

What Are  
the Birds  
Thinking?



17<sup>TH</sup> ISTANBUL BIENNIAL  
"WHAT ARE THE BIRDS THINKING?"  
TEACHER'S GUIDE



## Introduction

The Teacher's Guide was prepared by the İKSV Alt Kat and Pera Museum Learning Programmes in cooperation with the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) and the Suna and İnan Kiraç Foundation to help teachers convey the 17th Istanbul Biennial's "What Are the Birds Thinking?" project to elementary and middle school students.

The Teacher's Guide includes the questions to be directed to students within the scope of the project, as well as information on bird watching and a bibliography. The students' answers and productions, reached through observing birds to answer the questions asked within the scope of the project, will be exhibited online as part of the 17th Istanbul Biennial.

Students will observe birds in their immediate surroundings and nature within the scope of the "What Are the Birds Thinking?" project. The questions directed to the students focus on topics such as how birds think, how they see people, how they are affected by environmental changes, and how they nest, feed, and behave. Thanks to the tips included in the guide, teachers can easily go birdwatching with their students and carry out various exercises by following the activity suggestions found in the bibliography. Students are encouraged to understand the importance of nature and living things to human life through these activities and gain greater love and appreciation for nature.

With the information contained in this guide, it is aimed that students develop their skills of critical and creative thinking, questioning, and the ability to express themselves correctly. This project allows teachers to also develop multi-disciplinary teaching methods with the subject of birds. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate associations, make linkages and trigger connections and questions related to climate change, modern industrial systems and societies, ways of living, producing and consuming, traditional ecosystems and indigenous societies.

With the information contained in this guide, it is aimed that students develop their skills of critical and creative thinking, questioning, and the ability to express themselves correctly. This project allows teachers to also develop multi-disciplinary teaching methods with the subject of birds. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate associations, make linkages and trigger connections and questions related to climate change, modern industrial systems and societies, ways of living, producing and consuming, traditional ecosystems and indigenous societies.

## ABOUT PROJECT PARTNERS

### Istanbul Biennial

The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and the Arts (İKSVA) has been organising the Istanbul Biennial, which aims to establish Istanbul as a meeting point in the field of visual arts between artists and audiences from different cultures, since 1987. The sixteen biennials organised by İKSVA every two years have enabled the formation of an international cultural network between local and international art circles, artists, curators, and art critics by bringing together new trends in contemporary art. The Istanbul Biennial, which is considered one of the most intriguing art events today, prefers an exhibition model that allows artists to communicate with each other and the audience through their works, rather than a national representation model. The curator of the biennial, appointed by an international advisory board, invites various artists and projects to the exhibition in accordance with the conceptual framework.

### İKSVA Alt Kat

İKSVA Alt Kat is a learning and interaction space established by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSVA) in 2019 at the basement floor of the Nejat Eczacıbaşı Building in Şişhane. İKSVA Alt Kat conducts its programmes on digital platforms and event venues throughout the year in cooperation with festivals and biennials for groups with limited access to cultural and artistic activities, especially for children and young people. İKSVA Alt Kat, which conducts its activities within the scope of the İKSVA Cultural Policy Studies Department, functions as a participatory, diverse, multicultural, accessible, and flexible platform that brings together cultural professionals, non-governmental organisations, artists, educators, and audiences.

### Pera Museum Learning Programmes

Pera Learning Programmes aim to introduce children, teenagers, and adults to art, make it accessible and create awareness for museum-going by building a bridge between the audience and the works of art. In these activities based on interpretation and creativity, creativity is also supported while the artworks are being evaluated. The learning programme, supported by hands-on work in the workshop, also aims to make the museum a part of social life. The "Pera Learning" programmes created for this purpose continue throughout the year at ongoing Museum Collections and temporary exhibitions, with colourful and creative activities aimed at different age groups and special education students.

### Hisar Schools

Hisar Education Foundation established Hisar Schools in 1996 as a continuation of its mission to raise academic standards in Turkey. Hisar Schools have prepared their 21st-century curriculum by blending innovative and progressive learning and have made it their mission to "discover and develop the true potential" within the students. With K-12 academic programmes at the preschool, elementary, middle, and high school levels, Hisar Schools are celebrating their 25th year in education. Hisar Schools are among the leading schools in Turkey with its constantly renewing, flexible approach to education, technology, and education centres that increase in number every year, studies and collaborations with international organizations, well-equipped academic and administrative staff, and over 1400 students.

### Education Reform Initiative (ERG)

Eğitim Reformu Girişimi [The Educational Reform Initiative] (ERG) is an independent and non-profit initiative that contributes to the systemic transformation in education for the development of the child and society through sound evidence, constructive dialogue, and the collective wisdom of diverse views. Evidence-based decision-making processes in education, the participation of all concerned parties, and ensuring every child has access to quality education are the key elements of systematic transformation in education. Established in 2003, ERG constitutes a good example for Turkish civil society by being a joint initiative supported by several leading organizations in Turkey. ERG carries out its activities through its units, the ERG Education Observatory and the Education Laboratory, and coordinates the Teacher Network. ERG is supported by Mother Child Education Foundation, the Aydın Doğan Foundation, Borusan Kocacıyık Foundation, Elginkan Foundation, ENKA Foundation, İstanbul Bilgi University, İstanbul Kültür University, Kadir Has Foundation, Mehmet Zorlu Foundation, MV Holding, Sabancı University, Tekfen Foundation, Vodafone Turkey Foundation, Vehbi Koç Foundation, and Yapı Merkezi.

### The Teachers Network

Öğretmen Ağı [The Teachers Network] is a sharing and collaboration network where teachers are empowered by coming together with their colleagues, people, and institutions from different disciplines. The Teacher Network, coordinated by the Education Reform Initiative, is sponsored by seven leading foundations working in education in Turkey (Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı (AÇEV), Aydın Doğan Foundation, Bir Arada Yaşarız Eğitim ve Toplumsal Araştırmalar Vakfı (BAYETAV), Enka Foundation, Mehmet Zorlu Foundation, Vehbi Koç Foundation and Sabancı Foundation).

## CONTENTS

- About the 17th Istanbul Biennial
- “What Are the Birds Thinking?” Project Text, Objectives and Questions
- New Concepts and Words
- About Birdwatching
- Recommendations



Utkan Ç.



## About the 17th Istanbul Biennial (17 September - 20 November 2022)

The 17th Istanbul Biennial includes projects that start before and end long after the eight-week period of the exhibition. It hosts multi-disciplinary creations that extend beyond visual arts and stimulate all the senses. Within the scope of the biennial, many different participants present their works in smaller and more intimate venues etched in the city's memory, including bookstores and used-book stores. The biennial exhibitions welcome the audience at venues within the Beyoğlu, Fatih, and Kadıköy districts and appeal to a wider audience through radio programmes and digital media.

This year, unlike previous years held under a common theme or a title, the different projects and works of the 17th Istanbul Biennial are unified through a process: composting. The Biennial considers compost, a natural fertilization method in which many different organic wastes are brought together and decomposed, as an inspiration. This biennial will spread to venues and meeting points that hold a special place in Istanbul's memory. An extensive programme of screenings, dialogues, talks, and exhibitions will take place across one-time and month-long venues in the city and online.



Gül Ş.

# “What Are the Birds Thinking?” Project

## Text, Objectives and Questions

This project, which takes place during May-December 2022 within the scope of the 17th Istanbul Biennial, aims to reach children in Turkey and different countries around the world between the ages of 6-14.

The project, carried out by İKSV in cooperation with the Educational Reform Initiative (ERG), Hisar Schools, Teacher Network and Pera Museum Learning Programmes, brings together experts, artists, teachers, scientists and partners from many different disciplines.

You can share your students' answers to the questions provided in the guide under the heading “**Questions about birds for children**” and their observations about birds in your preferred formats (text, images, photos, audio or video) through our Google Forms page (<https://forms.gle/gdgs3XP99hMAH6mY7>). The content sent through Google Forms will be shared in various media within the scope of the biennial. If you have trouble sharing you can provide information by e-mail to the [altkat@iksv.org](mailto:altkat@iksv.org).

### THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT:

- To build an interspecies and creative process that requires physical observation and concentration, which improves the ability to listen, record, compile and research.
- To divert children's imagination away from human dominated and digital spaces to make connections with nature and living things.
- To provide opportunities for children to reconnect with birds and nature, and to have conversations where they can approach bird-related issues from different angles.
- To facilitate children to add bird names, words and phrases related to birds to their vocabulary.
- To enable students to observe the effects of birds on the areas they live in, to observe the traces they leave, to distinguish migration routes and migration seasons, and to learn how to tell the difference between bird sounds..



Ada Ş.

# Questions about birds for children:

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

- What are the birds thinking?
- If birds could talk, what would they tell us? What could be ways to communicate with them?
- What does it mean to be a member of a flock of birds?
- Are the colours of bird feathers very different, unique, hidden and unknown?
- How do you think birds see? Why?
- How do birds learn to sing so well or learn to imitate sounds such as an alarm?
- How do birds learn to fly? What can we learn by watching birds?
- Where do birds live? With what materials do they make their nests, and how do they do it?
- How do birds build nests in different climates? Do they use different materials in different climates?
- How do birds feed? Do they eat different things in different seasons?
- What are birds' senses like? Can they smell and distinguish colours? What are their visual angles?
- Where do birds learn to fly and migrate? Is there a school where birds go?
- If you were a bird, what would you like to look like?
- If you were a member of a flock of birds, what shapes would you like to draw as you fly in the sky?
- How would birds survive if they didn't have wings?
- Are birds' best friends birds? Do they make friends with other animals or people?
- How do birds sing when they are happy? How do they sing when they are unhappy? How do they sing when they are excited?

## MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- What Are The Birds Thinking?
- Could birds be watching us? If so, what do they see? What do they think?
- If birds could talk, what would they tell us? Could there be ways to communicate with them? If we could communicate with birds, what would you tell them?
- Are the colours of bird feathers very different, unique, hidden and unknown?

- How do you think birds see? Why?
- How do birds learn to sing so well or learn to imitate sounds such as an alarm?
- Why could they be singing differently at different times?
- How do the repeating patterns, frequencies and rhythms of bird sounds change from species to species or over time?
- How do birds learn to fly? What can we learn by watching birds? What do you think has been accomplished by observing birds so far?
- Do you think birds like to fly over cities, or over forests, rivers, seas and mountains? How would you imagine the reduction of trees, meadows and swamps makes birds feel? Why?
- Do you think birds feel anything when they fly over borders between countries? And what about when they fly over refugee camps?
- Where do birds live? How do they build their nests? What materials do they use?
- How do birds feed? Do they eat different things in different seasons? How has unplanned urbanization affected birds' migration routes and feeding? What about migratory birds that are left behind, how do you think they live, feel and feed when they are separated from their flocks?
- Who starts the migration, how do the birds know that it's time to migrate and how do they know the migration routes?
- What message would you like migrating birds to carry, or which countries would you want them to go to?
- What are birds' senses like? Can they smell and distinguish colours? What are their visual angles?
- If you were a member of a flock of birds, what shapes would you like to draw as you fly in the sky?
- Are there any birds that don't fly? What do flightless birds do?
- Are there birds with disabilities? How do they live?
- What would be different in our lives if birds didn't exist?

## QUESTIONS THAT CAN PROVIDE INSIGHT TO THE ADULTS RUNNING THE EVENT:

- Could the experience of a childhood where stronger bonds are built with birds and nature, strengthen humanity? Could this experience bolster the ability to resist human or technological extremes?
- Could it be possible to put the process of "slow looking" and "slow/active listening" into widespread use in our lives?
- What do we gain by knowing the names of the birds, trees and plants we live with?
- Could awareness of the birds we live with support our development of empathy, building interspecies solidarity, and overcoming trauma, depression, and alienation?





Eda Ö.

## New Concepts and Words:

Ecosystem / Ecology / Ornithology - Ornithologist / Population / Habitat / Colony / Biodiversity / Endemic species / Ecological footprint / Carbon footprint / Water footprint / IBA (Important Bird Area) / V formation

### WHAT IS AN ECOSYSTEM?

An ecosystem is a system of living and inanimate entities located in a certain territory, formed by the mutual interaction of these entities.

### WHAT IS ECOLOGY?

Ecology is the science that studies the relationships of living things with each other and their environment. Ecology is a word formed by the combination of the ancient Greek words “oikos” meaning “house, physical environment”, and “logos” meaning “science”.

### WHAT IS ORNITHOLOGY? WHO IS CALLED AN ORNITHOLOGIST?

Ornithology is the science of birds, that is, the branch of zoology that studies birds. Ornithology's main areas of study are the distribution, migration, behaviour and ecology of the approximately 10 thousand species of birds on Earth. An ornithologist is a scientist who studies birds.

### WHAT IS POPULATION?

A group of the same type of living beings in a certain area is called a population.

### WHAT IS A HABITAT?

The natural environment where a species lives, feeds, and grows is called a habitat.

### WHAT IS A BIRD COLONY?

A colony can be defined as a congregation formed by animals such as ants, bees, or birds. A bird colony is formed as a result of a large number of individuals of one or more species of birds nesting in a certain area or coexisting during certain periods.



## WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

Biological Diversity is the variety of as all living things such as plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms and the ecosystems they live in. Biodiversity consists of three elements: species diversity, genetic diversity, and ecological diversity. Species diversity means the diversity of different species. Genetic diversity refers to the diversity of genes found in plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms. Ecological diversity covers all the different habitats that exist on Earth.

## WHAT IS AN ENDEMIC SPECIES?

It is a type of local animal/plant that lives/grows only in a certain region and is unlikely to live/grow anywhere else in the world. It comes from the Latin word endemos and is used in the sense of “native”.

## WHAT IS ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT, WATER FOOTPRINT, CARBON FOOTPRINT?

*Ecological footprint*, in brief, refers to the human impact on the environment. The concept of ecological footprint is a method developed to calculate ecosystem balances that have been disrupted as a result of human activities and to determine the amount that needs to be restored to the ecosystem.

*Water footprint* is defined as the total volume of fresh water consumed by an individual, business, or community.

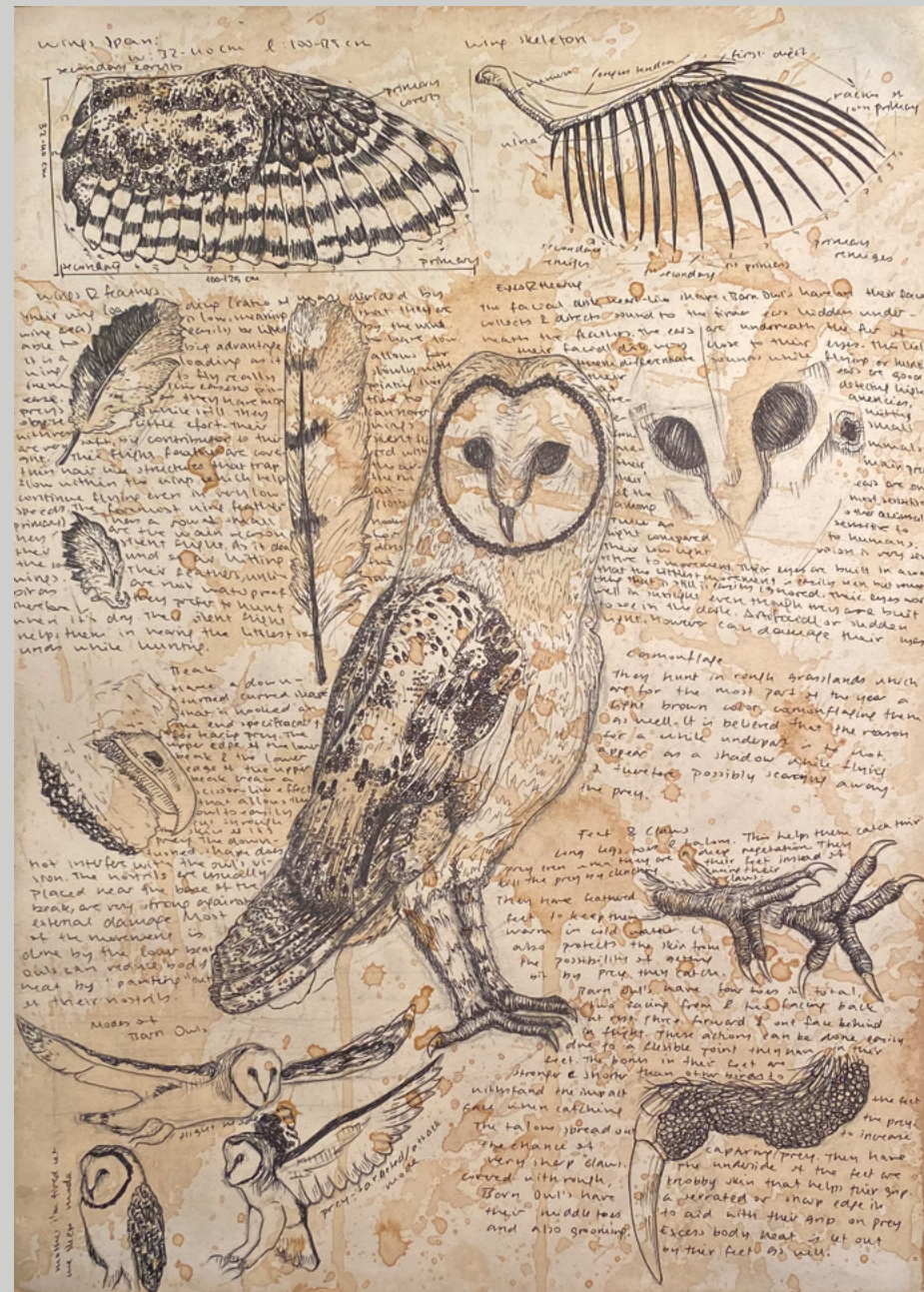
*Carbon footprint* is also a measure of accounting the damage caused to the environment by human activities in terms of emitted greenhouse gases, which is measured in units of carbon dioxide.

## WHAT IS AN IMPORTANT BIRD AREA (IBA)?

Important Bird Areas are geographic areas that are especially important for the survival of generations of bird species. Important Bird Areas are of international importance and are aimed at ensuring the continuity of birds together with other living things and ecosystems.

## WHAT DOES “V FORMATION” MEAN?

The V formation is the name given to the symmetrical V-shaped flight formation used by geese, ducks and other migratory birds.



Deniz E.



# About Birdwatching

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO DURING BIRDWATCHING?

We need to be as quiet as possible so that we can hear the birds and not disturb them. If we are a crowded group, we should stay as close to each other as possible.

## WHAT TIMES CAN WE GO BIRDWATCHING?

We can watch birds throughout the year. Not every bird can be seen during every season. There are birds that are seen throughout the year, birds that are seen only in summer, only in winter, and only during the migration season. It is important to know when which species can be seen.

## WHAT TIME OF THE DAY IS BEST FOR BIRDWATCHING?

In hot weather, songbirds are active very early in the morning and in the evening when it gets cooler. Large predators and some soaring birds wait for the weather to warm up to fly. Most owls and nightjars are active at night.

## WHAT TO WEAR FOR BIRDWATCHING

When going out in cold weather, we should wear warm clothes and prefer comfortable shoes. In hot weather, thin fabrics should be preferred for comfort. It is especially recommended to wear a hat in summer, apply sunscreen, and bring an insect repellent with you if you are allergic.

**ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 1:**  
Bring images of the birds that are most often seen in the region to the classroom. Place the images of the bird in the environment so that the students do not see it. Depict the bird's patterns and appearance, imitate its sound. Ask the students that have not seen the image of the bird to guess the type of bird from the descriptions.

## HOW TO BEHAVE DURING BIRDWATCHING

To ensure a quiet environment, a "social contract" can be developed in the classroom before going out for birdwatching. Hand signals can be created by the class for phrases such as "be quiet", "there's a bird here", and "I need something."

If birdwatching is to be done with a large class, the class can be divided into small groups by creating different activity stations to ensure silence. For example, while a group is trying to observe birds, a group may search for nests, and another group may search for clues about the eating habits of birds.

### *A Note to Teachers:*

In order to make it easier for your students to be ready before birdwatching, you can play games introducing the birds that are more likely to be seen in your region.



## BENEFITS OF BIRDWATCHING

Recognition and conservation of bird species, learning about endangered birds, bird tourism, nature exploration and understanding the relationship between humans and the environment.

## HOW CAN WE LEARN ABOUT BIRD SPECIES?

A lot of information is available from other bird watchers, guidebooks, and the internet.

## WHERE TO GO FOR BIRDWATCHING?

You can birdwatch almost anywhere in the world: in lakes, forests, seas, parks and even on the balcony of your home.

## EQUIPMENT FOR BIRDWATCHING

Notbook

Pencil

Binoculars

Guidebook (see the chapter Recommended Reading and Research)

### ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 2

Play recordings of the sounds of birds that are common in the region to the students. Introduce the birds with their visuals. Have students try to guess the bird species by its sound. Bird species that are most likely to be observed are introduced through this activity and it also prepares the students to be ready before going out on the expedition.

*Suggestion for Bird Sounds: You can find the sounds of birds living in Turkey via the link below.*

[https://www.trakus.org/kods\\_bird/uye/?fsx=turkiyenin\\_kuslari](https://www.trakus.org/kods_bird/uye/?fsx=turkiyenin_kuslari)

### ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 3

Examine the important bird habitats in the region together with students. Ask the students to research the lives of migratory birds. Through this activity, the students' curiosity about the subject will increase and they will be more enthusiastic about birdwatching.

## NOTES ON BIRD WATCHING

---

**Name and Surname of the Birdwatcher:**

---

**The Name of the Field You Are Observing:**

---

**People You Observe Together:**

---

**The Day of Observation:**

---

**The Date of Observation:**

---

**The Time of Observation:**

---

**The Season of Observation:**

---

**Weather (Precipitation and wind speed, cloud amount, etc.):**

---

**Characteristics of Birds (colour, song, size, behaviour, etc.):**

---

**Names of Birds:**

---

**Your Impressions of Bird Watching:**



# Recommendations

## WEB PAGES:

<https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/the-lord-god-bird/>

<https://www.sciencealert.com/scientists-document-wild-birds-communicating-with-african-tribespeople-to-help-them-find-honey>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/06/why-birds-do-what-they-do/610588/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/sep/30/robert-macfarlane-lost-words-children-nature>

[http://bnhsenvis.nic.in/KidsCentre/Birdactivitieskids\\_865.aspx](http://bnhsenvis.nic.in/KidsCentre/Birdactivitieskids_865.aspx)

## FILMS:

*Rio*, 2011

*Rio 2*, 2014

*Happy Feet*, 2006

*March of the Penguins*, 2005

*Kes*, 1969

## APPS

<https://ebird.org/home>

<https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

Rather than a great tree, laden with sweet, ripe fruit, this biennial seeks to learn from the birds' flight, from the once teeming seas, from the earth's slow chemistry of renewal and nourishment. There may be no great gathering, no orchestrated coming together at one time and place; instead it might be a great dispersal, an invisible fermentation. Its threads will be drawn together, but they will multiply and diverge, at different paces, crossing here and there but with no noisy culmination, no final knot. Let this biennial be compost. It may begin before it is to begin and continue well after it is over.

17 SEPT.-20 NOV. 2022 FREE OF CHARGE

17<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL BIENNIAL

17 SEPT.-20 NOV. 2022 FREE OF CHARGE

with the contributions of



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

iksv founding sponsor



airline partner



with the support of



[bial.iksv.org](http://bial.iksv.org)