# Bird Songs and Calls

## Materials

- Computer with sound

## Introduction

Scientists who study birds are called *ornithologists*. They study how different birds sound so they can identify birds even when they might not be able to see them, and to try to understand what birds are saying with their songs. Birds create different songs and calls. One bird can have many different songs and calls. Songs are usually longer than a call and have a pattern in the sound they make. Calls are shorter and simpler. Birds make calls all year long! Male birds sing songs in the springtime to keep other males away, or to attract females.

## Activity

Listen to different songs or calls made by local Illinois birds.

- Look at the picture of the bird.

- Close your eyes and listen to its call or song.

- Do the different birds sound the same or different? How?

- Can you make these sounds?

- What do you think the birds are trying to *communicate*, or say, with their songs?

- What do you think scientists can learn from listening to birds?

## Expand

- Take what you learned outside! Try and listen for local bird calls and songs. Do they sound like the ones you listened to in this activity? If so, which ones? If not, how were they different? If you can't go outside, try listening through an open window!

- Do you know of other kinds of birds? How do they sound? Visit www.xeno-canto.org to find out!

## At the Field

- Visit the Illinois Woodlands section of the *Crown Family PlayLab* to hear the Northern Cardinal and the Eastern Screech Owl.

- Explore the *Ronald and Christina Gidwitz Hall of Birds* and *Nature Walk* exhibitions to see and hear more birds!

**PlayLab At Home**

# Birds Local to Illinois

**Click on the Image of the Bird to Hear its Song or Call**

Northern Cardinal song



Eastern Screech Owl song



Mallard Duck call



American Crow call

# Other birds

Emperor Penguin call



American Flamingo call

PlayLab At Home