

Wildsquare Teachers' Notes

Would you like to...

- Learn more about the area around your school with your class?
- Find out who else lives there?
- Carry out fun surveys and use these to plan interactive and participative lessons?

Then Wildsquare is the project for you! Get involved and take part in some great surveys in a place that is special to you and your pupils.

Your Wildsquare is a one kilometre square piece of land and can be wherever you like – you can choose an area you visit regularly, like a local park or nature reserve, or it could include your school grounds – it's up to you.

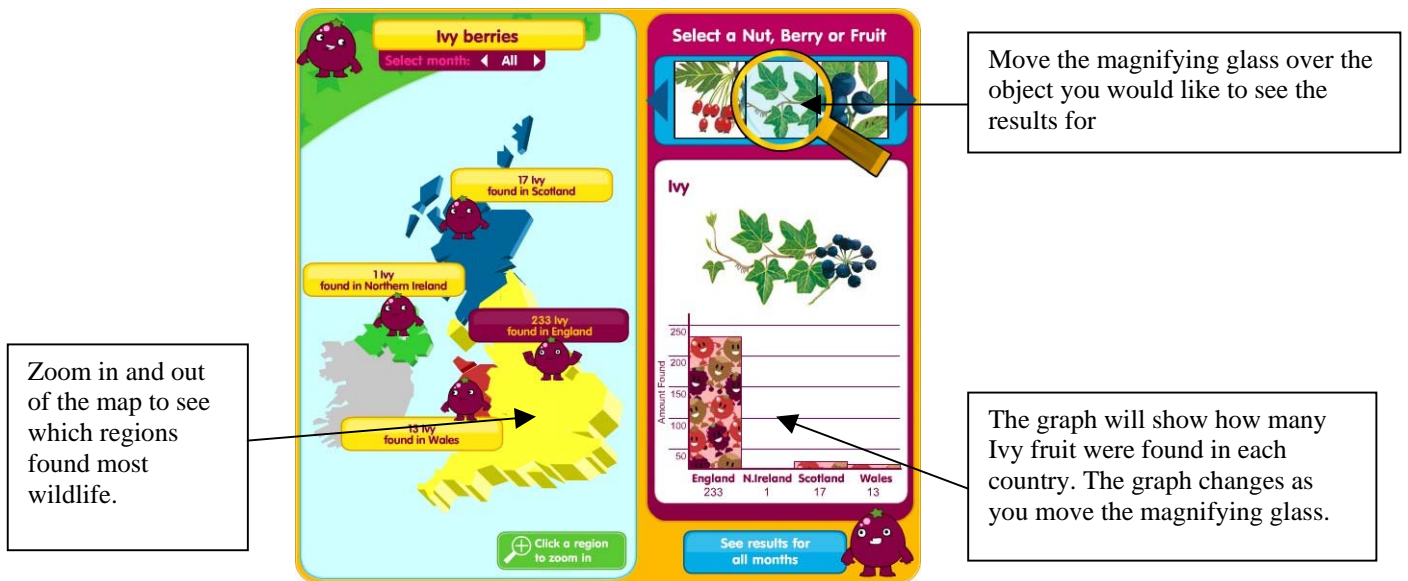
You will need to register with us online at www.rspb.org.uk/wildsquare; telling us where your Wildsquare is and how many children will be actively participating in the project. We will then send you one Wildsquare folder for the school; and a calendar and sticker pack for each participating child.

Use the folder to file all your survey and activity sheets to build up an exciting picture of the square you have chosen. The stickers are designed to go on the calendar so they can track notable sights, such as when they saw their first swallow, or toadstool and they can also mark on when they start and finish the Wildsquare surveys.

The Wildsquare web pages tell you about exciting surveys and activities you can carry out in your square. When there aren't any surveys going on, or you just need a fun activity for your class; use the activity sheets on the website. There are lots of different activities to choose from; from Butterfly bingo and baking Gingerbread birds to making a hedgehog house and an apple bird feeder. The activity sheets are updated on a regular basis, so there will always be something new to use with your class. There are indoor activity sheets that can be used in the classroom or on rainy days and other sheets to get you outdoors, learning more about your Wildsquare.

Once you have completed a survey you will need to tell us what you have seen in your Wildsquare - before we can protect our wildlife we need to learn more about it. You will need to check the website to find out when the interactive survey results are published.

Once published, the survey results are displayed online, in the following way and are perfect to use and explore via an interactive whiteboard.



As well as teaching your class about their local area, in a fun and inclusive way, taking part also helps conservationists to learn about and protect our wildlife and environment. Both elements to this project make it a truly valuable and worthwhile exercise

Teachers Comments:

We started in September 2007 with the nuts and berries survey. We divided our two classes into 4 groups, each taking $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Square Kilometre and a designated area that they are responsible for surveying and caring for. With help from the class teachers and teaching assistants we helped the pupils identify the variety of seeds, nut and berries in the area by showing them actual specimens and then comparing them with the images on the Identification sheets. We spent a lesson teaching the children what seeds, nuts and berries are and what their functions are. We helped the children understand how animal species such as finches and squirrels etc depend upon the seeds, nuts and berries for food.

Wildsquare has enabled this group of children to become more aware and observant of their local environment, to develop their love of this area in a personal way and establish an ownership of it.

More Wildsquare ideas

Wildsquare can support curriculum-based work in the following ways:

Citizenship

- Discuss the importance of conservation and maintaining habitats that can sustain wildlife. Identify ways in which the children can do this within their Wildsquare, homes and the wider environment.

Literacy

- Writing accounts and reports about what was seen during the surveys. This could be included in your school newsletter/newspaper or even published on your school's website
- Hotseating – playing the part of an inhabitant of your Wildsquare, to find out more about its life, based upon the findings of your surveys.

Geography

- Using maps of Great Britain and our interactive survey results, find out where the animals and plants of the survey forms are most likely to be found. Highlight the fact that wildlife can be found in many different areas of the country, but on the other hand some species may be limited to where they live due to climate, type of food or type of habitat found in that area.
- Discuss how changes in climate, human population movement and building developments can affect wildlife.

Science

- Identify different habitats and wildlife within your Wildsquare
- For each survey look into the individual animals or plants listed for the survey in more detail, explore food chains related to these.

Maths

- Data handling activities, using graphs, numbers and percentages when you enter your results onto the website and when you show the children the online results pages.

Art

- Use the craft activity sheets from the website.
- Make observational sketches during your surveys

ICT

- Use your interactive white board to enable your class to enter their results online. The whole class can feel part of entering the results they have collected. The white board can also be used to show the online results. There are interactive graphs and maps to use to show the Wildsquare survey results for the whole of the UK as well as individual regions.