



Biodiversity

Human impact on the Earth has led to huge loss of biodiversity - the wide range of animals and plants that depend on each other and which help ensure the overall health of the planet. A healthy planet provides everything needed by living things to survive. The more diverse an ecosystem, the healthier it is.

ACTIVITY

Can you identify food webs in your local area?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Before going outside, the activity leader should talk to the children about how animals and plants depend on each other. Encourage the children to choose ONE local ecosystem where they might find plants and animals that they can identify. If you have mobile devices, show the children how to access apps to identify any unknown species. Alternatively, print nature identification guides.

In pairs, children spend time observing the different plants, animals and fungi that live in one ecosystem and make a note of each organism they see on a sticky note. Remind children to look up as well as on the ground!

Arrange the sticky notes to create a food web showing which animals depend on other animals and plants for their survival. Children might need to research what some of the animals eat.

After working outside, remind children to wash their hands.

KEY FACTS/SCIENCE

A **food web** is a diagram showing the many different ways that animals and plants depend on each other for food, e.g. a cat eats thrush, which has eaten a snail, which has eaten a leaf. Arrows joining each living thing show the flow of energy, e.g. leaf → snail → thrush → cat.

An **ecosystem** is a community of living things (e.g. plants, animals and fungi) in a habitat, and the non-living things also found there (e.g. air and water).

Scientists use the term **biodiversity** to refer to the number of different types of living things (species) found in an ecosystem. A single tree ecosystem can support hundreds of different living things (**species**).

RESOURCES

a suitable site to look for animals and plants

sticky notes & pencils

printed nature identification guides or mobile devices
with apps (<https://www.inaturalist.org/>)

optional:

plastic containers, spoons, trowels, magnifiers

QUESTIONS FOR LEARNING

- How much biodiversity did you find?
- Do you know which animals depend on other animals and plants for their survival?
- What could you do in your school to support more wildlife? Use the QR code to find out about rewilding in Britain.

