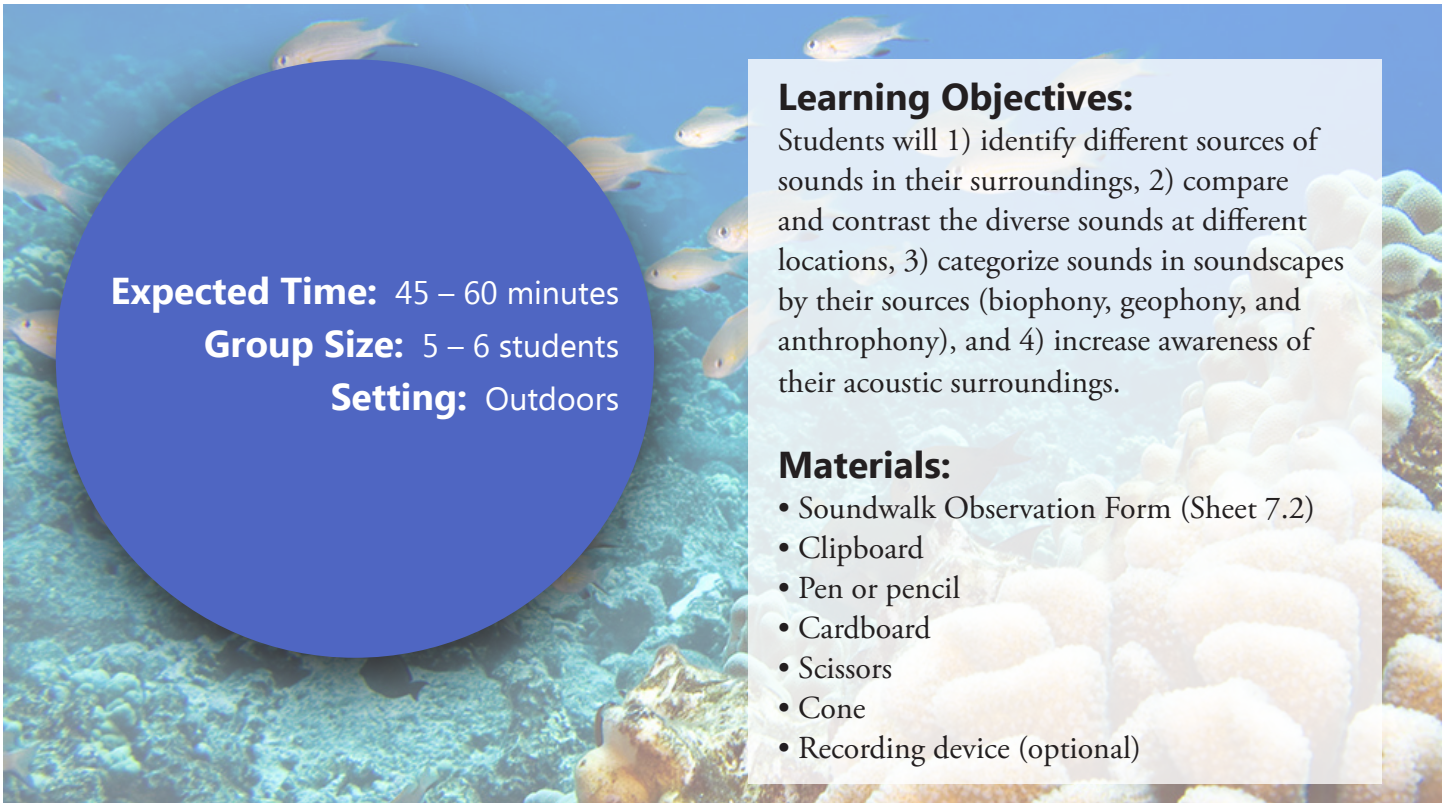


Expected Time: 45 – 60 minutes
Group Size: 5 – 6 students
Setting: Outdoors

Learning Objectives:

Students will 1) identify different sources of sounds in their surroundings, 2) compare and contrast the diverse sounds at different locations, 3) categorize sounds in soundscapes by their sources (biophony, geophony, and anthrophony), and 4) increase awareness of their acoustic surroundings.

Materials:

- Soundwalk Observation Form (Sheet 7.2)
- Clipboard
- Pen or pencil
- Cardboard
- Scissors
- Cone
- Recording device (optional)

Activity 7: Sound Walk

"Sound walks" were originally conceived by teachers of music and the visual artists. The main purpose of an ecological sound walk is to actively listen while walking in a natural setting. Have you ever noticed how the sound of a river changes after a rainy day? What about the chorus of birds at sunrise? Why does the environment sound quieter after it snows?

Soundscapes reflect the identity of landscapes. The acoustic identity of each ecosystem reflects and affects the quality of the area for both wildlife and people. Through intentional listening, people can develop a "sense of place" and greater attachment to nature and certain locations. Sound walks allow for such intentional listening.

A sound walk is also a good method to introduce students to the fieldwork methods of soundscape ecology. Many soundscape ecologists spend hours listening to the soundscapes of a place. During the sound walk, encourage your students to listen to local sound sources. This experience will not only enhance their connection to nature, but also develop their awareness of spatial variation in soundscapes and their geographical orientation in a certain place.

Sound walks can take place anytime and anywhere—during the day or night, in a park, in a forest, or even in a street! Every environment has its own unique soundscape, be it a rich, biologically diverse soundscape in a rain forest or a busy, human-dominated soundscape in an urban area. Sound walks can be part of an everyday routine. They are spatial activities that combine visual and aural perception of landscapes, and they can help students to better appreciate natural spaces.

INSTRUCTOR DIRECTIONS

This activity is a field activity that encourages students to open their ears and listen to their surrounding soundscapes. They will learn how to make observations by trusting their sense of hearing.

Pre-Activity

Choose several locations that will serve as places to stop and listen during the sound walk. It is highly recommended that these sites be located in places associated with different soundscapes (e.g. close to a pond, in the middle of a forest, or close to a road) so that students are exposed to different soundscapes. Ask students to make the "viewfinder" and "sound finder" before the sound walk, and explain how they can be used for focused listening (Sheet 7.1).

Activity

During the sound walk, students should not talk, though they can communicate by quietly mimicking sounds they hear or by pantomiming. Each group can choose a signature call (preferably a local biophonic or geophonic sound so that they can easily find their group members without disturbing the natural soundscape).

Before leaving, provide materials for students to build their view finder and sound finder (Sheet 7.1).
"Warm up" students' ears with the following exercises:

1. Have students cover their ears with their hands for 20 seconds, and then ask them to remove their hands. This action helps them to calibrate and focus on their sense of hearing.
2. Ask them to listen to the sound that is nearest to them and then to the sound that is farthest from them.
3. Ask them to focus on the sounds they hear with their left ear and then with their right ear.
4. Ask them to listen to sounds behind them.

5. Ask students if there are any continuous sounds around them.
6. Ask if there are any sounds that are periodic (occur in a pattern) or random.
7. Ask students to close their eyes, and ask if they hear anything differently with their eyes closed.
8. Ask them to limit their field of vision with their hands or a viewfinder, and ask if this changes what they hear.
9. Ask them to use the sound finder, and ask if it affects their hearing. Listening devices from Activity 3 can also be reintroduced if desired.
10. Take students to each site, and stay for several minutes (at least 5 minutes per site) of focused listening. Students can arrange themselves in a circle; they can face inward to communicate or outward if the group has problems focusing.
11. At each site, students should categorize the sounds they hear on their observation form (Sheet 7.2).
12. On the way back to the starting location, ask some follow-up questions:
    - Which categories of sound (geophony, biophony, and anthrophony) did you hear and note on your observation form?
    - Which category was most prominent? Which was rarest?
    - At which site did you hear your favorite soundscape? Why?
    - Which soundscape was your least favorite? Why?
    - Were there any sounds that you could not identify?
    - How did your silence shape your experience?
    - Compare the soundscapes of the different sites you visited. What might explain any similarities or differences you noticed?

KEY QUESTIONS

If you could alter one of the soundscapes you heard, what sounds might you add or remove? Why?
Answers will vary.
Did you make any sounds like footsteps or rustling of clothes that contributed to the soundscape?
Answers will vary.
If you were an animal such as bird or frog, in which place that we visited would you choose to live? Why?
Answers will vary.
How might the loss of biodiversity alter the soundscape?
Answer: Disturbances like human development, climate change, and invasive species affect biodiversity negatively. If biodiversity declines, biophony will decline as well.
What might this area have sounded like before human development?
Answers will vary.

POSSIBLE EXTENSION

Sound walks can be modified in a number of ways. Here are a few possibilities:
Record different sounds during the walk.

- Go to different locations to explore new sounds.
- Use the same locations at different times of day to see how some sounds change over time.
- Have students change their physical positions while at a site (in a circle, line, lying down, etc.).
- Have students describe the differences between sounds at different locations.
- Have students write in a journal about the soundscape in greater detail.
- Have students write poems about soundscapes.

ADAPTATIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

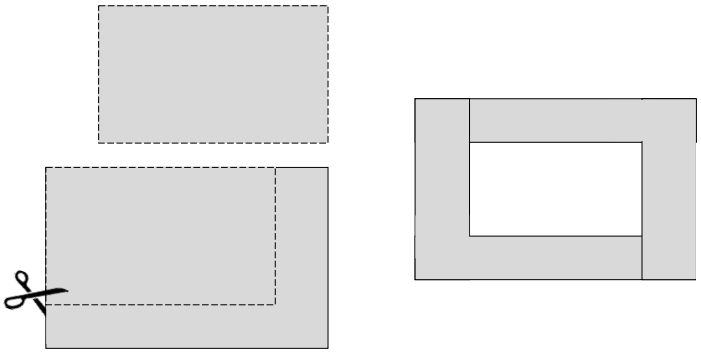
- Choose accessible sites, and/or allow students input to guide the site selection.
- Clarify the route of the sound walk before starting.
- One assistant per group may be needed to complete the students' observation forms.

Sheet 7.1: How to Make and Use a Viewfinder & a Soundfinder

Materials: Scissors, 2 pieces of rigid card stock, pencil, ruler, paper clip

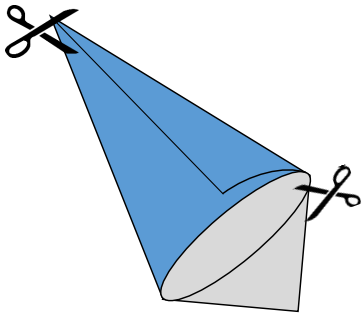
FOR THE VIEWFINDER

- With a ruler, draw two L-shapes on the card.
- Cut out the two L-shapes with scissors and put the Ls on top of each other to make a window.



SOUND FINDER

- Cut and fold an 18" x 24" sheet of paper to make a cone, as shown below.



HOW TO USE A VIEWFINDER

- Hold your viewfinder in your hand or make a frame with your hands.
- Look through its window at the landscape, pan around the landscape, and adjust the size and shape of the viewing window.
- Look at different views, until you find a view that you like.
- Hold the viewfinder or your hands steady and focus your ears to hear the sounds that are coming from the area you can see.
- Reset your viewfinder and focus on how the sounds you hear change as you change the content in your viewing window.

Sheet 7.2: Soundwalk Observation Form

Name:

Date:

Time:

At each site, list all of the sounds in your surroundings and put them in one of the categories below.

Keep a tally of every kind of sound you hear on your walk. Which sound did you hear the most?

Site Name	Natural Sounds				Human-made Sounds	
	Biophony	Tally	Geophony	Tally	Anthrophony	Tally
	eg. bird sounds 		eg. rain sounds 		eg. car sounds