



Birds

Observation and recording



Curriculum links

Science

Unit 2B Plants and animals in the local environment

Unit 2C Variation

Unit 4B Habitats

Geography

Unit 8 Improving the environment

Mathematics

Block C: Handling data and measures

Art and Design

Unit 2B Mother Nature, designer

Citizenship

Unit 1 Taking part – developing skills of communication and participation

Unit 3 Animals and us

Learning objective

To investigate how bird behaviour varies between species and habitats.

Introduction

The pack is suitable for use with around 30 participants divided into up to 5 groups. In the pack there are:

Instructions showing how to use the activities.

Materials and equipment for 5 groups and their leaders.

A risk assessment for the site and the activities in the pack.

A checklist of contents.

Activities for Key Stage 1 and 2:

- Activity Recording
- Species Recording

Using the site

Please begin your visit with a talk about using the site.

Wildlife sites are home to many animals, plants and insects and you'll meet some of them on your visit, please treat them with respect. Human visitors who come to enjoy the wildlife too, so please keep the site looking good. When you have completed an activity, please try to put everything back as you found it, e.g. turn any dead wood you have looked underneath back over or scatter the leaves you picked discretely.

If there site has a pond and wet areas, make sure you know where these areas are and if you are using any of them, that participants are supervised.

Checklist

Please ensure that everything is there before you return the pack and report any losses.

Clip boards

Pencils

Folder A - FSC bird guide

Drywipe pens

Folder B - Activity record sheets

Folder C - Species record sheets

Site map



Recording birds

Key



Where



Resources



Equipment



Instructions

Select sites



Two areas with bird activity. If possible, one area will contain a bird feeder.



Site map, dry wipe pens



The activities in this pack are based around observing bird behaviour and identifying birds. To make the activities work the group needs to be as quiet and calm as possible. The first task is to walk around the site to find two locations suitable for watching birds (preferably one of these locations will contain a bird feeder). Locate these two sites on the map. For the following activities the group needs to be split in two to work in the two locations, carrying out one activity at one location and then swapping locations and activities. One group will record the activities that the birds are engaged in, the other will attempt to identify and then record birds. It would be sensible to work in groups of three to carry out the following activities, with two participants acting as spotters and one as a recorder.

Activity recording



Activity record sheets (in Folder B), pencils, clip boards



Talk about what features the birds are using at the site e.g. feeders, trees, ground.

Talk about the behaviour they might see:

Feeding

Preening (cleaning feathers)

Resting (sometimes called loafing)

Singing

Defending (scaring other birds off from territory or food)

Flying (passing through without stopping)

What do you think that birds will spend most of their time doing?

A blue tit, weighing between 8 and 12 grams, needs to eat about 40% of its body weight every day, just to survive. That's equivalent to you or I eating about 80 roast dinners, 160 bowls of cereal or almost 500 mars bars – every single day.

(from The Bumper Book of Nature, Stephen Moss. Square Peg. London.

Set a time limit for recording activity (15 - 20 minutes). Use the record sheet to record the number of birds engaged in each activity.

Species recording



Folder A - British Garden Birds guide



Species record sheets (in folder C), pencils, clip boards



Talk through the species you are seeing, talk about the things you need to look for to identify birds. Size, colour and pattern, body, tail and beak shape. Perhaps identify a few birds as a group before setting a time limit for species recording (15 - 20 minutes). Use the species recording sheets to record the number of each species of bird that you see, adding any other species to the bottom of the list.