



Section 5 ACTIVITIES & WORKSHEETS



WORKSHEET 1 Habitat mapping

Whether you are simply looking to familiarise yourselves with your surrounding environment or considering to care for it, compiling a **habitat map** of the area is a great starting point.

A **habitat map** shows the geographic distribution of different habitats and species within a particular area.

The purpose of a habitat map

Before you start, ask yourself the following questions; what is the purpose for the habitat map? What improvements would you like to see around your school in relation to biodiversity? How might these improvements benefit your local environment? For example, are you looking to increase the levels of biodiversity in the school or local area? Are you looking to help protect a particular species or preserve an area of natural beauty for example, the oak tree in the corner of the school yard? Are you simply interested in what surrounds you?

Preparation – in the classroom

You may wish to consider the issues below before you start mapping:

- How might you measure the area and do I make my map more accurate?
- What level of detail do I need?
- Could I create a collage and use recycled materials to create the final map?

Next

- Divide the students into groups depending on their age and ability
- Each group should be given a sheet of paper and clipboard to lean on
- Before mapping the area decide on codes and symbols to represent what you might find before you begin mapping the grounds. For example, decide on symbols for the trees, hedgerows, concrete area etc. The codes and symbols and what they represent should be outlined on the side of the page
- Mark in the boundaries of the school grounds before you begin mapping

Note: You will already be very familiar with your school grounds. However, if you decide to venture further afield please visit the Green-Schools website for further details on how to create a habitat map of an area outside your school grounds. Furthermore, if you are simply creating a habitat map of your school grounds feel free to come up with your own codes and symbols. However, if you are mapping areas outside your school, the Fossitt habitat classification system is recognised as the national standard. Visit <http://irishbutterflymonitoringscheme.biodiversityireland.ie/> - Click on 'Resources' and go to 'Fossitt habitat classification'.

Write up a **list** of what you will need to bring with you.

Each group should bring with them:

- Instructions
- Notebook and clipboard
- Pencils, pens, markers
- Camera if possible
- Your list of codes and symbols

Outside

- **Walk** the area once before you begin mapping
- **Record** the weather/date/exact location on you data sheets
- Begin mapping by marking out the school building itself, any paved areas, green areas, football pitch or playing field, marking the boundaries as you go
- Wherever possible, identify the dominant species in each of the habitat units mapped and record these on the map using the chosen **species codes** (letter codes to represent the species present) or use the common name for the species.
- Mark any areas or features of special concern or of conservation interest on the map using target symbols. **Target symbols** should be recorded and numbered while habitat mapping your area, see example list below. Number each target symbol and enter a corresponding numbered target note into a notebook. Target symbols can be denoted on your map with the following symbol •

Sample List:

1. Litter hotspot
 2. Fly-tipping
 3. Potential Hazard
 4. Rocky outcrop covered with various lichen species
 5. Rabbit
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Follow up (work as a group or individually)

1. Construct a full colour habitat map of the school grounds
2. Add codes for the habitat units and the dominant species using **species codes** or their common names
3. Add target symbols and accompanying notes (annotating your map with brief notes)

