

Bird Bingo

Spring has well and truly sprung and those of us who are prepared to clamber out of bed early will be fortunate to enjoy one of nature's greatest phenomenon, the dawn chorus. But have you ever wondered why birds make such a racket in the morning, while the rest of us are happily tucked up in bed, and why it is essential for them to get up so early to do it?

The dawn chorus - is all about defending territory and raising chicks. The singing you typically hear is performed by male birds, who feel safer singing their hearts out in the dim light

Green spaces such as woods and parks are among the best places to enjoy the dawn chorus, but even if you live in town you can still enjoy the performance if you have trees in your street or bushes in your garden. Why not set yourself a challenge and try to memorise the calls of six common birds by tuning in for a game of Bird Bingo?

Day 1: Observe the birds in your neighbourhood while you are out on your daily exercise. Write down the names of six common birds you see, e.g. robin, house sparrow, blackbird, starling, great tit, blue tit.

When you get home, take a sheet of paper and mark out six boxes in a grid. Draw one bird in each box - you might need a bit of help from the RSPB website. Now it is time to do your homework! Log onto the RSPB website and listen to the call of each of your six birds. www.rspb.org.uk

Day 2: Set your alarm clock for 6am, or 5.30 if you are feeling brave. Wrap up warm, grab a recording device such as a phone and head outside with a parent or guardian to record what you hear.

Are you ready for a game of bingo? Place your Bird Bingo sheet in front of you on the breakfast table and play back your recording. As you hear each of the bird calls, mark off the correct bird on your sheet. The first person to mark off all six birds is the winner!

Black Cap



Goldfinch



Great Tit



Robin



Swallow

