

Go nature-spotting

Wogglebox

Indira says:

'I liked this activity as I like drawing and like to watch the birds.'

Monitor levels of local wildlife in your neighbourhood

People benefit from spending time in nature and witnessing wildlife in its natural habitat. To find out what species are present in your local area, help your young people to monitor the animals they see by spending an hour in your local park or public green space, or on a walk.

Suitable for Beavers and Cubs

You will need

- pens
- paper
- camera
- magnifying glass and/or binoculars
- bird and animal ID guides, like the RSPB's wildlife survey, found online

Instructions

1 Explain to your young people that they will become nature-spotters by monitoring what animals they see in nature over a three-month period.

2 Plan an outing or a walk to a park or nearby green space that you can easily visit again at least once a month for the next three months.

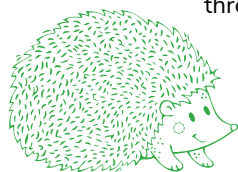
3 On the outing, encourage young people to be aware of what wildlife they see, such as birds in the trees

or on the ground, squirrels, butterflies or other insects on plants, or ducks on the pond. How are people interacting with nature? They might be feeding the ducks, watching the squirrels or birdwatching.

4 Ask the young people if they can see any signs of where animals might have been, like tracks, burrows, small holes in hedges that animals have created (also known as a 'smeuse'), droppings, birds' nests or other signs of life. Can they spot any areas where wildlife is being helped, like wildflowers that have been left to grow to provide habitats for insects and small mammals?

5 Encourage the young people to record what they see by making drawings, taking photos, making audio recordings and writing descriptions. Ask them to write down the time and date too.

6 Return once a month or more to the same place and record what you see. This will help the group to keep track of different things they spot at different times, or in larger or smaller numbers. At the end of three months, they can compare what they have seen on each visit. Did it change as one season turned into another?





Shhhh!
 When you're looking for wildlife, be as quiet as possible so you don't scare it away. And don't disturb any animals or birds' nests that you might spot.

Wogglebox
Sibylla says:
 'I want to be an artist – I like drawing and I like nature. We drew people walking their dogs, some spiders' webs and dog pawprints.'

Find guidance...
 on safety: scouts.org.uk/safety and Terrain Zero
 Activities: members.scouts.org.uk/FS120426

Time needed
60 minutes

Badges

Pets at Home partners the Beaver Animal Friend and Cub Animal Carer Activity Badges

Partner

Taking it further
 Arrange for your section to visit a park ranger or local farm to find out about what they do, and see if there's anything they can do to help. Older Cubs could help a conservation charity like The Mammal Society to study sightings of animals. Through their Mammal Mapper app the public can record when and where they see mammals to help detect changes in population sizes. Go to mammal.org.uk to find out more.

Outcomes
 The young people will monitor wildlife for three months to track what animals come and go in their local area. They will also notice how people interact with wildlife, the benefits of spending time in nature and the importance of protecting natural habitats.

More information
 For more badge resources and activity sheets visit: scouts.org.uk/petsathome.

