

Viking Saga Songs

7. Birds of the North

Joanna Hello and welcome back to *Viking Saga Songs*, where we're travelling north again.

Nigel To Scandinavia, home to the Viking people, over a thousand years ago. Home too, for many thousands of years, to all sorts of birds.

Both *Birds of the North*
Swooping, swerving
Birds of the North
Turning, curving
Birds of the North
Wing-shapes shifting
Birds of the North
Windward drifting...

Nigel Yes, the wind certainly blows around the mountains and forests and fjords of Scandinavia, lifting birds up in the air to go swooping and...

Joanna ...swerving...



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- Nigel ...and turning...
- Joanna ...and curving...
- Nigel ...wind shapes shifting...
- Joanna ...windward drifting...
- Both *Windward drifting...*
Windward drifting...
Windward drifting...
- Joanna Do you think you can join in that part of today's song, singing 'Windward drifting...' three times? Your voice will rise and fall, ending on a held note. You can sway a little in time as you sing.
- Both: *Windward drifting...*
Windward drifting...
Windward drifting...
- Nigel The Viking people were very influenced by the natural world around them. Their stories and art-work are full of patterns, with plants and animal shapes - and especially images of the birds that travelled alongside them on their Viking journeys.



- Joanna Listen to some different birds singing or making other sounds on their journeys. Sparrows...
- Nigel A falcon...
- Joanna Ravens...
- Both *Birds of the North*
Swooping, swerving
Birds of the North
Turning, curving
Birds of the North
Wing-shapes shifting
Birds of the North
Windward drifting...
- Nigel That's the chorus of today's song...and that chorus keeps on returning.
- Joanna Did you hear how the introduction moves along, gently flowing, rising and falling, with arpeggios on harp and guitar?
- Nigel Then the song words have the phrase 'Birds of the North...' - which is sung four times to the same notes each time. 'Birds of the North...' You try that phrase.



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Both

Birds of the North...

Joanna

In between each of these is a phrase whose tune goes up and down, to suggest different bird movements. Copy each phrase like an echo after me.

Joanna

Swooping, swerving

Nigel:

Swooping, swerving

Joanna

Turning, curving

Nigel

Turning, curving

Joanna

Wing-shapes shifting

Nigel

Wing-shapes shifting

Joanna

Windward drifting...

Nigel

Windward drifting...

Joanna

Did you notice how the last drifting is a bit longer?
You hold on to that note.



Nigel Let's put the whole chorus together. Trying to hit the right notes each time and singing with a soft, controlled voice.

Joanna Remember that the 'Birds of the North...' phrase comes four times, with a different movement words in between. Here's the introduction, so get ready to sing. And..

Both *Birds of the North*
Swooping, swerving
Birds of the North
Turning, curving
Birds of the North
Wing-shapes shifting
Birds of the North
Windward drifting...

Nigel Did you get the words in the right order? Try it once more, everyone keeping together using a very gentle voice. Are you ready? And...

Both *Birds of the North*
Swooping, swerving
Birds of the North
Turning, curving



Birds of the North
Wing-shapes shifting
Birds of the North
Windward drifting...

Joanna There are three verses in the song.

Nigel So look now at the words of verse one.

Sparrow and Falcon
And Swallow and Swan

Joanna *Tree, mountain, lake*
Till it's time to be gone...

Nigel Each verse is made up of five notes...

Joanna ...that gently fall, then rise, and fall, then rise...

Nigel See if you can copy that first phrase of that verse
after me.

Sparrow and Falcon
And Swallow and Swan



Joanna

*Sparrow and Falcon
And Swallow and Swan*

Then the next phrase has just the same notes, except you need to hold on to the last word of all: '...be gone...' It's much longer than the other notes. Copy the whole of that phrase after me.

*Tree, mountain, lake
Till it's time to be gone...*

Nigel

*Tree, mountain, lake
Till it's time to be gone...*

Great! Let's put all of that verse together. To help you the tune is played by guitar and there are some little 'flicks' played by the harp. Sing the words gently. But see if you can sing all the bird names really clearly. Get ready.

Both

*Sparrow and Falcon
And Swallow and Swan
Tree, mountain, lake
Till it's time to be gone...*



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Joanna

After the verse comes - the chorus! It always has an introduction, so you have plenty of time to get ready. We won't bring you in this time, but just remember the first words are 'Birds of the North' and then the bird movements.

Nigel

So can you sing very quietly together this time, to match the flute and echoy whistle playing along?

Both

Birds of the North
Swooping, swerving
Birds of the North
Turning, curving
Birds of the North
Wing-shapes shifting
Birds of the North
Windward drifting...

Nigel

Verse two has two more bird names. Follow the words:

Raven and Eagle
And small birds that sing

Joanna

Summer and Autumn
And Winter and Spring...



Nigel Remember the melody falls and rises and falls and rises - a bit like a bird in flight - and don't forget the last word of all needs to be held on so that it's longer than the others: 'Winter and Spring...'

Joanna Get ready then to sing verse two, being with 'raven'...

Nigel *Raven and Eagle*
And small birds that sing
Summer and Autumn
And Winter and Spring...

As the seasons turn, we move from the verse to...

Joanna The chorus. We will do that in a moment. When you can image you are floating and gliding with wings out spread across the northern landscapes towards the sea. But after singing this chorus you'll go straight on to the next verse - verse three - which is all about sea birds. Can you see it?

Nigel *Seagull and Curlew*
Call out as you glide
Sail with the clouds
And then turn with the tide...



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- Joanna The tune for that is just the same as the last two verses. Don't forget the long word at the end.
- Nigel And after verse three you'll make sea sounds – 'shhhhhh' - in the introduction to the next chorus.
- Joanna: So start with a chorus, then the seagull and curlew verse, then some swishing sounds into another chorus.
- Both *Birds of the North*
 Swooping, swerving
 Birds of the North
 Turning, curving
 Birds of the North
 Wing-shapes shifting
 Birds of the North
 Windward drifting...
- Joanna *Seagull and Curlew*
 Call out as you glide
 Sail with the clouds
 And then turn with the tide...
- Shhh / Shhh / Shhh / Shhh / Shhh / Shhh / Shhh*



- Both *Birds of the North*
Swooping, swerving
Birds of the North
Turning, curving
Birds of the North
Wing-shapes shifting
Birds of the North
Windward drifting...
- Nigel Well that's almost the whole song! Except there's a 'coda' or tail at the end. That's easy because it's the same music as the first music you sung today with the words: 'Windward drifting...'
- Joanna Three more times for that phrase holding on to the very last note so that it gradually fades away. Keep still until the echo whistle has faded away too. Let's give it a try...
- Both *Windward drifting...*
Windward drifting
Windward drifting...
- Joanna Till next time!
- Both Farvel / Good bye!

