

Habitat explorer presentation notes

Objective

To introduce schoolchildren to the RSPB and our conservation work for all nature (birds and other wildlife) using the ethos of our Giving Nature a Home campaign.

You can find out more about Giving Nature a Home at: rspb.org.uk/homes

Audience: 5–11-year-olds

Running time: approximately 10 minutes

Resources

The slides in this presentation are visual representations and prompts to help the delivery of the content in these notes. They tie the narrative together and give the presentation structure, whilst helping to facilitate discussion and interaction with the audience.

Format

The presentation is saved as a Microsoft Office PowerPoint file.

Discussion points and extra information

These notes include some extra information to help with further discussion about the subjects covered and make possible links to the curriculum and follow-on activities. The person presenting may choose to draw on some of these during the presentation, if more time is available, or incorporate them into follow-up work in the classroom.



Slide one

Action: click on to slide one.

Presenter: *All animals, including us, need similar things to stay healthy and stay alive.*

Have a think. What do we all need to survive? Put your hand up if you can think of anything. We'll explore these things on the next few slides.

Discussion points and extra information

- At this point you may want to share the objectives of the presentation:
 - to explore why we need to give nature a home
 - to empower children so they know that they can personally improve their school grounds
- You may want to guide older children by making reference to their science learning around the seven Life Processes that tell us that animals are alive (movement, reproduction, sensitivity, nutrition, excretion, respiration and growth).
- You may want to make the point clear to younger children (and as a reminder to older children) that there is no fundamental difference between an "animal" and a "human". Humans are animals as well.
- You can find more information about the broad range of the RSPB's work, including Giving Nature a Home, at rspb.org.uk



Slide two

Action: click on to slide two.

Presenter: *We need water to drink and wash in, to keep our bodies healthy. Birds and other wildlife need water too.*



Slide three

Action: click on to slide three.

Presenter: *We need to eat food to give us energy. Wildlife needs food too.*

Discussion point and extra information

You may want to make a specific link between "eating" and "nutrition" as one of the seven Life Processes.



Slide four

Action: click on to slide four.

Presenter: *Where do you go when you want to keep warm and stay dry? (Rhetorical question). Your home. Whether you live in a house, a flat, a caravan or a cave – it's where you sleep and where your family are; it keeps out the rain and keeps you safe.*

And wildlife needs a home just like we do. This is a dormouse in its nest. It looks really cosy, doesn't it? Dormice spend much of their lives sleeping, so nests that are safe, warm and dry are very important to them.

Slide five



Action: click on to slide five.

- A** A tree
- B** A log pile
- C** A pond
- D** A nestbox
- E** Flowers
- F** A hedge

Presenter: *All kinds of birds and other wildlife are around us all the time. All of the pictures on this slide shown important homes for wildlife. Do we have any of these “homes” at our school? Which ones?*

Can you guess what wildlife might live in each one?

In some places in the UK, birds and other wildlife can't find the homes and the other things they need to survive.

The RSPB is trying to help by creating more homes for nature and making sure they have enough to eat, drink and survive. They need our help too, and we could give nature a home here at school.

Discussion points and extra information

- You could point out that the nestbox is a man-made place for garden birds to nest and bring up their young. It's not part of their natural habitat, which would be the trees or in a hedge. But it is one way that we as humans can help give nature a home – helping the birds by giving them somewhere safe and dry to bring up their chicks.

Examples of the kind of wildlife that needs the different places shown:

- **A tree** – insects such as caterpillars, birds of all sizes and squirrels. Oak trees (like the one shown) produce acorns that fall to the ground and are eaten by mammals such as badgers and deer, so trees are also important to creatures that don't live in them.
- **A log pile** – earth worms, ants, beetles, slugs and leatherjackets – the larvae of crane flies (otherwise known as daddy-long-legs).
- **A pond** – frogs, toads, newts, water snails, water boatmen, damselflies, dragonflies and pond skaters.
- **A nestbox** – nesting birds, including blue tits, great tits and house sparrows. In winter, lots of wrens sometimes huddle together in nestboxes to keep warm!
- **Flowers** – pollinating and nectar-drinking insects, including bumblebees, other bees, butterflies, moths (some of which can be seen flying in the day) and hoverflies.
- **A hedge** – birds nesting amongst the branches, spiders building their webs, and creatures foraging for food under hedges, especially wrens, mice and hedgehogs.

You may want to make reference to the fact that animals do not survive in isolation:

Animals and birds live in a place that they are specifically 'adapted' or 'suited' to. The place that they 'fit' is called their habitat.



Slide six

Action: click on to slide six

Presenter: *We all know what this is; it's a bumblebee. I'm pretty sure we all know what noise bumblebees make don't we? After three we'll make that noise all together 1... 2... 3... "Buzzzz!"*

I want everyone to think carefully about what bees might eat. Get a picture of it in your mind.



Slide seven

Action: click on to slide seven.

Presenter: *Were you right?*

Bees collect nectar and pollen from flowers – nectar provides them with lots of energy to keep them buzzing about. So, to make sure they have the food they need to survive, bees need plenty of flowers.

Can you think what you can do to help make sure bumblebees have the food they need? Hands up.

Action: select a few children from the audience to hear their suggestions.

Note for presenter:

Ideally children would respond with answers such as "plant more flowers". There is the chance that some children may suggest "putting out nectar" for bees. In this case, tell the children that bees will drink "sugar water" (a solution of around two tablespoons of white, granulated sugar mixed with one tablespoon of water) if it is put out for them – and some fun investigations can be done with this. But flowers are better at attracting bees. They are natural and provide a reliable source of nectar.

Presenter: *To make sure there is more nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects, we can plant more of the flowers that they like in the school's grounds: in flowerbeds, window boxes, or in pots. The more flowers there are, the more food there is for insects.*

Discussion points and extra information

At this point you could mention the names of certain flowers that are particularly good for attracting bees and other insects, such as:

- **Lavender**
- **Borage**
- **Knapweed**
- **Honeysuckle**
- **Heather**
- **Foxgloves**

You can find out more about plants that are good for wildlife and gardening with wildlife in mind at [rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/gardening/wildlife-friendly_garden.aspx](https://www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/gardening/wildlife-friendly_garden.aspx)



Slide eight

Action: click on to slide eight.

Presenter: *What do you think these children are looking for in their school grounds? Hands up.*

Action: select a few children from the audience to hear their suggestions.

Presenter: *Can you think of a way that we can help birds in our school grounds?*

Note for presenter

Ideally children would respond with the answer "birds". But if they don't, any other suggestions they have can open up useful discussions about other wildlife living in the school grounds, such as butterflies and squirrels, or homes for nature, such as trees.



Slide nine

Action: click on to slide nine.

Presenter: *Well, one thing we can do is make sure they have enough food to eat. This is especially important in the cold winter months when their natural food – which for most birds is insects and/or plant seeds – is harder to find. Planting ivy is really good for attracting insects, because ivy flowers provide nectar all autumn and a long way into winter. No other plant lasts so long into the cold weather.*

This picture shows a bird feeder that you can make. It can be hung up somewhere quiet and safe, and out of reach of cats. This food gives birds like the great tit in the picture lots to eat, and gives them the energy to stay warm and survive cold weather.

Can you think of any places outside, in the school grounds, where we could hang up bird feeders?

If we put them in view of the windows, we could watch the birds from the school buildings without scaring them away.

Discussion points and extra information

- A fun class activity could be making bird feeders and bird cake too. For step by step instructions, visit: [rspb.org.uk/forprofessionals/teachers/resources/school-grounds/index.aspx](https://www.rspb.org.uk/forprofessionals/teachers/resources/school-grounds/index.aspx)



Slide 10

Action: click on to slide 10.

Presenter: *Who's this? It's a small creature that you might see in our school grounds.*

Yes it's a woodlouse.

Have you ever seen one? (Rhetorical question). They can be tricky to spot because they are so small, and are often hiding in soil or under rocks or plant pots. But if you look really closely on the ground, you might see one.

What do you think we can do to help give woodlice, and other tiny minibeasts, a home in our school grounds? Hands up.

Action: select a few children from the audience to hear their suggestions.

Note for presenter

At this point, children will hopefully say something about giving them food or building them somewhere safe to live.



Slide 11

Action: click on to slide 11.

Presenter: *We can build them a wildlife stack! This works like a bug hotel, giving all kinds of minibeasts, including woodlice, beetles, spiders, worms, ants and snails, shelter from the rain. All the holes and tunnels in the stack are great places for them to hide away. And some, like ladybirds, will hibernate in them.*

Does anyone know what "hibernate" means?

Well done – it's when a creature goes to sleep for several months when it's cold, in order to use as little energy as possible and survive the winter.

Can you see what this wildlife stack has been made from?

Slide 12

Action: click on to slide 12.



Presenter: *We've learnt lots about wildlife today and how we can all help give animals what they need to survive. Can you remember some of the things we've spoken about and what wildlife we can help in our school grounds? These pictures should help you.*

If you help give birds and other wildlife a home and the food and water they need, you will help them to survive.

And that's really important. Imagine what life would be like without all the birds and other wildlife we get to see every day at school. Or that you see in your garden at home, or the local park, or on your way to school.

Discussion points and extra information

- Lots of activity sheets about providing food and homes for nature can be downloaded from the **Outdoor resources** section of [rspb.org.uk/schoolsoutreach](https://www.rspb.org.uk/schoolsoutreach)

Slide 13

Action: click on to slide 13.



Presenter: *Wildlife lives all around us, so the RSPB needs your help to give nature a home where you live.*

And it needs all of us to help give nature a home at our school. Let's find out what homes for nature we've got already...

Presentation ends

Slide photos: Boy looking at frog by Eleanor Bentall, house sparrow drinking water by Ray Kennedy, red squirrel by Mike Read, common dormouse by Roger Tidman, oak tree by Mike Lane, log pile by Sue Kennedy, pond by David Levenson, blue tit in birdbox by Chris Gomersall, wildflowers by Jodie Randall, hedge by Andy Hay, bumblebee in flight by Richard Bedford, children with binoculars by Eleanor Bentall, bumblebee on flower by Jesper Mattias, great tit on apple feeder by David Tipling, woodlouse by Sue Kennedy and bug hotel by Mark Hamblin (all rspb-images.com). Girl drinking, boy eating, and boys in bed all by iStockphoto.com

Extra information for teachers, resources and follow-on activities:

- Please take some photos and write about what your school does to help give nature a home, and either e-mail your photos and stories to us at education@rspb.org.uk or tweet about it: [@RSPB_Learning](https://twitter.com/RSPB_Learning)
- Visit rspb.org.uk/teaching for lots of activities and ideas for practical projects that you can do with your pupils to give nature a home in your school grounds.
- Taking part in the **RSPB's Wild Challenge** means you can do lots of other exciting activities, learning about wildlife and helping it too. As you tick different activities off your list, you can work towards receiving a bronze, silver and gold award certificate and some cool stickers. You can find out more about the **RSPB's Wild Challenge** at rspb.org.uk/schoolswildchallenge