Exhibition Guide

*Bird Song* is an exhibition of sounds. John Hutchinson’s bird recordings are paired with scientific illustrations of Western Australian birds to create an interactive and sensory experience.

This guide aims to help you navigate the exhibition and engage with the illustrations and sound bites of Western Australian birdlife. Like every journey, you will bring your own life experiences to the exhibited works. Your own responses, interpretations and forks in the road may vary from others.

We wish you an enjoyable experience.

**Pre visit**

- How many Australian birds can you name? In groups, make a list. Can you put them into categories?
- What is an ornithologist? What role does an ornithologist play in the conservation of native birds?
- Read, *How the Birds Got Their Colours: an Aboriginal Story* by Mary Albert. Discuss how Aboriginal stories have been a traditional way to share understandings of the natural world.
- Find a photograph of an Australian bird on the internet. Draw a coloured sketch of the bird and label the parts. Where in Australia does your bird live? How do the bird’s features suit its habitat?

**In the exhibition space**

- Introduce the exhibition and explain to students what they are about to see and what you hope they will gain from the experience. Outline your expectations of appropriate behaviours and remind students that they will be interacting with the public.
- Divide into small groups.
- Walk through the exhibition, taking the time to look at each item and discuss what you see. Read the panels and reflect on and discuss the questions provided on the wall decals.
- Ask students to look closely at each artwork and discuss their responses with their peers or parent helper. Examples of discussion points include: whether the images are reflections of reality or something else, the use of colours and shapes, how an ornithologist conducts a field study.
- Ask each parent helper to find a space for their group and choose one of the texts about birds, from the display stand, to read aloud.
**Reflecting on the exhibition**

- Find a quiet spot to sit and reflect on the exhibition, in groups or as a whole class.

Suggested questions:

- What is your response to the exhibition?
- Which is your favourite illustration? Why?
- What did you learn about the process of scientific observation?
- Why take field notes? Why are they important?
- Why are John Hutchinson’s bird sounds important to Western Australian heritage?
- What other Western Australian sounds should the State Library collect?

**Post visit**

- Develop a selection of words that describe birds and their movement. Put them together to create a Word Cloud. Using the words as inspiration, write a poem from a bird’s point of view.
- Be an ornithologist and spend time observing birds around your school. Take photographs and field notes. Sketch the birds that you see and identify them. What are their common names and scientific names? What bird family do they belong to? Where in Australia do these species live?
- Record sounds that can be heard around your school. Play the sounds to a partner. Can your partner identify them?
- Research the design of a bird wing. How does a bird fly? Identify what makes an object aerodynamic. Conduct an investigation that identifies the characteristics a paper plane must have in order to fly farthest.
- Discuss the importance of native birds settling in your local area. Design and make a bird feeder, using recycled materials.
- Research the impact of introduced species and feral animals on native birds. Present your findings to the class in the form of a poster or pamphlet to raise awareness.
- Reflect on the question, “Should we keep native birds as pets?” Debate or write a persuasive text explaining your point of view, either for or against.
PRE AND POST WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Curriculum links:
Science:
- Biological Sciences - living things have a variety of external features.
- Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things.
- Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment.

Nature and Development of Science – Science involves observing, asking questions, about, and describing changes in objects and events.
- People use science in their daily lives, including when caring for their environment and living things.

Science Inquiry Skills – (all).

English:
- Language - text structure and organisation; purpose, audience and structures of different types of text.

Expressing and Developing ideas – Vocabulary – learn extended and technical vocabulary.

The Arts (Visual Arts):
- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Responding to and interpreting the arts.

Reasons why people make art.

Recommended reading:
- How the Birds Got their Colours: An Aboriginal Story by Mary Albert.
- Crow and the Waterhole by Ambelin Kwaymullina.
- Waddle, Giggle, gargle by Pamela Allen.
- Owl Babies by Martin Waddell.
- Puffling by Margaret Wild.
- Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by Mo Williams.
- Edwards the Emu by Sheena Knowles.
- Chip by Kylie Howarth.
- The Bush Concert by Helga Visser.
- Sticky Beak by Morris Gleitzman.
- Storm Boy by Colin Thiele.

Recommended websites:

Recommended viewing:
- Oddball
- Storm Boy

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