their nesting areas
- Are named because they frequently sing at night, in fact- the name has been used for well over 1,000 years
- Are rarely seen in the wild because it spends most of its time in the thick bushes
- Create their nests low to the ground or on the ground which is unusual for British birds.



# Learning Opportunities

- Observation
- Nature connection and appreciation
- Focus
- Listening
- Patience
- Memory
- Wellbeing, mindfulness and relaxation
- Learning about the natural world

## Safety

When children are watching or listening out for birds from indoors always ensure there is no risk of them falling from an open window. Ensure safety locks are in place and supervise children at all times.

## Tips

- When bird spotting start by observing differences in size, shape, flight form and colour.
- Start by focusing on learning one or two common bird's by sight and song.
- There are plenty of free online resources and apps to help identify birds by sight and song such as the RSPB Bird Identifier (<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/birdsongs/what-bird-is-that/>)
- Binoculars and bird identification books can help encourage and extend children's learning and engagement with birds.
- Always wash hands after playing outside and with natural materials, and especially before eating.
- Please follow the 'no pick, no lick rule': Do not let children put fingers or found objects in their mouths and discourage them from picking or breaking anything that is growing.

