

Living Things in the Kent Downs

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Teachers Notes

Classification is the organisation of similar living things into groups.

Habitat is the natural home of these living things.

This is an activity worksheet for the pupils incorporating three separate tasks. They can take it out on the walk with them or fill it in once they get back to the classroom.

Task 1 – Classification of Living Things

The pupils have been asked to - organise (classify) the 'Living Things' list below into mammals, plants, birds, invertebrates or amphibians and write their answer against the name.

There is a list of living things which can all be found in the Kent Downs. They have all been given their full name so that the pupils will begin to learn and recognise them on their walks. These living things can be found at different times of the year so there is always something for the pupils to see on a walk in the Kent Downs.

Task 2 – Identification of Living Things

The pupils have been asked to match the names of the living things with the relevant photos and then label the photos.

This is again a recognition exercise; they will be able to recognise a flower but may not know the name. Here are notes to help with the identification of these living things.

Notes on the living things



Barn Owl -This owl can be seen in the late evening flying over open rough grassland looking for food and often lives more in the roofs of barns on farms.



Cowslips - These yellow flowers grow on chalk grassland and can be found flowering in the spring during April and May when the Bluebells are also in flower.



Chalkhill Blue Butterfly - This can be found on chalk grassland. There are several different blue butterflies, the rarest, which is very similar to the Chalkhill Blue, is the Adonis Blue which can be found on chalk grassland in the Kent Downs. The food source for both of these butterflies is the Horseshoe Vetch.



Pyramidal Orchid - The pink flower is found throughout the Kent Downs on the chalk grassland and also in open woodland. It flowers in early June to July.



Hornbeam Trees - These trees which look very old and gnarled have been coppiced over the years, i.e. it has had its branches cut towards the base several times over the hundreds of years it has been growing. A tree like this can often be found in ancient woodland or on the perimeter of this woodland as a boundary tree.



Pipistrelle Bat - This bat can be found in its summer roosting sites in tree holes, bat and bird boxes, and the attics of farmsteads. In the winter they hibernate in cellars, tunnels and caves. During the summer they fly across mature woodland, as well as orchards and parkland for their food source.



Green Woodpecker - Most of the pupils should recognise a Green Woodpecker which inhabits open deciduous woodland, parks, gardens, orchards and farmland hedges. They forage for food in the tree canopy, although they do spend some time on the ground searching for food.



Bracken - This is a fern which is a very successful coloniser and is widespread, particularly on neutral to acid soils where it has become more invasive following tree clearance. The vigorous growth and dense foliage can often be found in woodlands.



Blackberry - The black and red round fruit grows on the bramble, which is a thorny plant to be found throughout the Kent Downs in hedgerows. The Blackberry fruits in August through to October, when the fruits are black and soft.



Bee - There many different species of bee which can be seen flying throughout the summer gathering pollen. This bee is visiting blossom in an orchard which aids with pollination of the blossom to produce fruit.



Mole - Very few people will have been lucky enough to see a mole but many people will have seen the remains of mole activity, mole hills. So look out for mole hills around the countryside.



Rose Hips - Roses grow wild in hedgerows in the countryside and their red shiny fruit are called rose hips. They are evident from late summer into autumn when the weather is beginning to change and mornings are becoming damper.



Marbled White Butterfly - This butterfly is sitting on a Greater Knapweed flower often found on chalk grassland. Their food source is Sheep's Fescue, Cock's Foot and Cat's Tail grass, yet they can often be found feeding on any kind of grass.



Common Frog - This frog can be found in ponds and damp areas of grassland in the Kent Downs.



Common Nettle - Known as the stinging nettle, if someone is stung by one of these plants rub a dock leaf on the sting and this will alleviate the sting. The Common Nettle can be found in grassland and woods, around ponds, in orchards, and in fact can be found in most places.



Tor Grass - A grass which is found on chalk grassland, it looks very tussocky and needs controlling otherwise it would take over from the species rich grassland which should characterise chalk downland.

Task 3 – Matching living things to the correct habitat.

In the centre of the page is a picture of a landscape similar to that which you may see in the Kent Downs. The pupils have been asked to choose the appropriate habitats for each of the living things in the photos. Once they have decided where they would find them they have then been asked to draw a line from the photo to the correct habitat in the picture. The notes above should help with this. For some of the living things there are several answers.

When the pupils are out in the Kent Downs, ask them if they recognise any of the landscape characters in the picture. They could even compare some of the landscape characters, such as grassland in the valleys, with that on the chalk downland; or compare the plant life in ancient woodlands with newly planted woodland.

Have fun.