



Animal Biodiversity Starter Pack for Primary Schools

Try these activities and resources to get started investigating basic animal groups in your school or local community.

Bird Watching Activities

Before you start

- Watch this [Interactive Workshop Recording](#) on common Irish Birds and see if you can identify birds by sight and sounds before getting some tips on attracting more to your school grounds.
- Identify where you will go bird spotting. Are there any bird feeders around the school? Is there a local park/woodland nearby.
- Divide students into groups and print out a selection of spotter sheet on next page and some from our links below and give one to each group.

Completing the activity

- Go on a looped walk around the school/park/local area. Try not to make too much noise! Listen out for the sound of bird song and follow carefully.
- You may find crows or gulls flying overhead or out in the open on your school pitch but most smaller birds prefer to be in hedgerows, tree lines or under cover.
- Keep a record of any birds you see. Try to match them to your spotter sheets. Photograph if possible.

You will need

- Spotter sheets. Try a selection including our GS one below, [Birdwatch Ireland Sheet](#) and [Wildlife Watch](#)
- Camera/phone/ipad
- Binoculars (optional)
- Paper and pencil

Follow on actions.

- If you have seen birds you could not identify try again back in the class by searching by colour or habitat seen on Birdwatch Ireland's webpage [here](#).
- Try this bird song activity [here](#) and go on another bird walk to see if you can identify any birds by listening to their calls.
- Hang some additional bird feeders around you school and see what birds they attract.

Green Schools Bird Spotter Sheet

Tick every time you see me!



Magpie/Snag breac

☐

Blackbird/Lon Dubh

☐

Robin/Spideóg

☐

Blue tit/Meantán gorm

☐

Wood Pigeon/Colm coille

☐

Herring Gull/Faoileán
scadán

☐

Bullfinch/Corcrán coille

☐

Starling/Druid

☐

Bug Spotting Activities

Activity One: Shake a Tree

- To find insects that are on leaves or twigs of trees and bushes place an old sheet or an upside down umbrella underneath and gently shake a branch for 10 seconds. Watch our [Demonstration Video](#) for tips!
- Check and see what insects have fallen onto your sheet or umbrella. Avoid standing or kneeling on the sheet. Spread out and watch for movement.
- Try to identify, photograph or draw any insects you see before placing back in a safe place – at the base of the tree or under the bush.

You will need

- Light coloured sheet or umbrella
- Spotter sheets below and [here](#)
- Camera/phone/ipad
- Paper and pencil

Activity Two: Look under things!

- Look for ground and crawling invertebrates in dark and damp hiding places. Watch our [Demonstration video](#) for tips!
- Lift up logs, plant pots, piles of leaves or other debris on the ground. Also check under window sills and the lids of compost bins. You may need to be quick as many of these creatures can move fast! You can try to place temporarily in an insect jar, paper cup or large tray.
- Try to identify, photograph or draw anything you see before returning where you found them. Make sure you put back anything you lift up to its correct place.

You will need

- Spotter Sheets below and [here](#)
- Camera/phone/ipad
- Paper and pencil
- White trays/tubs or paper cups for observing insects

Further Links: For a more in depth look either out in the field or back in the classroom with your photos click these links for [ladybirds](#), [butterflies](#), [beetles](#) and [bees](#).

Green Schools Crawling Bugs Spotter Sheet

Tick every time you see me!



Snail/Seilide garraí



Woodlouse/Cláirseach



Worm/Péist talún



Centipede/Céadchosach



Caterpillar/Bolb



Slug/Slog



Ant/Seangán



Earwig/Ceilpeadóir

Green Schools Flying Insect Spotter Sheet

Tick every time you see me!



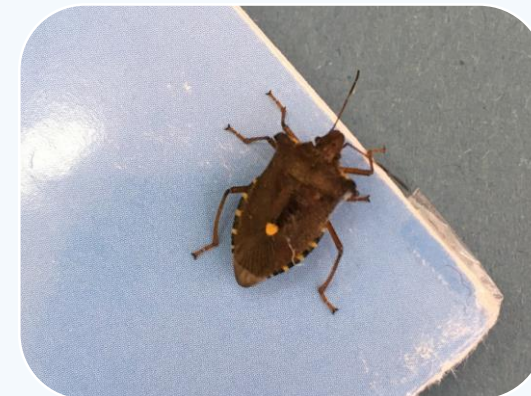
Wasp/Foiche

☐

Butterfly/Feileacán

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Bumblebee/Bumbóg

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Shield Bug/Frídscéithe

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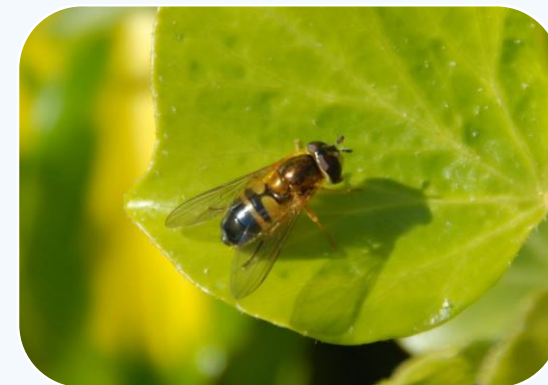
Bluebottle/Cuil ghorm

☐

Ladybird/Bóin Dé

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Green Fly/Cuil ghlass

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Hoverfly/Beach ghabhair

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