

Activity Sheets

Habitats



Educational Visitor Activities

Habitats

Aim of the habitat activities

To recognise the range of habitats on the reserve. Having had an overview of the whole site while looking at the landscape, it is now time to zoom in on some of the different habitats that make up the rest of the reserve. Children will be asked to think about how the habitats might have been created, plus how they are being maintained at present and what the future may hold.

Preparation/classroom activities

Make sure that children fully understand the term habitat. A habitat is an area with a particular group of plants and animals which exists under certain conditions.

Chalk grassland is a very special habitat found within LNRs. The gradient of the grassland in particular is very steep which means mechanical cultivation is very difficult. Therefore historically the area was grazed by sheep and cattle. As a result the meadows on the reserve have been unimproved (not cultivated). This has led to a diverse collection of different species and variety of wildlife. Many wildflower species grow very well in a low nutrient environment, as they are not in direct competition with more vigorous species, which tend to take over nutrient rich soils. Cattle still graze these grassland areas which maintains short grass where orchids flourish in spring and summer, and longer grass where wildflowers, moths and butterflies can be found.



Bumble bee in convolvulus

All animals have a place where they like to live. Some build nests or dens, but many don't. They all need the right sort of things in the area where they live. People need a home, with shops, schools and roads nearby. What do the animals on the reserve need? Choose an animal that lives on the Reserve. It can be a bird, a mammal, a fish, an insect - any animal that you know is living on the reserve. If you can, watch the animal and see what features of the reserve it is using: trees, the water, flowers. Do some research to find out more about this animals life.

Resources

- Information about the reserve in the Educational Visitor Guide
- Binoculars
- Map of the reserve
- Internet
- Books from the library
- Notebook

Challenge
Make a poster display that shows everything that your chosen animal needs to make it feel at home, such as: what and where it eats, where does it find shelter, where does it raise a family, what routes does it travel around the reserve.

Additional background information

This activity is best done after you have spent time watching an animal on the reserve. The information that you get from this will make your poster much more interesting as it will link the animal with the place. Mammals are hard to see, but there are lots of birds, insects and spiders that are easier to watch, especially when the weather is warm and sunny. Use a map and mark on where you see the animal. Try to identify any of the trees and plants that the animal uses, particularly if it is for food.





The Moving Shadow

What is it like to live in the shade? What changes when the shadow moves? When is it good to be in the shade? How do plants and animals live with the changing pattern of shadows?

Explore the Reserve to find places that are in the shade for different lengths of time during the day. There will be some that never see direct sunlight and others that may be shaded only in the early morning or late afternoon. What is different about these places?

Resources

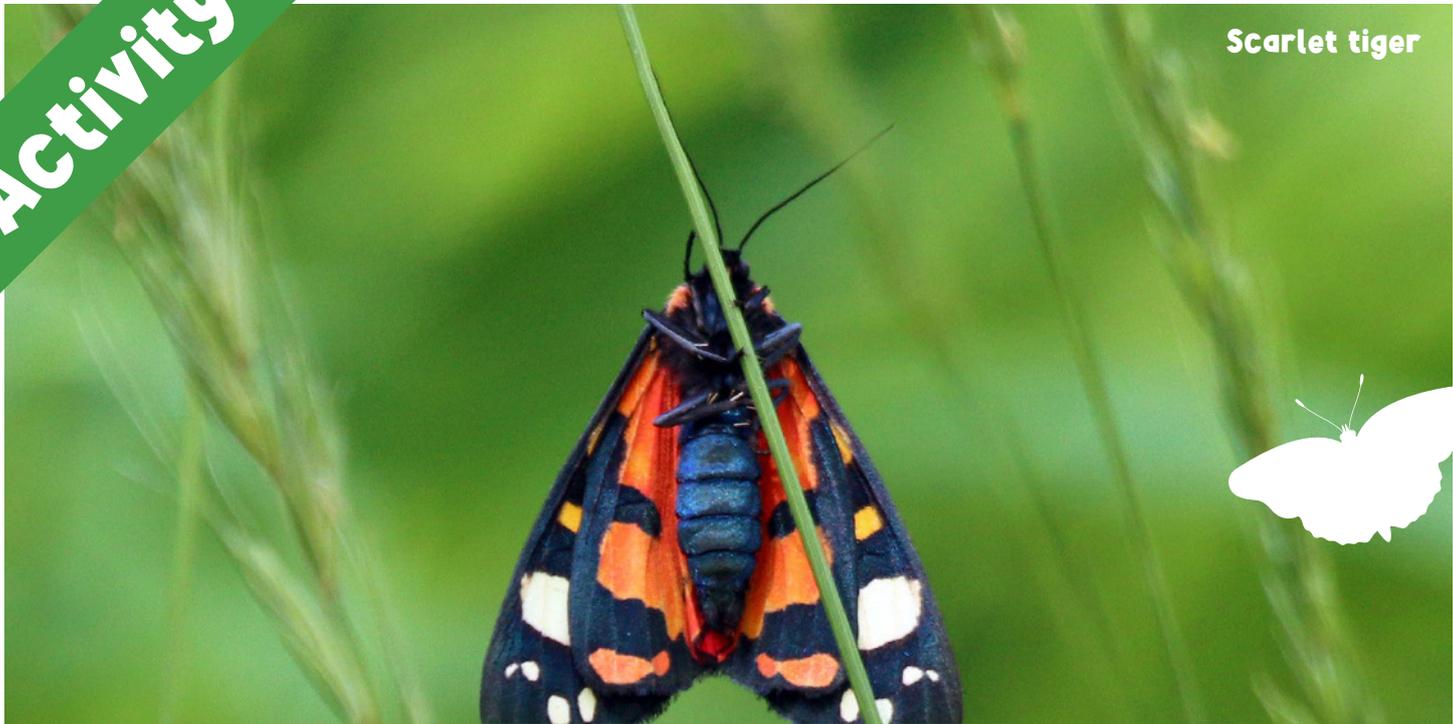
- Map of the Reserve
- Camera
- Digital thermometer
- Notebook and pencil
- Plant identification charts
- Light meters

Challenge

Describe the differences that you find between places that are shaded and not shaded. Try to discover if it is just the amount of light that makes a difference to the plants and animals that live in these places or if there are other features that are altered by being in the shade.

Additional background information

This is an open-ended investigation so you can take a good look at the places you have chosen and try to discover what is different about the environment there. What you are seeing is a change in the habitat for the plants and animals and you can try to measure what the differences are in light, temperature and anything else that your senses tell you might be different. If there is another group working on the same activity, you can get together to compare your ideas and your results..



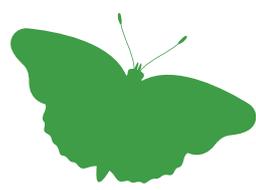
Spotting for points

There are lots of animals and plants to see when you walk round a nature reserve. It is fun to have a list and tick off what you see. You can make it into a game by scoring points for each plant or animal. The points that are scored can be different for each plant or animal. How do you decide the points value of each one?

You need to get to know some of the plants and animals that live on the reserve. You can do this by looking at the reserve information pack or by going to the reserve. Make a list of plants and animals that it would be good to spot and put them into groups which score different numbers of points.

Resources

- Information about the reserve in the Educational Visitor Guide
- Identification charts
- Notebook and pencil
- Binoculars
- Light meters



Challenge

Make a game that you can play yourself or challenge your friends. Write a list of plants and animals and give each one a points value. Take your list out to the reserve and see how many points you can score by spotting as many plants and animals as you can.

Additional background information

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Something beginning with...

Do more animals and plants start with the letter R than the letter D? Which letter is the commonest starting letter? Pick a letter that you think will be a winner and try to spot as many animals as you can which starts with that letter.

Before you go to the reserve, decide whether you are going to work as teams or individuals. Each team (or person) will they need to choose a letter that they think will be a winner. As you walk around the reserve, keep your eyes open for plants and animals an try to identify them.

Resources

- Information about the reserve in the Educational Visitor Guide
- Notebook and pencil
- Identification charts

Challenge

Choose a letter of the alphabet that you think will be the winner in a race to spot as many different plants and animals that begin with that letter. Keep a record of what you see.

Additional background information

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This publication is dedicated to the memory of:

Len Weatherly



**Head Teacher
Shepherd's Spring Infant and Junior School,
Andover
1967 - 1984**

This guide contains a series of National Curriculum linked activities suitable for Key Stage 2 pupils. Some activities are adaptable for younger or older age groups, if necessary. The activities are suitable for use in the classroom or at a Test Valley Borough Council Local Nature Reserve. A detailed map of the site is included in the Educational Visitor Guide to help you find your way around the site.

The Educational Visitor Guides and activity sheets are available from our website: www.testvalley.gov.uk

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