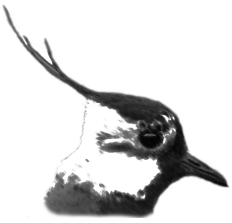

Stream mini-beasts

Curriculum themes

Science	Variety of life
	Plants and animals in the local environment
	Habitats
	Adaptations

Resources required

10 x white trays
10 x nets
10 x magnifying pots
10 x spoons
10 x Freshwater Name Trail
10 x bug dials
Recording sheets
Clipboards and pencils
Wellies!

Background information

Best time of the year for the activity

Late Spring to early Autumn.

Timing

This activity will take 1.5 – 2 hours

Location on the farm

Woodland section of Ashes Beck. Best around the wooden bridge in the woods.

Introducing the activity

A habitat is a place where a plant or animal lives. An adaptation is a feature of a plant or animal, which helps it to live in a particular habitat. Animals that live in freshwater habitats, particularly still water habitats like lakes and ponds, have adaptations to the low oxygen levels. In flowing water, streams and rivers, the animals have adaptations that help them to move in the current and prevent them from getting swept downstream. The aim of this activity is to look at the variety of plants and animals in Ashes Beck, a small stream that flows through Carrs Farm. The activity also encourages the children to think about the adaptations the animals have to living in flowing water.

Undertaking the activity

Introduction

Introduce the terms habitat and adaptation. Use the stream mini-beast recording sheet to introduce the adaptations the animals will have to living in flowing water.

Demonstrate how to sample for mini-beasts in the stream. Stand in the stream, facing downstream. Place the pond net in front of your feet. Shuffle your feet backwards and forwards in the gravel on the stream bed for at least 30 seconds. This is called a 'kick sample'. Fill the white tray with water and wash the net into the tray. Pick 2-3 stones and wash them into the tray. This method is used as the animals in streams are hiding under the rocks or are attached to the rocks.

Stream dipping

Divide the class in groups of 3 or 4. Ask each group to fill their white tray with water and place it in a safe place, where they can be supervised working. Give each group a section of the river to work in. Each group will do a kick sample and wash 2-3 stones. Once they have a sample of the animals from the stream they should try and name them using the Freshwater Name Trail or the bug dial. They can look at the animals more closely by putting them in the magnifying pots or placing them in a spoon. The animals can be recorded on the stream mini-beast recording sheet. The children should try and work out the adaptations their animals have to living in flowing water. This can also be recorded on the sheet.

Follow-up ideas

Produce a table and combine the class results together to show the animals found and their adaptations.

Use the internet to research each animal. A particularly useful website is www.naturegrid.org.uk. This information can be used to produce a freshwater food chain and food web.

Use the stream mini-beast follow-up sheet to draw one of your mini-beasts and add the labels to it, naming its habitat and adaptation to that habitat.