

Check out your WoW factor (Wealth of Wildlife)

You will need:

- cameras, poster paper, glue, mark-makers.

And later:

- whitesheet, magnifying glasses, soft paintbrush, card/dustpan, white collecting tray, fruit and veg, birdfood



Activity 1 Check out how much wildlife you have outside at different times of the year to decide your WoW factor.

Each different type of living species counts as one.

Photograph or video your findings, or use another way to record them. Always approach areas with a special quietness as creatures can be quick to leave and you really want to see as many different creatures as you can.

Involve the children as detectives to consider what kinds of small creatures might live in your grounds and where they might be. Can they think of any clues that they might expect to find, tracks, spider webs, nibbled leaves or petals, eggs underneath leaves

Include

- Bird Survey.
- Animals – look for animal signs; footprints, chewed food.
- Butterfly Survey – using a sweep net in the summer months or just look. August, September and October are the best months to attract them to feeding stations.
- Minibeast hunt – look in log piles, beneath flower tubs, in the shade, at the base of plants or damp walls. Take a white sheet outside and place under a tree. Shake the branches to see what creatures fall onto it.

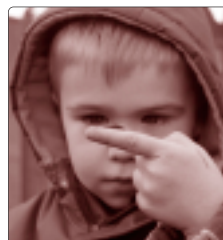
Survey other living things that provide homes and food for wildlife too:

- Flower Survey – follow the seasons to see what is flower.
- Hedge and Tree Surveys – they are providing shelter and protection for wildlife.

By combining all of these surveys together you will have a very good idea of what your settings WOW factor is.



Activity 2 Record



Keep records over time to see whether you can attract new species to your lists. Gather pictures and photographs of the wildlife seen and laminate them.

Display the pictures outdoors as well as in, to remind children of what they can look for.

Activity 3 Examine and Experiment

Challenge the children to think of any other ways to attract wildlife for observation – setting up feeding grounds – creating damp places, dark places – this could lead on to creating small new habitat places.

Consider a sugar trail or vegetable traps for enticing minibeasts so you can count and identify them:

- Hollow out a potato with a teaspoon, making a hole at each end. Lay it in the ground, with the entrance level with the surface.
- Experiment with different fruit and vegetables. Maybe try apples, strawberries
- Experiment to find the best length of time to leave the vegetable.
- Experiment with different places to leave the vegetables, also checking them at different times of the day.



Knowledge and Understanding of the World:

- Show an interest in the world in which they live
- Talk about what is seen and what is happening
- Examine objects and living things to find out more about them
- Find out about and identify some features of living things, objects and events they observe



Feed the Birds

You will need:

- **Lard or suet, nuts, cheese, cake or similar; bowl and spatula/spoon; containers e.g. coconut shell.**

You will also need:

- **cameras, birdtable, birdfeeders, seeds, container of shallow water, nesting boxes.**
- **Always wash hands before and after activities.**

Activity 1 Finding out

Birds need food, water, shelter and nesting sites. Ask the children to check out what is provided in your outdoor space for the birds. Give the children time to think about this and encourage parents and carers to input also. Children need to know what the outdoors is like before engaging in the following activities so they can then appreciate the changes. Decide together what would be best to provide and plan for it.



Birds need water for drinking and bathing. Provide a regular supply of clean water for them.



Activity 2 Making Nesting Boxes



Provide nesting boxes away from prevailing winds, rain and sun (facing North East is best). Put them up between August and February. Keep them out of the reach of children and predators. If attaching to a tree use a tree-tie or inner tube from a bicycle tyre round the trunk to prevent damage to the tree. Check the nesting box is dry and has a drainage hole in its base. Don't put boxes too near each other unless for gregarious birds like sparrows which like communal boxes (sometimes called terraces) and try to keep them away from the bird table. Give the boxes a good clean out in the autumn if they aren't being used for roosting. Any unhatched eggs can only be legally removed between Oct and Jan and must then be destroyed (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).

Activity 3 Bird feeders



Hang bird feeders for seeds and nuts. Involve the children by talking with them about suitable locations, what is needed and why. Let the children help to put food out on bird tables daily in winter. Food can include cheese, cake, fresh fruit, moist bread, fat and even dog food. Never use salted peanuts or salted meats, dried coconut or dehydrated foods. Birds can become dependent on food during this period and artificial food such as kitchen scraps should only be given from November to March as it can cause death if fed to nestlings. Food high in moisture content provides the birds with insulation. Remove uneaten food from bird tables daily and wash the table with clean water every few weeks.

Activity 4 Bird cake



Let the children mix about one third softened lard or suet rather than margarine or oil with two thirds dry ingredients such as nuts, cheese and cake. Stir it well in a bowl and then put into any suitable container such as empty coconut shell, yoghurt pot or plastic cup. Once solid put out on the bird table and watch from a distance. Photograph the birds and put up the photographs where the children can see.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World:

Show curiosity and interest

Talk about what is seen and what is happening

Show an awareness of change

