

Pishing for Birds

All Ages

What is Pishing?

Pishing is a technique birdwatchers use to draw small birds closer to get a better view. Please, be respectful and use this technique responsibly.

How To Pish

Pishing is an easy technique to master. Different sounds can be effective, but "pish" is just fun. Repeat the sound three to five times in a slow, regular tempo. You can also try *Pssst*, *Sip*, *Seep*, as well as kissing or lip-smacking noises, tongue clicks, and a rapid "chit-chit-chit". Keep the volume softer than an inside voice and barely louder than a whisper. Birds have excellent hearing. Too loud, too much and too often and the birds will ignore you.

How Pishing Works

There are a couple of theories as to why birds respond.

- Mobbing** - many small birds, when they hear an alarm or scolding call, mob together to chase away the predator.
- Hungry** - birds that are feeding may be attracted to higher-pitched or sharper sounds which can mimic insect noises
- Curiosity** - some birds may just be playful and enjoy investigating unknown noises.



When to Pish

Try pishing when you suspect, usually by hearing, any of the following birds are nearby. Chickadees, Finches, Jays, Kinglets, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Warblers, Wrens

Pishing Etiquette

At all times when engaging with nature be respectful. Disturbing birds with excessive pishing may draw them away from important behaviors such as caring for nestlings, foraging, or preening. Interfering with their activities may impact their survival.

- ◇ Avoid pishing in sensitive areas, such as near nesting sites
- ◇ Pish just until you see a bird, then stop and watch it go about its natural activities.
- ◇ Keep pishing a family affair. Not all birding groups or gatherings appreciate pishing.

Tip: Birds are very good at disappearing when someone new comes into their space. Practice being still and quiet. Use whispering voices and slow movements. The birds soon forget you are there and reappear.

