

# Houston Zoo at Home

## BIRD BEHAVIOR: GUAM RAIL

### Super Sneaker!

Ages: 4 and up

The Guam rail is a secretive, territorial bird that are most easily observed bathing or feeding along roadsides or field edges. Guam rail's medium-length legs are strong, and the long toes help the bird to walk over grasses and soft marsh mud. Rails are very good at walking, or even running, without making any noise, even when moving through thick vegetation. Can you be sneaky like a Guam rail?

#### Materials Needed:

- Something to represent a Guam rail snack! This could be a plastic toy insect, some leaves or some seeds.
- Blindfold
- This game works best with three or more players, but can be adapted for a smaller group

#### Steps:

1. Find a space either in your home or outside that you can safely move around.
2. Have one person stand in the center of the space with the "Guam rail snack" at their feet. This person should put on a blindfold.
3. All other players should surround this person and be as quiet as possible
4. Get all around them: some in front, some in back, some to the side
5. Make sure the person in the center doesn't know where you are starting from.
6. When the person in center says "Go!" the other players must try to sneak up and grab the "Guam Rail snack" without being heard. Move slowly and quietly!!
7. The person in the center with the blindfold on must try to listen to hear where the other players are coming from. If the person in the center thinks they hear someone, they will yell "Coming from the left" or "Coming from behind" (you can also point in the direction of the noise). If they correctly heard someone coming, that person is out for the round
8. The round ends when a person reaches the snacks and they are the winner.

Play as many rounds as you like. Take turns being the center person.

### Share your project with us!

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# Take Flight!

Ages: 4 and up

Even though Guam rails don't fly, they can jump and flutter away if needed. They have been known to flutter 3 to 10 feet at a time. That is impressive for a bird who is less than a foot long. Let's see how well you can jump and flutter!

## Materials Needed:

- Pieces of paper, cardstock, cardboard, or other flat lightweight items around your house (these will represent your Guam rail wings!)
- Tape measure
- Something to mark the length of each jumper's jump

## Steps:

1. Pick a starting line and see how far everyone can jump without any of the items you have gathered.
2. Measure and mark each person's first attempt at jumping.
3. Have everyone pick a different item and attempt to jump again. How far did you go while holding your items? Try again and attempt fluttering your arms with your items in your hand.
4. Do different items make you go farther?
5. What about getting a running start?
6. See how many different actions you can try in you jumps! Can you spin? How about a high kick?

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