

ENVIROKIDS WORKSHOPS



BIODIVERSITY



Biodiversity The term means “the circle of life”
Biodiversity means the richness and variety of life on the planet, creatures and plants and trees.
Biodiversity maintains the health of the earth and its people. It provides us with food and medicine and contributes to our wellbeing. It tells us a lot about our planet and life on this earth
Biodiversity helps all our animals and insects. No matter how small, all have an important role to play in boosting our ecosystem. The greater the variety of species, the healthier the planet. If we are good to nature and all its creatures, nature will be good to us. Nature is all around us and there to be enjoyed. In this edition we will be looking at what’s outside our door and what creatures to look out for.



What's in our garden? There is so much life in our garden and lots of places for all types of creatures to live and breathe? Whether your garden is big or small, nature, is at work and ready to be explored.



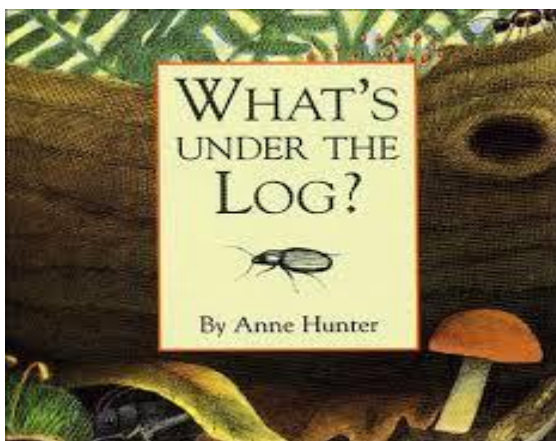
If you plant certain types of plants or vegetables, they will attract certain creatures who will create life in your garden. If you start with some seeds in recycled yogurt pots, put them on your windowsill and when grown, plant in your garden. Discover trees and the types of trees in your area



Bird feeders are a fabulous way to see our birds. Bird feeders can be left out all year round and the variety of birds can change from season to season. A great way to see different types of birds is to mix the feed.

What is a Habitat

All plants and animals live in habitats. A habitat is a place where a collection of plants and animals live and it provides each of them with the things they need to survive e.g. **food and shelter**. Habitats can be big or small. In any community there can be many habitats, vegetable garden, field, ponds, flower garden. Wooded area are so important our native trees Oak, Ash, Birch provide great habitats for all creatures. Each habitat will have different plants and animals living in it e.g. some plants prefer bright sunny spots to grow, whilst others like shady places. Plants and animals often have to adapt or change in order to survive like if we have a lot of rain, animals can find it hard to feed and stay warm. If a habitat gets damaged this can affect not only the creatures, but humans too.



We also have micro habitats that can be found in our garden or local park or woods. These habitats have an wide variety of life and serve a huge part of our ecosystem. These little creatures, like the woodlice and worm make the soil rich for plants by eating all the dead leaves and matter and cleaning up the soil. These creatures are some of the most important creatures on the planet. Take a look next time you are in your garden or out with your family for a walk, pick up an old log or plant pot. If you find the micro habitats, this is a good sign that this area is good and the ecosystem is in good health. Get a compost bin or heap in your garden or school, this can be a place that these micro habitats will flourish. Composting is very important and can save our landfills.



Why are insects so important

Insects are crucial to our ecosystems, where they perform many **important** jobs. They help pollinate plants, and control plant pests. **Insects** help create the nutrient-rich layer of soil that helps plants grow. Ants and beetles dig tunnels that provide channels for water, benefiting plants. Without insects, our lives would be vastly different, insects pollinate many of our fruits and vegetables that we enjoy and rely on without the services of insects. **Bees** are one of the most important insects on the planet, they provide us with so many food products from Honey to oranges and almond nuts. Without bees and other insects, things would be a lot different and life would be a lot harder. Without insects to help break down and dispose of wastes, dead animals and plants would accumulate in our environment and it would be messy indeed. They are the sole food source for many, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Insects themselves are eaten by people in some countries, this is something I don't think would catch on in Ireland. Wasps are not liked by many people but again provide a vital role to our planet, wasps live for 12 to 22 days and in that time do a lot of work making our planet more liveable. Without a certain insect we would not have Chocolate, the cocoa plant is pollinated by a small insect. **Be good to insects we need them**



Our native wildlife

Ireland is rich in wildlife and has some beautiful creatures to be seen on a walk or drive. Some of the most common animals are rabbits or hares, wild deer and squirrels which can be seen regularly. We also have creatures less seen such as Foxes, pine martins and otters. Ireland has creatures that can only be seen at night like the Badger, Barn owl and the Daubenton Bat (one of 9 species of Bat) that we have in Ireland.. In our coastal areas you can see humpedback whales. Basking sharks can be seen off the west coast at certain times of the year and Rays and Sea lions that can be seen all along Irelands coastline. We have over 450 species of birds in the country, some common garden birds like the Blue Tit, Sparrow and Robin can be seen all year round. We also have migrating birds (birds that come on holidays) like the swallow, arctic tern and barnical goose. Some fantastic birds of prey like the Honey Buzzard, Kestrel and the only native bird of prey to Ireland the Sparrow Hawk. **Take time to view our wildlife build a scrapbook to help keep not of the creatures you have seen.**



Activities to do at home

You could identify as many trees as you can in your garden, the park, or on a walk with your family. Maybe you could take a photo with a phone of them or sketch them out on a pad. Do you know the differences between deciduous and evergreen trees? If not, you can ask your parents or research using books or online. Again, do some drawings or copies in a pad or book. Discover a Micro/ Mini Habitat on a walk by checking under old logs, stones or trees. Take note of the creatures you see and put them into your notebook.

Quiz

- 1, What is a male and female fox called?
- 2, What do Badgers eat?
- 3, What type of whale can be seen off the west coast of Ireland?
- 4, Name 2 food that Bees help provide?
- 5, What is a Habitat?
- 6, How long do wasps live for?
- 7, How many types of Bats are in Ireland?
- 8, What is a good way to see birds in your garden?
- 9, Name 2 creatures that come out at night in Ireland?
- 10, How many species of birds are there in Ireland?

All answers will be on our next issue the Amazon rain forest.



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