



# Bird Dancing

## Introduction

Bird dancing is primarily used for finding a mate, so there's always an audience for the dance — a potential mate! Some male birds take things a little farther with a spiffy dance floor or gather in leks, a meeting space where birds get together to dance in a group to attract female birds. Kids learn more about the kinds of displays birds put on to attract a mate and can try some bird moves of their own.

---

## Get kids thinking ...

### WATCH:

#### **THIS COCKATOO SURE CAN DANCE**

[youtu.be/D8MFhizls\\_8](https://youtu.be/D8MFhizls_8)

#### **BIRDS OF PARADISE (OUR PLANET)**

[youtu.be/rX40mBb8bkU](https://youtu.be/rX40mBb8bkU)

The cockatoo Snowball is the first animal to dance to music without any training. He is responding to the beat and experimenting — much like people do when they dance. Other bird dances — like that of the Western Parotia — have to be more perfectly choreographed and attuned to what is of interest to a potential mate — not a driving beat. A bird that makes mistakes in the dance might be thought of as weak or inexperienced and not a good choice for mating.





# Bird Dancing

## Let's get started!

**Put on some music** (Rockin' Robin: [music.youtube.com/watch?v=uLF3YZIjucs&list=RDAMVMuLF3YZIjucs](https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=uLF3YZIjucs&list=RDAMVMuLF3YZIjucs)), **have kids stand up, and see what happens.** Human brains are primed to move to music. Scientists think it's likely that most birds and animals don't have the same traits that create an impulse to dance. They also don't have access to a lot of music!



**Have kids get moving even more deliberately and interpret bird activity** using their bodies or imitate the ways different birds move.

Get them started with the dances below, and then have them come up with some dances of their own!

### **"THE PIGEON"**

Bert from Sesame Street made it famous, but everyone can move their heads in and out as they walk in short steps with hands behind their backs.

[youtu.be/VDJsgtoizj8](https://youtu.be/VDJsgtoizj8)

### **"THE TURKEY VULTURE SOAR"**

Like the birds, kids hold their wings (arms) in a wide letter v-shape and rock gently from side to side as they glide around the room.

### **"BIRD HOP"**

Just like sparrows and robins who spend a lot of time hopping around on the ground looking for food, kids can fold their wings (arms) next to their bodies and hop around!





Start with a Book: Bird Buddies Toolkit

## Bird Dancing

### **“THE PENGUIN WALK”**

The penguin can't fly, but it is a great swimmer, and its walk is distinct; kids can hold their arms down on their sides or straight out and take short wide steps and wobble while they walk.

### **DO THE PENGUIN WALK / WILD CLIPS (SESAME STUDIOS)**

[youtu.be/a6Ur326zJtM](https://youtu.be/a6Ur326zJtM)

---

## More bird dancing

### **DANCING WITH BIRDS MERENGUE ROUTINE (ENGLISH AND SPANISH)**

[youtu.be/qzM1TyNsVrI](https://youtu.be/qzM1TyNsVrI)

### **WEIRD AND WONDERFUL DANCING BIRDS COMPILATION**

[youtu.be/wTcfDCjBqV0](https://youtu.be/wTcfDCjBqV0)

