



WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS



Programme Two

ACTIVITY WORKSHEET 1

Student Name: _____



Mini Zoologist

Choose an animal to study (e.g. a bird in the park) and record the number of times you see it. When you record a sighting of this animal, you should write down information such as the time, date, weather and habitat on this sheet. You can use this sheet every time you visit your park. This way, you will build up a great deal of information about your chosen animal. Try going back at different times of the year to see if your chosen species can be seen.

Record details

Name of Park: _____ Date: _____

Animal to be studied: (e.g. Grey heron) _____

How many animals of the same species can you see? _____

What is the weather like?: _____

Time of day: _____

What is the animal doing? _____

Describe the habitat:

Any other information:



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TEACHER INSTRUCTION ACTIVITY 1

Discover Wildlife and their Habitats

This programme is designed to introduce students and teachers to the wonderful world of wildlife and where they live. It will help you to investigate and observe wildlife and gather skills of recording and tracking wildlife.

Biology is the study of living things. **Ecology** is the study of the relationships of living things with their environment. An **Ecosystem** is when the different living things live together within their living environment or habitat.

A **Habitat** is the place where animals normally live. An animal's habitat provides a particular set of conditions needed for it to live. A habitat may be large, for example, a woodland, or small for example, a branch on a tree.

Different Animals

Mammals: Animals with a backbone that can maintain their own body temperature. They are covered in hair and have sweat glands. They give birth to live young and suckle. For example, humans and foxes.

Invertebrates: Animals with no backbone. Insects, slugs, crustaceans and spiders don't have a backbone. They usually have their skeletons on the outside to protect their soft bodies. For example, flies, ladybirds and worms.

Birds: Animals that are warm blooded and have a backbone that have wings, feathers, a beak and sometimes fly. Most birds can fly but some cannot e.g. Ostrich. They lay their eggs in their nests during their nesting season. For example, robin, blackbird and swan.

Reptiles & Amphibians: Amphibians have a backbone but spend part of their life in water and part of land. Reptiles also have a backbone but spend all their life on land. Both are cold-blooded vertebrates, for example, the Common Frog, Smooth Newt and the Common Lizard.

Species: refers to different types of animals. For example, there are two species of squirrel in Ireland, one species is the red squirrel and the other species is the grey squirrel.

Most of our mammals are **nocturnal**, which means they sleep most of the day but come out to look for food at dusk when it gets dark until dawn. In November, most of our animals activities slow down and some such as the hedgehog go into **hibernation**. This is to conserve energy when food is scarce. If they use too much energy at this time, they could die of starvation and exhaustion. In spring, food becomes more plentiful again and all the animals become lively again, very active foraging for food.



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Teacher Instruction Activity 1

Food is very important to animals as it gives them life. It gives them the energy to look for food. It is the cycle of life and is how energy flows between the different animals. This is illustrated in the food chain.

Carnivore: an animal that eats meat (another animal). They have sharp teeth to eat meat.

Herbivore: an animal that only eats plants.

Omnivore: an animal that eats both plants and animals as part of a mixed diet.

Some animals are called **predators** as they hunt and kill other animals for food. The animals being hunted are called their **prey**.

Recording Wildlife

Wildlife recording is very important as it helps us to know what wildlife lives in your park, how many different types of animals there are and whether from year to year the numbers change. This can tell us about changes in their environment. Recording can also tell us information about where they like to live and how they behave.

A Wildlife Record needs to contain four vital pieces of information.

1. What was seen? - the animals name
2. Where it was seen? - give as much detail as possible
3. When it was seen? - the date of the sighting
4. Who are you?

Photographs are very useful in verifying identification using animal books.

Other important information is to describe any activities that the animal is doing such as nesting, resting in the sun, preening its feathers, flying or feeding.

What you can do?

Bring the students on a walk through the park and record what wildlife they see. Once they have recorded their wildlife in the field, they can put the information together back in class. See how many records you have made on different visits to your park and you will start to get an idea of what type of animals are in your park and how many are there. Use Collins wildlife book series to help you identify what you saw. These books can be found in your local library.