Animal Sounds and Communication!

Why do animals make sounds?

You've probably noticed during a walk, that animals make all sorts of different noises! One of the best examples of this are birds. Every bird species has a specific song and various calls that set it apart from other birds, but why do they have this?

It's for communication! Just like you and I use words to tell each other what we want to say, birds use different notes, patterns, and noises to tell other birds what is on their mind! And other animals do this too, think about a rattlesnake...what is it trying to say when it rattles its tail?

A quick game you can use to practice this is called the "Hey!" game. Imagine you are a bird, but the only sound you can say is "hey!". Try to tell the person next to you that you are happy using just "hey!". Now, how would it sound if you were angry? Sad? What if you were trying to warn them that a bear was behind them! Remember you can only say "hey". This is how birds use their specific notes to tell each other things too!
How do other animals communicate?

Let's play a fun game to learn some of the other sounds that Utah animals make to communicate with each other! Have your guardian or a friend go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=mn5FFSPYkio&feature=youtu.be to find the sounds you'll need to play!

Print out the following animal cards (or simply draw their names on separate pieces of paper) and place them around your backyard or a room of your house. Have your guardian or friend play the video and run to the animal that you think is making that noise! Check your answer with whoever is playing the video.

Once you have guessed all the animals, go back through and try to determine what the animal might be trying to say through their noises! Are they displaying a warning sign? Trying to attract a mate? Simply singing to each other? These guesses are up to you, so feel free to get creative!
Sandhill crane

Coyote

Red-tailed hawk

Western diamond-backed rattlesnake

American bison
Nature Sound Walk!

Take a walk around your neighborhood, lay in your backyard, or simply open up a window and see how many different sounds you can hear outdoors!

Challenge yourself to find 10 unique sounds and write them down or draw what you hear on a piece of paper.

Remember that humans are part of our ecosystem as well, so human sounds count too! How do you think the sounds that we make affect wildlife?

See if you can recreate any of the sounds that you hear using your mouth or object around you! Can you call back to the birds?
Painting a Soundscape

Create a picture with the sounds that you are hearing! Use our sound key below, or create your own, and sit quietly outdoor (or by a window) and recreate the sounds you hear through color.

Each time you hear one of these sounds, paint it with the color that represents it! You can paint squiggles, lines, zig zags, objects...whatever feels right to you!

For our example soundscape, we used watercolors, but feel free to use other paints, crayons, markers, or any other drawing supplies! Get creative with it and feel free to mix it up!

Key:
- Purple - birds
- Blue - wind
- Green - mammals
- Red - cars
- Yellow - water
This soundscape was painted in an educator's backyard, while sitting outdoors for 20 minutes. In it, she noted being able to capture a conversation between her dog and a squirrel (green), multiple birds chirping (purple), and rain dripping from her roof (yellow).