

Your Better Sense of Nature

*This is part of a series of articles based on Jacob's new book called **The Book of Nature Connection – 70 Sensory Activities for all Ages**, published by New Society Press and released on April 18th, 2022.*

Nature is calling...

Our environment is a delightfully textured tapestry of sound, sight, taste, feel and smell. And spring is a wonderful time to activate our senses so that we can feel more connected to the rebirth and renewal that this season brings.

Each of our senses is a remarkable evolutionary achievement. Take our hearing for example. Our small protruding ears help us to pick up a range of sound vibrations. We have hearing that is sensitive enough to detect wind gently moving through grasses and bold enough to deal with loud and raucous honking of Canada Geese winging their way north. We can hear sounds from many locations simultaneously – one could say that we hear in three dimensions, in complete surround sound.

And spring is a marvelous time to tune into an awakening world.

Deer Ears

Here is how you too can turn your ears into deer ears.

- Press your fingers together and cup your hands. Place them directly behind your ears and push forward. You can amplify your hearing by as much as 10 times by using this technique
- Now find a quiet spot. Close your eyes and listen to the natural sounds around you. Perhaps it is the swish of grass, the gurgle of water, the gentle murmur of tree leaves or the creaking of branches. How many natural sounds can you hear?

Try this Nature Sound Scavenger Hunt:

- The short bursts of trilling by Chorus Frogs. To hear what they sound like go to www.frogwatch.ca
- The 3 toned springtime song of the Black-capped Chickadee – sounds like “Hey Sweetie” (to hear what this sounds like, go to: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-capped_Chickadee/sounds)
- Listen for Tree Songs – Here is a wonderful word for you to use during your next game of Scrabble: psithurism, meaning the whispering of wind as it blows the trees and rustles leaves. Some people can close

to identifying the type of tree by listening to the quality of the sound wind makes as it moves through the treetops. A white pine whooshes, a maple and oak chatter, Quaking Aspens shiver and bushes whisper. Can you become a psithurist – a connoisseur of tree songs?

- The bright and urgent song a Red-winged Blackbird – sounds like “Konk-er-me” To hear what this sounds like to go: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-winged_Blackbird
- The cheerful sound of the American Robin which sounds like “Cheer-a-lee, cheer up, cheer-a-lee.” To hear what this sounds like go to: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Robin

Submitted by Jacob Rodenburg, Executive Director of Camp Kawartha, an award-winning outdoor education centre and summer camp.

