GET OUT! Kids' Club

Make a Sound Map

5 & Up

Sometimes we are so familiar with a place we stop noticing the details that make it unique. Or we are so focused on going from point A to point B that we miss much of what we are travelling past. So often in natural spaces, on walks, in the garden, it is the moments of pause that provide the richest experiences.

Making sound maps is a great way to slow down and tune in to the place you are in.

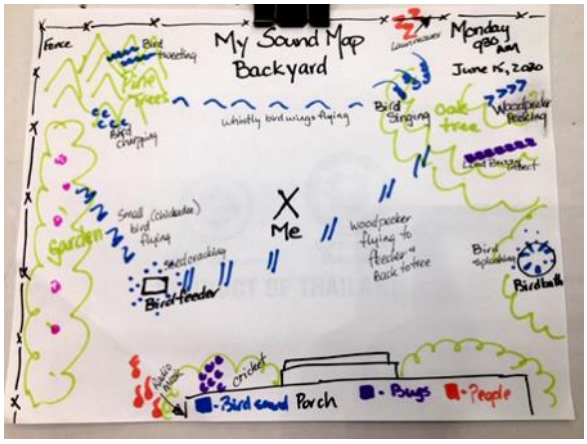
What is a sound map? As a technique, sound maps couldn't be easier. Take the emphasis off the visual, and tune into the sounds around you. Everyone can participate.

To make a sound map, you will need:

Paper and a clipboard or cardboard and a clip

Crayons, pencil crayons, markers

Sound Mapping Instructions:



Gather your materials and find a spot outside, or at a window, where you can sit and listen to the sounds around you.

First, just listen for 1 minute. This will help you tune your ears for really listening.

Using your paper as a map, mark an X on your map to identify your location. Listen again for a minute. When you hear a sound mark it on your map. Consider how far away and in which direction the sound was. You can record the sounds on your map with words, symbols, colours, or a combination of these.

Try closing your eyes. Or make "deer ears" by cupping your hands behind your ears to capture more sound. Reverse your hands, palm to the back with your hands in front of your ears, to hear behind you. Have you seen animals move their ears like this?

Take time to share your map with others and talk about the sounds you heard and where they came from.

- ◊ 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?

Sound maps are so simple, it is surprising that they can have such a relaxing effect. Sitting quietly—listening to nature calms us and deepens our appreciation for the life around us. Here are a couple of resources to help identify nature sounds . Hear insect sounds at Songs of Insects . A free bird song app is available at Song Sleuth , or for a small fee, at Sunbird .

Tip: Grab a flashlight, or strap on a head lamp, and map night sounds. How are they different from the day time sounds? Try sound mapping at different times through the day, in different weather or in a variety of habitats.

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PRINCE EDWARD POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY

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