WHAT IS IN YOUR HABITAT?

INTRODUCTION

In this module children begin to learn about different habitats, how the living things are suited to the habitat and the interactions between the living organisms within a habitat. During the module they explore the habitat by identifying things that are living, once-lived and never-lived. They construct food chains that show how living things depend on each other. This builds on the understanding gained in Year 1, Module 2, Looking at Animals, that animals eat different types of food. Finally they consider how living things are suited to a particular habitat, again building on work in Year 1, Module 2, Looking at Animals. This is further developed in Year 6, Module 4, Everything Changes.

National Curriculum:

To identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other; to explore and compare the differences between things that are living, things that are dead and things that have never been alive

To describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food

Working Scientifically:

Using observations and ideas to suggest answers to questions

Gathering and recording data to help in answering questions

Scientific Enquiry:

Grouping and classifying

Finding things out using secondary sources of information

Key vocabulary:

habitat, alive, living, once-lived, dead, never-lived, plants, animals, decay, rocks, soil, air, water, food chain, plants, animals, herbivores (eat plants and parts of plants), carnivores (eat other animals), omnivores (eat plants/parts of plants and other animals), direction, source of food, suited, habitat, features, names of habitats, living things and animal body parts

FACT FILE:

Habitats

A habitat is a natural environment or home of a variety of plants and animals. The animals and plants that live in a habitat depend on the never-lived things in the environment (water, oxygen, soil or sand and rocks) and each other for their basic survival needs.

The two main types of habitats are land habitats and water habitats. Among the many types of land habitats are forests, deserts, grasslands and mountains. Because of their wet, hot climate, rainforests support more kinds of plant and animal life than any other habitat. In contrast, deserts support only animals and plants that are suited to live without much water. All animals are suited to the particular habitat in which they live.

Water habitats may contain freshwater or salt water. Freshwater habitats include streams, rivers, swamps, marshes, ponds, and lakes. Saltwater habitats include oceans, seas, salt lakes, salt marshes, and saltwater swamps.

A microhabitat is a very small, particular habitat, such as under a log, in the reeds in a pond, in an oak tree.

Food chains

Plants are producers and can make their own food using sunlight, carbon dioxide and water in the process of photosynthesis. Animals depend on the other living things in the habitat for their food – they are known as consumers.

A food chain can be used to show the way in which these animals depend on each other for energy (food).

Oak tree → mouse → fox

In this example, the oak tree is the producer. The mouse eats the acorns and is therefore a primary consumer. The fox eats the mouse and is known as a secondary consumer. The fox is a

predator and the mouse is its prey. The arrows between each item in the chain always point in the direction of energy flow – in other words, from the food to the feeder. Most food chains are quite short. There are rarely more than four stages, because a lot of energy is lost at each stage.

Living/once-live/never-lived

Living is anything that is currently alive. Seeds can be classed as living as they are able to germinate and grow given the right conditions. Berries and fruits contain seeds so can therefore be classed as living.

Once-lived is something that used to be alive but is no longer living. This could be a dead animal/ plant or part of a plant/animal such as leaves, twigs, logs, empty seed cases; bones, dead skin, hair. In everyday language these things are usually referred to as ‘dead’ but the more appropriate scientific term is once-lived.
Examples of things that have never lived may be naturally occurring, such as rocks, soil, air, water, or manufactured materials such as refined metal and plastic.