Make a Sound map

(Adapted from: <https://www.sharingnature.com/sound-map.html>)

This is a great activity for increasing awareness of our surroundings. It is also very good for our mental health as it has a very calming effect and deepens our appreciation for life around us.

**Concepts, skills, and qualities taught:** Auditory awareness, serenity  
**When and where to play:** Day and night / natural area  
**Number of people needed:** For 1 person or more  
**Suggested age range:**Ages 5 and up  
**Materials needed:** Paper, pencil(s)

How to play: give each person a piece of paper with an X marked in the centre. Tell the participants that the paper is a sound map and that the X represents where each player is sitting. When a player hears a sound, they make a mark on the paper to represent the sound. The location of the mark should indicate the direction and distance of the sound from the player’s seat. Tell players not to draw a detailed picture for each sound, but to make just a simple mark. For example, a few wavy lines could represent a gust of wind, or a musical note could indicate a blackbird, a drum could represent a snipe. Making simple marks keeps the focus on listening rather than on drawing.   
  
Encourage the players to close their eyes while listening for sounds. To help them increase their hearing ability they can cup their hands behind the ears. This hand position will create a greater surface area to capture sounds. Then show them how to cup the hands in front of the ears (palms facing backwards) to hear sounds behind them better.  
  
Tell the players to each find a special “listening place” and to remain in that spot until the activity is over. How long should you play? From 4 to 10 minutes is good—depending on the group’s age, interest level, and on how active the animals are.

Once the sound map has been produced you can think about these questions

* What sounds were the most familiar to you?
* What sound had you never heard before? Do you know what made the sound?
* What sound did you like best? Why?

If there are sounds you don’t recognise, why not try to record these on a phone, or write down a description of what they sound like. You can then investigate further when you get home.

The table below may help you identify some of the more common Shetland bird sounds but if you can’t find what you’re hearing, drop us an email with a description of the sound or the bird that made it, or better still a recording, and we’ll try to help with identification.

The RSPB website has a brilliant Identification guide complete with bird sounds.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/>

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| Bird Name | Call |
| Starling | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/starling/> |
| Sparrow (House sparrow) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/house-sparrow/> |
| Blackbird | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/blackbird/> |
| Shalder (Oystercatcher) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/oystercatcher/> |
| Laeverek (Skylark) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/skylark/> |
| Horsegok (Snipe) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/snipe/> |
| Lapwing | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/lapwing/> |
| Whaap (Curlew) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/curlew/> |
| Peerie Whaap (Whimbrel) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/whimbrel/> |
| Whooper Swan | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/whooper-swan/> |
| Redshank | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/redshank/> |
| Pliver (Golden Plover) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/golden-plover/> |
| Lintie (Twite) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/twite/> |
| Sandiloo (Ringed Plover) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/ringed-plover/> |
| Dunter (Eider Duck) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/eider/> |
| Hill Sparrow (Meadow Pipit) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/meadow-pipit/> |
| Wren | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/wren/> |
| Tirrick (Artic Tern) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/arctic-tern/> |
| Chat (Wheatear) | <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/wheatear/> |

Here are some of the local birds we have mentioned in the video, or are likely to be seen/heard by you.