

Activity: Animal homes

Kit needed: Natural materials, animal identification sheet (optional)

Group/ family size: 1+

Age Group: 2+

Location: this can be done in the garden, local park or woodland,

Learning about: Native species, their homes, habits and habitats, construction methods, properties of natural materials

Instructions:

Talk to your child about their favourite British animal (or see the identification sheet for more information about some of our best-known animals).

Collect sticks, stones, leaves, grass and mud to create a home for the animal in an appropriate place (you wouldn't put a badger up a tree).

Make the animal home and be creative – would the animal like a garden, a swing or a slide? What pretend food could they have stored?

Encourage your children to take the lead and use their imagination.

Additional comments:

The animal home can also be used for their favourite toy.

The accompanying identification sheet contains information about the following animals:

Badger Grey Squirrel Hedgehog Fox Barn Owl Rabbit

Avoid private property/land unless you have the landowner's permission.

Be careful not to disturb wildlife or destroy habitats.

Watch out for stinging insects, brambles and nettles

British animals

Homes, habits and habitats



Badger

Favourite food: worms (80% of its diet)
Also eats: bugs and slugs, fruit and nuts, eggs and small mammals
Home: Underground burrow called a sett
Habitat: Mainly woodland (or places with lots of worms)
Young are called cubs
Usually out at night - nocturnal

Grey Squirrel

Favourite food:



nuts, acorns and seeds
Also eats: flowers, pine cones and eggs
Home: a nest in a tree called a drey
Habitat: woodland, places with trees
Young are called juveniles or kittens

Usually out in the day - diurnal
Not a native species
Introduced to Britain in the 1800s
Originally from North America



Hedgehog

Favourite food: beetles, slugs and worms
Also eats: eggs
Home: a sheltered nest of leaves in hedges and woodland edges
Habitat: varied – woodland, farmland, parks and gardens
Young are called hoglets
Hibernates in winter
Usually out at night - nocturnal

Make a small hole in your fence (13x13cm) to let hedgehogs roam between gardens



Fox

Favourite food: small mammals
Also eats: beetles, worms, fruit and berries
Home: underground burrow called a den, sometimes called a lair, earth or covert
Habitat: Almost everywhere
Young are called cubs or kits
Usually out at night - nocturnal
Top of the woodland food chain



Barn Owl

Favourite food: small mammals
Parts they can't digest (fur and bones) are coughed up as owl pellets
You can see what an owl has eaten by looking at an owl pellet
Habitat: Open countryside and farmland
Young are called owlets
Usually hunt at night - nocturnal
Almost silent flight and a high-pitched screech



Rabbit

Favourite food: fresh green plants
Also eats: 80% of their own poo!
Home: underground burrow – a collection of burrows is called a warren
Habitat: almost everywhere
Young are called bunnies or kittens
Most active mornings and evenings - crepuscular