All about animals

Aim of this section
To learn about forest animals and birds through a series of hands-on activities

Curriculum links

**EYFS**
- Understanding the world
- Communication and language

**Year 1: Science**
- Animals, including humans
  - identify and name a variety of common animals including amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals;
  - identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores;
  - identify and name parts of the human body associated with each sense.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)
- Pupils should use the local environment throughout the year to explore and answer questions about animals in their habitat.
- Pupils might work scientifically by: using their observations to compare and contrast animals at first hand, describing how they identify and group them; grouping animals according to what they eat; and using their senses to compare different textures, sounds and smells.

Resources provided with programme 3
- Forest animal information for teachers
- Set of animal pictures
- Word cards
- Animal fact cards
- Diet fact cards
- Animal evidence challenge sheet
- Animal food hunt challenge sheet
- Forest sensory challenge sheet

forestry.gov.uk/gruffaloteaching
Introduction/discussion

What sort of animals and birds live in forests in England?

Choose a few examples of animals and birds and discuss what they eat and where they live.

Background Information

- The Forestry Commission looks after more than 1500 woods and forests in England.
- When we cut down trees, or plant new ones, it creates lots of different habitats and places for animals and birds to live.
- Some creatures prefer dense woodland with mature trees, while others prefer newly planted areas.
- Some favour conifers (e.g. pine and spruce) and others broadleaves (e.g. oak and beech).
- Management plans ensure that we consider all sorts of animals and birds to make sure that they have their preferred habitat and a variety of tree species.
- Remember also, that the forest is not just the trees – there are often open spaces, ponds, streams, rocks and even heathland, all of which provide other habitats for wildlife.

Preparation

Choose which activities you will do from:

1. Test your memory
2. Mammal, bird, reptile or amphibian
3. Carnivore, herbivore or omnivore
4. Diet facts
5. Who am I?
6. Forest animal art
7. Evidence challenge
8. Animal food hunt challenge
9. Forest sensory challenge

You will need to print and laminate the resources for the activities you are going to do.

TOP TIP FOR TEACHERS

Some of the activities in this programme require setting up time – either by an adult colleague, or by the teacher beforehand.
Activities
All about animals

1. Test your memory
   This is a good warm up activity, for encouraging teamwork.
   **You will need**
   A complete set of the twelve animal pictures.
   **How to do it**
   Find an open space in the forest; hang the animal photos up in trees; ask the children to work in groups, running around the area, finding all the photos, agreeing what each animal is; next, get back together and see how many they can remember.
   **Extension**
   This activity could also be set out along a trail through the forest, with the discussion and memory test at the end.

2. Mammal, bird, reptile or amphibian
   Children will need to be familiar with these words and their meanings.
   **You will need**
   A complete set of the twelve animal pictures, and a set of mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian cards, for each group of children.
   **How to do it**
   In their groups, the children sort the animals on the ground into the correct categories; identify and discuss their reasoning and any common mistakes.
   **Extension**
   Discuss which category you think The Gruffalo falls into, and why.

3. Carnivore, herbivore or omnivore
   Children will need to be familiar with these words and their meanings.
   **You will need**
   A complete set of the twelve animal pictures, and a set of carnivore, herbivore, omnivore cards, for each group of children.
   **How to do it**
   Place the sets of pictures at one end of an open space, and the word cards at the other; have a relay race where each child runs to collect one picture of an animal, brings it back and puts it into the correct category; identify and discuss their reasoning and any common mistakes.
   **Extension**
   Discuss which category you think The Gruffalo and the other characters fall into, and why.
Diet facts

You will need
A complete set of the twelve animal pictures, and a set of the diet fact cards.

How to do it
With the animal photos in front of the children where everyone can see them, read out each diet fact; ask for suggestions about which animal you might be talking about; note – there may be several answers for some of the diet facts.

Extension
With the animal pictures hanging from trees, read each diet fact, and ask the children to run to the animal they think it refers to.

‘Who am I?’

You will need
A complete set of the twelve animal pictures, and a set of the animal fact cards.

How to do it
Choose an animal and start to read out the facts – how quickly can the children guess which animal you are describing?

Extension
Come up with six facts for a Gruffalo – is it a mammal; is it a carnivore; what is its habitat; does it have live young or lay eggs?

Forest animal art

You will need
A complete set of the twelve animal pictures and a Gruffalo picture.

How to do it
Using natural materials (e.g. sticks, leaves), make a ground picture or sculpture of one of the animals and birds – try to choose materials that are appropriate for the animal’s colour and features e.g. fur, feathers, scales.

Extension
Do another ground picture or sculpture of a Gruffalo or one of the other characters.

Evidence challenge

You will need
One animal evidence challenge sheet for each group of children.

How to do it
Explain that most forest animals are quite shy, but we know that they are there because they often leave clues or evidence; explore the area to search for the evidence on the sheet, and anything else that animals have left behind; discuss the things you find in more detail – Whose footprint did you find? Whose nest is it? Who nibbled the nuts?

Extension
Discuss what evidence a Gruffalo would leave – a footprint or fur perhaps; leave a trail of evidence to make people think that a Gruffalo has been here.
Hands on activities

Animal food hunt challenge

You will need
One food hunt challenge sheet for each group of children.

How to do it
Discuss where and how animals and birds find their food (they don’t go to the supermarket like we do); some (e.g. fox) hunt with their sense of smell; some (e.g. squirrel) find excess food in the autumn and store it for the cold winter months; bats hunt by echolocation; some (e.g. owls) have excellent eyesight to spot mice and other mammals. Explore the area to complete the animal food hunt challenge.

Extension
Discuss what The Gruffalo eats, and how he finds his food – does he have an excellent sense of smell or eyesight for example?

Forest sensory challenge

You will need
One forest sensory challenge sheet for each group of children.

How to do it
Discuss how animals use their senses to find food, to become aware of predators and to find their way – many have excellent eyesight or sense of smell. Remind the children what our five senses are, and which parts of the human body are used for each sense, then do the forest sensory challenge activity.
Conclusion

You have done lots of activities to learn about the animals and birds that live in the forest.

You have learned that trees and forests are really important places for animals and birds to live.

The Forestry Commission looks after lots of woods and forests in England. Trees are planted and cared for, so that they grow big enough to be cut down to make things, then more trees are planted. This means that there will always be a forest for wildlife to live in, and for people to enjoy.
Forest animal information for teachers

Fox

A fox is a mammal. It is classed as a carnivore, usually feeding on mice and other small mammals, but the fox is really an opportunistic feeder and often omnivorous. Foxes are nocturnal, with an excellent sense of hearing and smell. They live underground in a burrow or den (sometimes called an earth).

Deer

Six species of deer exist in the wild in the UK, all of which are mammals and herbivores, with a diet consisting of young trees, crops, grass and other plants. Many male deer have antlers, but the females never do. Deer tend to be quite shy, often hiding away during the day.

Mouse

There are a number of different species of mouse, all of which are mammals. A wood mouse is an omnivore and an opportunistic feeder. Its diet depends on the time of year and what is available, and includes seeds, nuts, fruits, fungi, insects and other invertebrates. Wood mice are mostly nocturnal. They can climb trees, but spend most of their time on the woodland floor, and live underground in a network of tunnels.

Hedgehog

The hedgehog is a mammal and a carnivore, with a varied diet which includes worms, slugs, beetles and bird eggs and chicks. Hedgehogs are mostly nocturnal and live on the forest floor. However, they can climb trees and even swim! They hibernate in the winter, making a nest in a pile of leaves or logs. Their spiky coat protects them from predators.

Toad

Toads have dry leathery skin and short legs. They are well camouflaged on the forest floor. They are amphibians, so they need to spend part of their lives in the water, which is where they lay strings of eggs that hatch into tadpoles. Toads are carnivores, and eat insects and the occasional small frog.

Owl

The tawny owl is a bird and a carnivore, with a diet of small mammals and other birds, as well as insects, frogs and worms. It is mostly nocturnal and has excellent hearing to help it hunt for its prey. After eating, owls produce pellets (the bones and fur are ‘sicked’, or regurgitated, back up – a bit like cats coughing up fur balls).
Squirrel

Grey squirrels and red squirrels live in forests in different parts of the country, with grey squirrels being much more common and widespread. They are mammals and herbivores, whose diet includes nuts and berries. They spend most of their time up in the trees, and make a nest (called a drey) from sticks and twigs.

Bat

The pipistrelle bat is the most common bat in the UK. All bats are mammals, and the pipistrelle is a carnivore. It eats moths and other insects, hunting at night using echolocation (making a high pitched squeak which bounces back off flying insects so it can locate them). Bats sleep (roost) during the day.

Adder

The adder is a type of snake, which enjoys sunbathing in warm sunny spots during the summer. Adders are reptiles, although they give birth to live young, and don’t lay eggs like most reptiles. They are carnivores, mostly eating small mammals, which they kill with their venom (poison) then swallow whole. They hibernate during the winter and as they grow, they shed (get rid of) their skin several times.

Slow Worm

The slow worm is a reptile. It looks like a snake, but is actually a lizard with no legs. It is a carnivore and enjoys a diet of slugs and earthworms. Slow worms live in the edge of the woodland, and spend most of their time underground or hiding under things.

Frog

Frogs are amphibians, which need to live near to water. They lay their eggs in jelly-like lumps in ponds, and are carnivores, eating insects and other minibeasts. They have smooth moist skin, and in cold winters, they go into a state of ‘torpor’ (a bit like hibernation) in the mud at the bottom of ponds.

Woodpecker

There are three different species of woodpecker that live in forests in the UK. The green woodpecker is a carnivore (and a bird), which eats lots of ants, as well as beetles, flies and caterpillars. They nest in holes in trees and you are more likely to hear them in the forest than to see them – they tap on tree trunks with their beaks, in order to make nest holes.
Top left – adder;
Top right – common frog;
Bottom left – green woodpecker;
Bottom right – hedgehog
Top left – pipistrelle bat;
Top right – slow worm;
Bottom Left – tawny owl;
Bottom right – common toad
Top left – wood mouse;
Top right – fallow deer;
Bottom left – fox;
Bottom right – grey squirrel
Word cards

Bird

Amphibian

Reptile

Mammal

Carnivore

Herbivore

Omnivore
### Animal fact card: Fox

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am mostly nocturnal (come out at night)</th>
<th>I have an excellent sense of hearing &amp; smell</th>
<th>I live underground in a burrow or den (sometimes called an earth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am a mammal</td>
<td>I am a carnivore, and I eat other small mammals, but I also like fruits, berries and even food from bins</td>
<td>I am reddish brown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Animal fact card: Wood mouse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am mostly nocturnal (come out at night)</th>
<th>I can climb trees, but spend most of my time on the woodland floor</th>
<th>I live underground in a network of tunnels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am a mammal</td>
<td>I love the forest, but am also found in many other habitats</td>
<td>I am an omnivore and enjoy eating nuts, berries, fungi and insects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Animal fact card: Hedgehog**

- I am mostly nocturnal (come out at night)
- I live on the forest floor, but can climb trees and even swim (but I don’t like swimming!)
- I hibernate in the winter, making a cozy nest in a pile of leaves or logs
- I am a mammal
- I am a carnivore and eat worms, slugs, beetles and bird eggs and chicks
- I have a spiky coat to protect me from predators

**Animal fact card: Fallow deer**

- I am very shy, and I tend to hide during the day
- I get into trouble with the forester, because I nibble his trees, and with the farmer, because I eat his crops
- I am a herbivore – as well as trees and crops, I like to eat grass
- I am a mammal
- I have short brown fur – in the winter my coat is darker, and in the summer, it is lighter
- My father has antlers, but my mother doesn’t
Animal fact card: Squirrel

My nest is called a drey and it is made from sticks and leaves.

I spend most of my time up in the trees.

I am a herbivore – I eat nuts and berries, and am a pest to the forester because I nibble tree bark.

I am a mammal.

I store nuts in the autumn so that I have plenty to eat all winter.

I can be red or grey.

Animal fact card: Pipistrelle bat

I sleep (roost) during the day in roof spaces and trees.

I am a carnivore.

I eat moths and other insects.

I am a mammal, but I can fly.

I hunt at night with echolocation (making a high pitched squeak, that bounces off insects so I can locate them).

I am usually black or dark brown.
**Animal fact card: Snake (adder)**

I am a reptile

I give birth to live babies (I don’t lay eggs, which is unusual for a reptile)

I hibernate during the winter

I enjoy sunbathing in warm sunny spots during the summer

I am a carnivore and I eat small mammals – I kill them with my venom (poison) then swallow them whole

As I grow bigger, I shed (get rid of) my old skin several times

**Animal fact card: Slow worm**

I live in the edge of the woodland, but I don’t like dense forest

I spend most of my time underground or hiding under things

If I am caught by a predator, I can shed my tail so that I can escape – later I grow a new one!

I am a carnivore

I am a reptile – I look a bit like a snake, but am actually a lizard with no legs

I eat slugs and earthworms
Animal fact card: Tawny owl

I am mostly nocturnal (come out at night)

I am a carnivore and I eat small mammals and other birds, as well as insects, frogs and worms

I have excellent hearing to help me hunt and find my prey

I nest in holes in trees

After eating, I produce pellets (bones & fur from whatever I have eaten, are regurgitated)

I am a bird

Animal fact card: Green woodpecker

I am a carnivore

I eat lots of ants; also beetles, flies and caterpillars, but ants are my favourite

I nest in holes in trees, but I find most of my food on the ground

I am green, but my friends can be great spotted or lesser spotted

You are more likely to hear me than to see me – I tap on tree trunks with my beak, in order to make nest holes

I am a bird

I am a bird
The forest is a good place for me to live as long as there is a pond nearby.

I have dry leathery skin and short legs.

I am well camouflaged on the forest floor.

I lay strings of eggs in the pond – these hatch into tadpoles.

I am an amphibian, but I spend much of my time on land.

I am a carnivore – I eat insects and sometimes other amphibians too.

I can live in the forest, but need to be near water.

I have smooth moist skin.

In cold winters, I go into a state of ‘torpor’ (a bit like hibernation) in the mud at the bottom of ponds.

I am a carnivore – I eat insects and other minibeasts.

I am an amphibian.

I lay clumps of eggs in a jelly-like lump, which hatch into tadpoles.
### Diet fact cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mice are my favourite food</th>
<th>I love to nibble on a nut</th>
<th>I find worms, slugs &amp; beetles really tasty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I eat grass &amp; nibble on leaves</td>
<td>Nuts, acorns &amp; tree bark make a delicious feast for me</td>
<td>Yummy moths &amp; insects are my favourite food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to swallow mice &amp; other small animals whole</td>
<td>I have a small appetite, and enjoy slugs &amp; earthworms</td>
<td>Mice &amp; other small animals can’t hide from me when I’m hungry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ants, ants and more ants – mmm, delicious!</td>
<td>I like insects for my tea, and the occasional small frog or tadpole</td>
<td>My favourite foods are insects and other minibeasts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Forestry Commission Gruffalo Teacher’s Pack**

Programme 3 – activity sheet
Animal evidence challenge sheet

- Feather
- Spiders web
- Nest
- Droppings (poo)
- Animal footprint
- Animal fur
- Burrow (hole in ground)
- Nibbled cones or nuts
Animal food hunt challenge sheet

**Food for a fox**
(look for nibbled nuts, which might mean that mice are nearby)

**Food for a mouse**
(look for nuts, berries or toadstools)

**Food for a hedgehog**
(find a big juicy beetle)

**Food for a deer**
(find some long grass)

**Food for a squirrel**
(find an acorn or nut, hide it, walk around for a minute then see if you can find it again)

**Food for a bat**
(look for moths or other flying insects)

**Food for a snake**
(find a hole in the ground, which could be home to a small mammal)

**Food for a slow worm**
(find a slug and a worm)

**Food for a toad**
(look for frog spawn or tadpoles)

**Food for a frog**
(look for insects, but they must be near some water)

**Food for a green woodpecker**
(find as many ants as you can)

**Food for a tawny owl**
(look for small birds)
Forest sensory challenge sheet

**Touch…**
- Something hard like the rocks
- Something sharp like The Gruffalo’s terrible claws (take care here!)
- Something wet like the stream
- Something cold like owl ice cream
- Something rough like the bark on Snake’s logpile house
- Something smooth like Snake’s skin
- Something soft like Fox’s fur

**See…**
- Something beautiful like a butterfly
- Something orange like The Gruffalo’s eyes
- Something purple like The Gruffalo’s prickles

**Hear…**
- Something that sounds like Snake hissing
- Something that sounds like Owl hooting

**Smell…**
- Something that smells delicious like Gruffalo crumble
- Something that smells damp, like Fox’s underground house