



Herts and Middlesex



Wildlife Watch

## Minibeast Safari

### Background information

Minibeast hunting is a great way to get children thinking about the diversity of life and the role that different animals play within an ecosystem. Many invertebrates act as decomposers and detritivores feeding on and breaking down dead organic material. Without them our woodlands would fill up with leaf litter, dead wood and animals!

### Activity objectives

Minibeast hunting is a good activity for all ages and can be adapted depending on the age group. It is a great way to see the range of life that you don't normally get to see and offers the chance to try out invertebrate sampling techniques while understanding the need to treat these creatures with care.

For younger children and KS1 they don't need to identify what they find— it is just fun to look at all the creatures that they come across. Older children and KS2 can follow identification keys and can even design their own.

This activity teaches children how to find, identify and record a variety of invertebrates.

### What you will need

1. Somewhere to go minibeast hunting! Visit a local woodland and look under log piles, dead wood/trees on the ground or under piles of leaves or stones. You can also hunt in other locations including gardens, flower beds, piles of pots/tiles or anywhere else minibeasts might be hiding.
  - \*\* Alternatively gather and bring some leaf litter into the classroom in large bowls or buckets, lay out newspaper and spread the leaf litter out for each group to hunt through. Remember to return the creatures back to where you found them!
2. Magnifying pots or clear plastic pots and magnifying glasses.
3. Soft paint brushes
4. Minibeast keys (e.g. "Woodland Name Trail" fold out guide from the Field Studies Council)
5. Worksheets to record your findings (see additional sheet) or note books
6. Antibacterial hand gel
  - \*\* See links below for details on where to buy kit.



Now turn over...



and play the game!





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## How to play

1. Split the group into pairs or small groups and get hunting! Get the children to look carefully under leaves, logs and stones to see what minibeasts they can find, replacing anything they move back to where they found it.
2. Using a soft paint brush carefully transfer the minibeasts found into a magnifying pot or clear plastic pot and use a magnifying glass to take a closer look.
3. Identify them using the minibeast key. The children could also photograph/draw them or describe them in words to identify later.
4. Once the groups have identified their minibeasts, return them carefully to where they found them.

\*\* Be very careful when handling the creatures. Some of them are quite delicate so need to be looked after gently.



## Follow up

1. Discuss the role of minibeasts in the ecosystem as decomposers and detritivores.
2. Research some of the different minibeasts you found– their needs, food, adaptations etc and create a display about them using drawings.
3. Make a bug hotel – see Wildlife Watch website for instructions [www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activity-sheets](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activity-sheets)

## Where to buy your kit

[www.field-studies-council.org/publications](http://www.field-studies-council.org/publications)  
[www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com)  
[www.wildforms.co.uk](http://www.wildforms.co.uk)

## Points to consider for working safely and responsibly

### In advance:

Confirm local health and safety considerations with LEA

Carry out a risk assessment, including health and safety measures

Ensure that an appropriate ratio of supervising adults will be present

### On the day:

Check the area again on the day of the activity to make sure there have been no changes, or new hazards.

Do a safety talk and demonstration for both children and assisting adults before the activity starts – this should set boundaries and ensure safe use of equipment.

Make sure health and safety measures are in place.





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## Points to consider for working safely and responsibly continued

Ask the children not to pick creatures up off the ground and warn them to avoid hand to mouth contact.

Monitor the activity as it takes place to ensure that it continues to run safely.

Make sure that children wash their hands immediately after the activity and before eating or drinking.

Ensure that the children who take part have appropriate clothing for the weather conditions.

Explain that animals (including invertebrates) should be treated humanely and handled carefully.

Ensure that animals taken from the wild are returned to the place from which they were taken.

## Information for Teachers

### National Curriculum Links



**KS1 POS** Observe closely using simple equipment. Identify and classify. Gather and record data to help answer questions (use simple features to compare living things, decide how to sort them into groups, collect and record simple data, talk about what they have found).

**Y1 POS** Identify and name a variety of common animals– identify as carnivores, herbivores, omnivores. Describe and compare the structure of common animals (use the local environment to answer questions about animals and their habitats).

**Y2 POS** Explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead and have never been alive. Describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of animals and plants and how they depend on each other. Identify and name a variety of plants and animals and their habitats. Describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain. Notice that animals have offspring which grow into adults.

**KS2 POS** Make systematic and careful observations. Take accurate measurements. Record findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, keys, bar charts and tables. Report on findings (talk about criteria for grouping and classification).

**Y3 POS** Animals need the right amount of nutrition, they cannot make their own food, they get nutrition from what they eat.

**Y4 POS** Recognise that living things can be grouped in different ways. Explore the use of classification keys to group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment. Construct and interpret a variety of food chains, identifying producers, predators and prey.

**Y5 POS** Describe the differences in the life cycles of an animal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird. Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals.

**Y6 POS** Describe how living things are classified into broad groups according to common observable characteristics and based on similarities and differences, including micro-organisms, plants and animals. Give reasons for classifying plants and animals based on specific characteristics (use keys to identify some plants and animals in the immediate environment). Identify how animals and plants are adapted to suit their environment in different ways and that adaptation may lead to evolution.





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# Minibeast Safari Worksheet

Use this sheet to record your findings! Sketch the minibeasts found in the boxes below and then using your minibeast key fill in the details on the right.

Species: .....

Where did you find me? .....

Description: .....

Species: .....

Where did you find me? .....

Description: .....

Species: .....

Where did you find me? .....

Description: .....

Species: .....

Where did you find me? .....

Description: .....

