



## MINI-BEASTS & BIRDLIFE

As the seasons shift and nature begins its colourful transformation, we're turning our attention to the fascinating world of Mini-Beasts & Birdlife. This term, we'll be exploring the hidden heroes of our habitats—from the flutter of wings to the scurry of tiny legs—celebrating the creatures that spark curiosity and inspire outdoor learning. Dive in to discover ideas, updates, and inspiration for bringing the wild wonders of autumn into your sessions.



# MINIBEASTS

The term minibeast is a child-friendly term for any small invertebrate. An invertebrate is an animal without a backbone. There is a vast range of different species: insects, arachnids (spiders), worms, slugs and snails are all types of invertebrates.

A minibeast hunt in the school grounds is a simple and enjoyable way for children to explore and discover more about the natural world. The science content can be tailored to meet the needs of any age group.

Areas to hunt in: leafy plants (tall plants, bushes, hedgerows or small trees); natural ground (minibeast hotels, log piles or leaf litter), hard surfaces (e.g. rocks, walls, fences, tarmac).

You can find lots of useful information on how to make the most of a mini-beast hunt with your children at school in our 'Mini-Beasts' page within our Hampshire Trailblazer resources at: [Trailblazer activities](#) | [Education and learning](#) | [Hampshire County Council](#)

You'll find information on using identification sheets, making a pitfall trap, using a pooter, tree beating, sweep nets and more! We've also included an example of a mini-beast hunt identification chart in this newsletter to get you started!

In this edition, you can also read an article by Lucy Mitchell from Hampshire Outdoor Centres about using mini-beast hunts to creatively link to other curriculum areas, and Charlotte Goswell from Bird Aware Solent tells us all about The Great Coastal Birdwatch 2025!





# MINIBEAST



# HUNT



CATERPILLAR



BEE



WORM



SLUG



LADYBIRD



SPIDER



BUTTERFLY



BEETLE



SNAIL



# BIRD AWARE SOLENT AND THE GREAT COASTAL BIRDWATCH 2025!

Discover the incredible coastal birds of the Solent – and how you can help them!

The Solent coast is of worldwide importance for wildlife. The migratory birds that visit our shores each year need to feed, rest and breed without being disturbed so they can build up enough energy to fly north again after winter, or so they can have a successful breeding season here on our coastline.



Bird Aware Solent is a local partnership project that raises awareness of the ducks, geese, waders and other migratory birds that rely on the Solent coast to survive. The ranger team covers over 250km of coastline including three SPAs (Special Protection Areas), from the New Forest to Chichester and the northern shore of the Isle of Wight. They engage with visitors and communities around the coast through education and outreach work to highlight the importance of giving space to the different bird species to minimise disturbance from recreation.

Over the last year Rangers Tony and Charlotte, who make up the outreach team, have started developing an education programme, linked to different areas of the curriculum. They have already delivered many sessions to schools and other local education groups together with guided walks and bird spotting sessions out on the coast.



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In addition, every Autumn Bird Aware runs the 'Great Coastal Birdwatch' a citizen science and engagement project celebrating the arrival of the birds for the winter season. The project aims to inspire people to become more involved with birdwatching whilst learning how to help protect wildlife at the coast. Anyone, including schools, can take part by doing their own 'birdwatch' or by joining in with one of the rangers events over the two-week long event. Information on getting started and downloadable resources such as recording forms and spotting sheets can be found on the Bird Aware Solent website.

This year's Great Coastal Birdwatch runs from Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2025. For further information please contact [info@birdaware.org](mailto:info@birdaware.org) or visit:

[Discover the incredible coastal birds of the Solent - and how you can help them!](https://birdaware.org/solent/)

<https://birdaware.org/solent/>

Charlotte Goswell, Bird Aware Solent

## The GREAT COASTAL BIRDWATCH





# Bird Aware Solent Outreach & Engagement



## Events



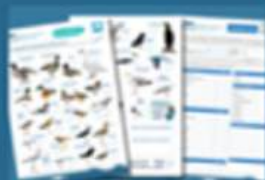
Reaching the local community



## Great Coastal Birdwatch

6th year for this citizen science project

Growing beyond the Solent area



## Guided walks



Birdwatching, Waggy Walks, Photography, Wellbeing



## Site Patrols & Pop-ups

On site information

Showcasing the birds in real life



## Education

Sessions linked to the National Curriculum

Working with schools and other education providers



## Coast & Country Canines



Targeted dog walker engagement and events



## Art Fest

Annual event reaching new audiences



## Photography Campaign

New for 2024

The Bird Aware Solent PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



## Talks & Presentations

Given to local groups and organisations

Opportunity for more in depth explanation of topics



## Watersports with Wildlife

Bespoke resources for wind and paddle sports  
Interactive map



# UPGRADE THE CLASSIC MINIBEAST HUNT!

There's nothing quite like a minibeast hunt, even with no specialist equipment it's fascinating for all ages to see what can be found tucked away in the corners of even the most urban school site. Here, we suggest a variety of additions that can be used to elevate a classic minibeast hunt and creatively link to other aspects of your curriculum, whilst maximising experiential learning!

## VARIATION 1: MINIBEAST STORYTELLING

**CURRICULUM LINKS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE, SUSTAINABILITY, PSHE**

**SET UP TIME: 5 MINUTES**

**AGE RANGE: YEAR 6 - CAN BE DIFFERENTIATED TO SUIT ALL LEVELS.**

**TIME: 30 MINUTES**

**RESOURCES REQUIRED: PEN/PAPER, RANDOMISED PROMPTS (OPTIONAL)**

1. Begin by identifying the creatures that have been found, (we're always fans of the tried and tested FSC ID guides!). Ask young people to give the invertebrates a narrative identity.
2. Offer the students a selection of story-telling prompts which they could choose out of a hat or select their favourite. Some great examples (structure depending on group ability): An epic-quest to find a new ecosystem to live in, the invertebrate crew meet a human for the first time, or two minibeasts become friends as they discover they have similar characteristics.
3. The story doesn't need to be written in prose! Acting improv, songs, poems, or drawing are all great mediums to get creativity and foster increased understanding of minibeasts. Over-anthropomorphising the creatures should not be encouraged.

Notes: Following normal minibeast hunt ethics - make sure to release the minibeasts carefully back where they were found after they've been used to spark creativity.

## VARIATION 2: DREAM HOMES

**CURRICULUM LINKS: DT, MATHS, ART, KS2 SCIENCE: LIVING THINGS AND THEIR HABITATS, GEOGRAPHY**

**SET UP TIME: 15 MINUTES**

**AGE RANGE: YEAR 6 - CAN BE DIFFERENTIATED TO SUIT ALL LEVELS.**

**TIME: 1 HOUR**

**RESOURCES REQUIRED: PEN/PAPER (MATERIALS IF YOU'RE GOING ALL OUT!)**

1. Begin by discussing different habitats and what makes a good home for minibeasts, discuss how each may need a slightly different habitat. For motivated young people this could lead into deeper individual research.
2. Have students design their own "dream home" for a minibeast, considering what the minibeast needs to survive, its perfect habitat, and where it fits in an ecosystem. This can be done as simply as a pen/paper but can be scaled up as much as you have time for.
3. Ask students to label their design and have a show and tell session.



## VARIATION 3: SENSORY EXPLORATION

CURRICULUM LINKS: KS2 SCIENCE: LIVING THINGS AND THEIR HABITATS, GEOGRAPHY

SET UP TIME: 15 MINUTES

AGE RANGE: KS1/LOWER KS2

TIME: 30 MINUTES

RESOURCES REQUIRED: MIRRORS, BLINDFOLDS

1. Mirror Walk: Using two mirrors, students can simulate different eye positions, for example, by holding the mirrors to their nose and angling them outward to create a larger peripheral vision. Have students guide each other around (consider an obstacle course if you're feeling brave!). Discuss why different minibeasts have various eye adaptations.
2. Blindfolded Exploration: Use blindfolds to explore diurnal vs. nocturnal animals. As students are guided around blindfolded, ask them to consider which senses become more important, discuss what these reveals about how underground minibeasts live.



## VARIATION 4: FIELD STUDIES JOURNAL

CURRICULUM LINKS: KS2 SCIENCE: LIVING THINGS AND THEIR HABITATS, GEOGRAPHY, ART, ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SET UP TIME: 15 MINUTES

AGE RANGE: KS2

TIME: 30 MINUTES

RESOURCES REQUIRED: PEN/PAPER

1. Inspire students by showing them field study journals from famous naturalists like David Attenborough.
2. Emphasize detailed drawings and labels, using colour to enhance them. Add soil, bark rubbings, or leaf prints to bring the minibeasts' habitats to life. Highlight that the scientific process can be as creative as art!

Escape the classroom and playground and explore all nature has to offer with [day visits to Calshot Activities Centre](#) or [Runway's End Outdoor Centre](#).

Discover our [Marine Explorers](#) sessions at Calshot and pick from themes of; how animals and plants adapt to life in the ocean, sustainability - plastics and the marine environment, or Oceans, climate change and renewable energy!

Or enjoy a day package of our [Environmental Programme](#) at Runway's End. Bridge the gap between theory and practice and immerse your students in a captivating woodland setting where environmental education comes to life!

Lucy Mitchell, Hampshire Outdoor Centres



# FREE CPD & RESOURCES



## TRAVEL SCHOOLS RESOURCES

New Forest Travel Grant open again from 1st April- schools and groups can claim up to £200 for travel to visit in the New Forest. More info here: [Travel grant - New Forest National Park Authority](#)



## PODCASTS

### The Forest School Podcast

Delicious waffle chat about education, nature connection, child development & community building. Hosted by Lewis Ames & Wem Southerden.



### The Wild Minds Podcasts

The Wild Minds Podcast by Marina Robb, Forest School and Nature-based Trainer and founder of The Outdoor Teacher.



### The Outdoor Ed School Podcast

These free podcasts from the Outdoor Ed School will walk you through how to provide meaningful team challenges, problem solving tasks, review models, and group discussion topics outdoors.



### 1000 Hours Outside Podcasts

1000 Hours Outside is another American organisation. Their 1000 Hours Outdoor Podcasts are free and through their various speakers and authors, they cover many interesting subjects on outdoor learning.



## WEBINARS

### Forest School Association Free Webinars

The [Forest School Association](#) (FSA) public archive holds a selection of their webinar recordings, which are free to view. FSA Members have access to the entire back catalogue of webinars.



### Free Outdoor Learning Webinars

Although American, you might find [these free webinars](#) from the [Outdoor Learning Store](#) useful:







- How to Teach Nature Journaling: Curiosity, Wonder, Attention
- Climate Connections: Climate Change Education in Outdoor Learning

Or [these recordings](#) from previous webinars.



# THEMES AND DAYS FOR OUTDOOR LEARNING

Here are lots of events and activities coming up that can be used to support getting children active and learning outdoors! See [Trailblazer Calendar of Themes and Days for Outdoor Learning](#) for the academic year 2024/25, so you can see what's coming up and plan accordingly!

DATE	EVENT	ALL THE INFO
1st - 31 <sup>st</sup> October	 <u>Walktober</u>	An HCC challenge held each October to celebrate walking to school as part of <a href="#">International Walk to School Month</a> .
2nd October	 <u>National Poetry Day</u>	The theme for National Poetry Day 2025 is Play. Why not read, write and share poems outside? See our <a href="#">Trailblazer Poetry Outdoors</a> activity sheet for ideas.
4th October	 <u>World Animal Day</u>	The mission of World Animal Day is to raise the status of animals in order to improve welfare standards around the globe.
4 <sup>th</sup> - 10 <sup>th</sup> October	 <u>World Space Week</u>	The theme for World Space Week 2025 is 'Living In Space'. The theme explores the wonder and challenges of life beyond Earth. Use <a href="#">this pack</a> from Forestry England and hold a star gazing session at your school.
10 <sup>th</sup> October	 <u>World Mental Health Day</u>	The <a href="#">World Health Organisation</a> recognises World Mental Health Day on 10 October each year.
10 <sup>th</sup> October	 <u>National Forest School Day</u>	An annual celebration day to connect, share and celebrate everything that is great and wonderful about Forest School.



# THEMES AND DAYS FOR OUTDOOR LEARNING



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13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> October	<u>Cycle to School Week</u>	Run by the Bikeability Trust, this is to encourage people up and down the country to use pedal power to get to school. <u>Bikeability in Hampshire</u>
24 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> October	<u>Bat Week</u>	Bat Week is an annual, international celebration of the role of bats in nature. Play the <u>Trailblazer Bat and Moth Game</u> to understand how bats locate their prey. <u>Build a bat box</u> and give a bat a safe place to roost on your school grounds.
6 <sup>th</sup> November	<u>Outdoor Classroom Day</u>	Outdoor Classroom Day is a global movement to make time outdoors part of every child's day. A great day for the whole school to take children outdoors to learn and play.
16 <sup>th</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup> November	<u>Road Safety Week</u>	This is an annual event dedicated to promoting road safety awareness and advocating for safer roads and responsible driving behaviour. This year's theme is After the Crash. <u>Hampshire Road Safety for Primary Schools</u>
21 <sup>st</sup> November	<u>Global Outdoor Learning Day</u>	Organised by the Institute for Outdoor Learning, Global Outdoor Learning Day brings together educators, organisations, and individuals globally to acknowledge and promote the benefits of outdoor learning. It promotes the belief that learning in natural environments contributes significantly to physical well-being, mental health, and a deeper understanding of the world around us.
27 <sup>th</sup> November	<u>Protecting Our Planet Day</u>	Protecting Our Planet Day 24 (POP24) is an inspiring, live-streamed event for schools created by STEM Learning. POP24 will feature live link-ups, talks full of inspiration and exciting classroom activities from innovators and experts working to tackle climate change. You can take part with your class or whole school and it is completely free to attend.



# UPCOMING COURSES

**Hampshire Outdoors** offer a wide range of courses covering Outdoor Learning; Fire Lighting; Risk Management; Camping in the School Grounds, Physical Education; Duke of Edinburgh Award, Bikeability and First Aid courses. See [here](#) for more details on all the courses we offer.

Many of our courses can be offered as bespoke courses for your school. If you would like to book a bespoke course please complete [this form](#). Book early to secure the dates you want!

## Offsite and Visit Leader Course (valid for 5 years) £120 SLA (£165 non-SLA) per delegate

- Fri 03 October Dover Park Primary School, IOW, PO33 2BN
- Mon 06 October Runways End Outdoor Centre, Aldershot, GU11 2RE
- Tue 14 October Stubbington Study Centre, Fareham, PO14 2ND
- Wed 05 November Testwood Lake Centre, Totton, SO40 3XP
- Wed 26 November Gilbert White Field Study Centre, Alton, GU34 3JH
- Thur 27 November Woodmill Outdoor Activities Centre, Southampton, SO18 2JR
- Wed 03 December Stubbington Study Centre, Fareham, PO14 2ND



## Full Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) Initial Training Course (valid for 5 years)

Please note that both sessions must be attended.  
£150 SLA (£200 non-SLA) per delegate

- Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 October 2025 (3pm-5.30pm) - Microsoft Teams
- Wednesday 19 & Thursday 20 November 2025 (3pm-5.30pm) - Microsoft Teams

## Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) Refresher Training (valid for 5 years)

Half-day refresher for those EVC's whose qualification has expired.

£90 SLA (£120 non-SLA) per delegate - 0.5 day refresher course

- Wednesday 08 October 2025 - 9.30am-12.30pm  
Microsoft Teams

## Using the Outdoors to Support Your National Curriculum Delivery

£120 SLA (£165 non-SLA) per delegate

- Wednesday 29 April 2026 - 9am-4pm -  
Stubbington Study Centre, Fareham, PO14 2ND



## ITC Outdoor First Aid - 2 day Course

£135 SLA (£180 non-SLA) per delegate

- Tuesday 30 September & Wednesday 01 October 2025 - Stubbington Study Centre, Fareham, PO14 2ND

## Outdoor First Aid Emergency Action - 1 day course

£100 SLA (£130 non-SLA) per delegate

- Friday 21 November 2025 - Minstead Study Centre, Lyndhurst, SO43 7GJ

# EVOLVE



Book courses through the [Hampshire County Council Learning Zone](#).

Please call 0370 779 1498 or email [karen.storey@hants.gov.uk](mailto:karen.storey@hants.gov.uk) if you have any queries.