

**Aims:**

Learn how to explore the countryside using your hearing whilst enjoying a bit of group quiet time!

You will need:

- Clipboard, pencil and paper, per person
- Something to sit on

Instructions:

1. Get everyone to sit down - ideally in their own space. Ask them to close their eyes and spend 60 seconds listening. Ask them to count how many sounds they can hear.
2. Explain how to draw a sound map:
 - Place a cross in the centre of your paper – this represents you and your location.
 - For every sound you hear draw a symbol or picture on your map to represent that sound.
 - If the sound is near, you draw it close to the cross, if it is far away you draw it further away from the centre nearer the edge of the paper.
 - Draw the sounds in a relative position to the cross. So if the sound is to your left, draw it to the left of the cross etc.
3. Get everyone to return to their own spot and spend 3-4 minutes (or longer if you can!) in silence drawing their sound map.
4. Discuss what everyone heard –
 - Where were the most sounds or were they all around you?
 - Why could some sounds be more common in certain places? e.g. birdsong from a hedge or wood instead of an open area
 - Were sounds close by or far away?
 - Were there more natural or man-made sounds?
 - What was the loudest song?
 - Where the bird songs different?
5. Echo challenge – can you sing back your sound map?

Handy notes:

Listening is a skill!

This exercise encourages listening and shows how you can use it to get a good picture of what is going on around you – just by marking sounds on a piece of paper.

From discussing what and where sounds come from you can develop understanding of where animals might be most commonly found – and where they are not.

Do more:

If you heard some bird song try and remember the song and back in the classroom play the songs of some common woodland and garden birds – do any of them sound familiar? See if you can remember which one you heard.

There are calls for all the birds on the [RSPB website](http://www.rspb.org.uk).