

Sit Spot Practice Journal

What Is a Sit Spot?

A Sit Spot is a place in nature that you return to regularly with one simple intention: to be present. It doesn't need to be remote or spectacular. It might be a corner of your backyard, a favorite tree in a local park, a quiet stretch of creek, or a bench overlooking a meadow. What matters is consistency. By returning to the same place again and again, what first appears ordinary gradually reveals layers of relationship, rhythm, and life that would otherwise go unnoticed.

A Sit Spot is not about escaping the world or trying to "quiet the mind." Instead, it is an invitation to become fully engaged with the world around you. Spend time listening to birdsong, noticing the movement of light and shadow, feeling the wind against your skin, smelling the earth after rain, watching insects, clouds, and changing seasons. Observe without trying to name or analyze everything. Simply allow yourself to become part of the landscape rather than separate from it.

It can be helpful to visit their Sit Spot at the same time each day, perhaps at sunrise with a cup of tea or in the evening as the day comes to a close to establish what's called "baseline." Creating a regular rhythm also helps anchor the practice and allows you to notice subtle changes over time. As your relationship with the place deepens, challenge yourself to visit under different conditions as well: midday, in the rain, during the changing seasons, beneath a full moon, or even in the stillness of night. Each visit reveals a different world.

Over time, your Sit Spot becomes more than a location. It becomes a teacher. The landscape begins to feel familiar, the birds recognize your presence, and your own nervous system starts to settle into the rhythms of the natural world. What begins as a simple practice of observation gradually becomes a practice of belonging.

This is a simple worksheet to support your Sit Spot practice over time. You can print it to fill out or use as a guide to journal by hand.

Tips on Journaling

1. Words

Describe what you notice as precisely as possible.

What is happening? What do you see, hear, feel?

2. Pictures

Simple sketches, shapes, lines, or maps of what you observe.

They do not need to be accurate. They only need to help you remember.

3. Numbers

Counts, patterns, timing, movement, repetition.

How many birds? How often does a sound repeat? How long does something last?

Sit Spot Journal Page 1

Date & Time: _____

Location: _____

Weather: _____

(Sunny, Cloudy, Rainy, Showers, Thunderstorms, Snowy, Windy, Foggy)

Season: _____

(Winter Solstice, Early Spring, Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice, Late Summer, Autumn Equinox, Late Autumn / Threshold into Winter)

Moon: _____
(available in most weather apps: New Moon, Waxing Crescent, First Quarter, Waxing Gibbous, Full Moon, Waning Gibbous, Last (Third) Quarter, Waning Crescent)

How am I arriving right now?
(mentally, emotionally, physically)

Additional Notes: _____

Sit Spot Journal Page 2

Sensory Awareness

Move slowly through the landscape & your senses. No need to rush.

Sight: What shapes, movement, light, or color do I notice?

Sound: What is near? What is far? What is subtle?

Touch: What do I feel through skin, breath, temperature, contact?

Smell: What scents are present in the air or environment?

Inner sensation: What is happening inside my body (breath, tension, ease, movement)?

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Relational Awareness

What feels alive or present in the space with me? _____

Do I feel separate, connected, or something in between? _____

What is my nervous system doing right now (settled, alert, restless, open, etc.)? _____

How do I feel now compared to when I arrived? _____

What is this place teaching me over time? _____

What did I miss? _____

Additional Notes: _____

BONUS: Bird Language Practice

Learning the Baseline

Bird language is the living conversation of the landscape. It is less about identifying species and more about noticing patterns of communication, relationship, and change within an ecosystem. Birds are among nature's earliest observers, responding to predators, weather, food sources, and one another long before humans notice a shift. Whether you're deep in the wilderness or sitting in your own backyard, they offer a continuous window into the rhythms of the natural world.

When beginning this practice, don't worry about interpreting every sound. Your first goal is simply to establish a **baseline**—an understanding of what "normal" looks and sounds like in your Sit Spot. Just as you would notice when a familiar friend suddenly becomes unusually quiet or animated, you'll begin to recognize when the birds' behavior changes from its everyday rhythm.

As you observe, simply notice:

Singing or territorial song — Steady, rhythmic, repetitive songs often indicate birds are comfortable, establishing territory, attracting mates, or simply going about their daily routines. This is often part of the landscape's baseline.

Alarm calls — Short, sharp, repeated calls that sound urgent or insistent. These often signal that a bird has detected something unusual, such as a predator, unfamiliar movement, or potential threat.

Sudden silence — One of the most informative observations. When birds abruptly stop singing or feeding, something in the environment has likely changed. The absence of sound can be just as meaningful as the sounds themselves.

Changes in flight patterns — Notice if birds suddenly flush from the ground, gather together, circle overhead, or all begin looking in the same direction. These shifts often indicate movement elsewhere in the landscape.

Feeding behavior — Birds calmly hopping, foraging, preening, or interacting normally generally suggest the environment feels safe. Steady feeding is often part of a healthy baseline.

"I'm Not Sure What I'm Noticing Yet..." That's perfectly okay.

At first, you may simply hear "bird noise." With time, that noise begins to separate into individual voices, rhythms, and patterns. You don't need to know every species or understand every call. Simply return to your Sit Spot, observe with curiosity, and let familiarity grow naturally. Over weeks and months, you'll begin to recognize when the landscape feels settled, when something has changed, and eventually, why. Bird language isn't a code to memorize—it's a relationship to cultivate. The more time you spend listening, the more the living world begins to reveal itself.

Sit Spot Journal Page 4: Bird Language

What do I notice in bird presence today? _____

Check any that apply:

- ☐ Singing / territorial song (steady, rhythmic, repeated)
- ☐ Alarm calls (sharp, repeated, abrupt shifts in sound)
- ☐ Sudden silence or change in activity
- ☐ Flight patterns shifting quickly or gathering
- ☐ Feeding behavior (steady, grounded, undisturbed)
- ☐ I am not sure what I am noticing yet

What stands out in the quality of sound or silence? _____

Do I notice any shifts in the environment when sounds change? _____

What patterns am I beginning to notice at this Sit Spot? _____

Additional Resources

The practices in this guide are rooted in direct experience. While no book can replace time spent outdoors, the following resources offer valuable guidance for deepening your understanding of awareness, ecology, and the language of the natural world.

The Tracker — Tom Brown Jr.

Part autobiography and part wilderness adventure, *The Tracker* introduces readers to Tom Brown Jr.'s early years learning from his Apache mentor, Stalking Wolf. Through stories of tracking, observation, survival, and deep connection with the natural world, the book offers more than outdoor skills—it presents a philosophy of awareness rooted in humility, curiosity, and direct experience. For many, it serves as an inspiring introduction to the traditions of wilderness awareness that have influenced generations of naturalists, trackers, and mentors.

What The Robin Knows — Jon Young

Perhaps the best modern introduction to bird language, this book teaches readers how to interpret the calls and behaviors of birds as a living communication system. It is an essential resource for developing observation skills and learning to read the subtle stories unfolding around you.

The Laws Guide to Nature Drawing and Journaling — John Muir Laws

One of the finest resources available for developing observation through sketching and journaling. More than an art book, it teaches how drawing slows perception, strengthens memory, and cultivates a deeper relationship with the natural world.

The Naturalist's Notebook — Nathaniel T. Wheelwright & Bernd Heinrich

An inspiring guide to keeping a meaningful nature journal. Filled with practical techniques and examples, it encourages careful observation, thoughtful questions, and long-term documentation of seasonal patterns.