

# Build an animal habitat

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## Introduction

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This activity prompts young people to identify which animals are common on their site, before creating a habitat for one of them. Finally, they can use this as a great way to observe and record nature activity.

### Duration

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3+ hours

### Location

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This activity can be delivered on youth group/school grounds or at home.

### Topics

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Biology



Design & Technology



English

### Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- Develop knowledge about local wildlife.
- Develop their observation skills.
- Develop their teamwork and construction skills.



## You Will Need

- Each animal habitat requires its own set of resources. Check out the 2 animal habitat ideas that are presented alongside this guide and read on for links to more ideas. All contain resource lists specific to those habitats.

# Follow These Steps

## 1 Research

There are 2 main questions that you need to answer:

1. What type of animal habitat should you build?
2. Where should the habitat be located?

For question one, find out what animals are common on your site. You can find this out in various ways:

- Speak to your site's owner, caretaker or manager. They will know which animals, birds and critters call your site 'home'. They may even have CCTV footage of the animal at night!
- Do a stake-out! Find a secluded spot on your site, hide out of view and spend a few hours monitoring what happens. Keep a tally of the animals that you spot and note what they do and where they do it. You could tempt animals into view by leaving out food such as fruit.
- We love the Woodland Trust! They have a brilliant set of guides to help you identify British wildlife – from using the tracks of mammals to identifying birds by their songs. Find out more [here](#).



For question two, you should think about the following:

- What location is close to where the animals currently are?
- Where does the animal need to be to remain safe?
- Does the animal need to be underground, overground or up in a tree?
- Does it need to be dry or wet?
- Can you easily add food to the habitat or a spot nearby?

## 2 Build

Presented alongside this guide are 2 short and simple guides for building different animal habitats:

- One to help you build a bug mansion
- One to help you build a 'boot-iful' bird-house

If these animals aren't common on your site, which are?

Return to your research and pick an animal. Below we've listed a few of the great websites and organisations that have developed different guides for building a variety of animal habitats. There are lots more to find online too. Make your creations even more nature-friendly by using as many sustainable materials as possible.

- [Wildlife Trusts](#)
- [National Trust](#)
- [Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust](#)

## 3 Record

Once you've built your animal habitat, keep a record of all of the activity that you see. Scientists keep something similar called 'wildlife diaries' to identify which animals are living in different areas. This helps them to protect wildlife and help animals to prosper and grow.



Print and use the Habitat Record template, presented alongside this guide, and answer the following questions:

- What animal is using the habitat?
- Can you describe or draw it?
- How many animals use the habitat?
- When are they most likely to visit or use the habitat?
- How long do they stay there?
- What types of food do they eat?
- Which is their favourite?!

### What Next?

- Spread your wings and create a 'wildlife diary' to help you understand the animals that live in a local green space. Note the animals that you spot, write a description and add where and when you spotted them. We recommend exploring a woodlands or a forest. Wildlife diaries can include everything from squirrels to insects and even pets, like cats.
- If you find something really unique and interesting, you could join [iRecord](#) and submit your discovery to be checked by experts. Your record might help to support research and decision-making at local and national levels. Visit [iRecord](#) for more information.

## How Can This Activity Connect to Eco-Schools?



This activity can be used to support work on the Eco-Schools Biodiversity topic and is a great way of informing and involving others about the variety of animals that occupy your site and their unique habitats.