

# Out and about in school grounds



## Learning objective:

- To carry out a habitat survey and to think about what the habitats offer a plant or an animal.
- To develop potential sites for supporting further habitats.
- To appreciate how human intervention affects a habitat.

## National Curriculum Skills

**Science** Through fieldwork, they should be given the opportunity to study the plants and animals in two contrasting local environments.

- The environmental factors that affect what grows and lives in those 2 environments.
- How humans affect the local environment.

**Geography** Identify and locate places and environments using globes, atlases and maps.

- Follow directions, estimate and calculate differences.
- Identify similarities and differences to describe, compare and contrast, places and environments.

Describe the causes and consequences of how places and environments change.

- Living in my world: caring for places and environments and the importance of being a global citizen.

**ESDGC** The natural Environment.

## Activity Outline

- \* Children survey the playground.
- \* Highlight the different habitats found in the playground.
- \* Plan how to develop further areas.

## Resources

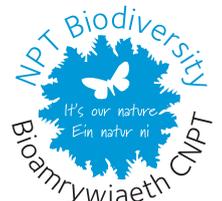
Photocopy a large scale plan or a sketch of the school grounds

Clipboards

Paper and pencils

Teacher's notes

Habitat Action Plan



# What habitats can we find in our school grounds?

## Lesson Outline

- Explain to the children that they are going to survey the playground for current and potential habitat. Ensure that the children know what is meant by the word 'habitat'. A habitat is the natural home of an animal or plant. That habitat should provide that plant or animal with everything they need in order to survive. It will provide them with the food and shelter they need as well as somewhere to breed.
- Encourage them to think about likely places in the school grounds which might already support biodiversity - long grass (an area of grass left to grow tall); pond; walls / cracks in hard surfaces (plants and invertebrates can live in these areas). Many of these are 'micro-habitats', that is, they are a mini habitat within another habitat.
- In pairs, give children a map of the school grounds. Ask questions to help children orienteer themselves. Agree on a simple key to mark in these areas on the map. (If your school has a large area, then you might want to initially limit the area covered by the plan). Mark in the habitats on the map. Remember –
  - Trees with berries provide food for birds (seasonal).
  - Hedges provide cover for birds and small mammals.
  - Cracks in walls could be homes for small reptiles/minibeasts.
  - Long grass/ uncultivated 'nature' areas, woodpiles etc. would be home to insects.
- Get children to look very closely at grassy areas - it is rare to find grass that has no other species growing within it, so make children look to see if they can find other plants growing in the grass. More species of plant in a grassland means more variety of animals are attracted there. Are there any flowers in the grassland? Bees and butterflies could feed on the flowers if they could grow without being cut or shaded by the trees.
- Once back in the classroom, colour in the map showing the habitats available.
- Next, identify potential areas to be enhanced – complete the Habitat Action Plan to make it more creature friendly. Think about what could be planted or built and the wildlife it might attract.
- Consider which wild flowers would be best suited to different areas of the grounds –
  - Meadowsweet, Yellow Flag Iris, Ragged Robin are best suited to damp ground (sow in Autumn or Spring).
  - Consider a bumble bee mix for grassy places.
  - Primrose, Bluebell and Snowdrops are best suited to dappled shade (sow in Autumn or Spring).
- Use the action plan to prioritise areas to be developed first/ most easily, who to contact and when to start. Link with [www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk](http://www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk)
- For advice on wildlife gardening visit our website [www.npt.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.npt.gov.uk/biodiversity)  
(For further advice /information contact [www.plantforwildlife.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.plantforwildlife.ccw.gov.uk))