

# The River of Life

## Lower Key Stage 2



### Summary

Using the environment of the River Thames and its floodplain, pupils will make systematic and careful observations to record and classify a variety of living things.

Pupils will identify the suitability of animals for living in their environment, and recognise that a change in the environment can sometimes cause problems for living things.

Pupils will also investigate food chains and feeding relationships between different living things.

### Workshop Contents

#### **Education Centre (Museum Tutor Led)**

- An introduction on the characteristics of living things, groups of vertebrates and invertebrates and food chains.
- A carousel of activities where pupils working in groups of four or five will do the following:-
  - a) identify observable external features to group different types of vertebrates and invertebrates
  - b) group plants and animals according to what they eat and use appropriate food chain terminology
  - c) observe birds' feet and beaks to help identify the type of habitats they are most suited to and the different food they might eat
  - d) group animals (vertebrates and invertebrates), plants (flowering, non-flowering), and fungi

#### ***River Walk (Museum Tutor led) If you have previously booked a boat trip, it will replace this session***

- A walk along the tow path where pupils will work in groups to identify and record a variety of river birds and their behaviours. The recording sheet can be used as a Bingo Card and/or pupils can score points for the different birds and behaviours they identify. This usually provides an element of competition between the groups.
- **Food Chain Game.** Each child is given a card with an image of a plant or animal. The pupils take on the identity of different members of various food chains, and they have to link up the other four or five members of their food chain, based on what they eat and what eats them. Again, there is a competitive element to this activity.
- **Bird Beak Game.** *(Please note pumpkin seeds are used in this activity.)*
- The class will also visit Cold Bath stream and discuss why there are no water voles living there, although it is a perfect environment for them.

### **Galleries (Teacher led)**

- The Museum provides challenge cards to reinforce the workshop activities and help pupils to understand how environmental change can sometimes pose dangers to living things.
- Tasks can be completed individually, in pairs or in small groups.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Pupils will work scientifically using careful observations of living things which live in, on or near the River Thames to group, sort, classify and draw conclusions, including the use of simple keys.
- Pupils will recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways.
- Pupils will use classification keys and different criteria to group identify and name a variety of living things.
- Pupils will recognise that environments can change and can sometimes pose dangers to living things.
- Pupils will recognise that living things have adaptations which are suited to their environment.
- Pupils will construct a variety of food chains and understand the associated terminology.

### **Equipment**

#### **Equipment provided by the Museum**

- Clipboards

#### **Equipment to be brought by the school**

- Paper and pencils
- Waterproof clothing and shoes for the outdoor activity
- Photocopied Bird Bingo sheets, both sides (1 game card per student)

### **Follow-Up Ideas**

- A minibeast survey of different parts of the school grounds
- Pupils make their own keys to identify plants and animals
- Pupils investigate food chains of a variety of animals that live in different habitats
- Pupils identify a range of plants and animal adaptations

**Large print versions of this and all teachers' and pupils' materials are available. Please ask when booking.**

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**Game 1**

**Bird Bingo!**

See how many of these birds, behaviours and features you can spot from the tow path. When you see one, cross it off on your chart. If every square in a row or column or diagonal is crossed off you have a full house!

**Game 2**

**Count the Birdy Points**

Seeing an example of a different water bird or water bird behaviour will score you points. You can only score points for the same bird or same behaviour once. Add the points up at the end of the game and see if you can beat a score of **55!** (The point scores are in brackets)

**Total Score:**

<p><b>Preening</b> (smoothing and cleaning feathers) (3)</p> 	<p>Gull (3)</p> 	<p><b>Quacking</b> (1)</p> 	<p>Canada goose (1)</p> 	<p><b>Taking off or landing</b> (3)</p> 
<p>Tufted duck (4)</p> 	<p><b>Baby birds</b> (4)</p> 	<p>Greylag goose (4)</p> 	<p><b>Swimming</b> (1)</p> 	<p>Female mallard duck (1)</p> 
<p><b>Drinking or feeding</b> (3)</p> 	<p>Farmyard duck (3)</p> 	<p><b>Heron (8)</b></p> 	<p>Egyptian goose (4)</p> 	<p><b>Diving</b> (3)</p> 
<p>Mute Swan (5)</p> 	<p>Cormorant(5)</p> 	<p><b>On nest (4)</b></p> 	<p><b>Flying (1)</b></p> 	<p>Coot (3)</p> 
<p><b>Empty nest</b> (1)</p> 	<p>Great-crested grebe (5)</p> 	<p><b>Being aggressive</b> (4)</p> 	<p>Male mallard duck (1)</p> 	<p><b>With other birds</b> (1)</p> 

# Ducking and Diving!!



Choose a common water bird, watch it carefully for a while and then record some information about it.

What colours are the feathers?

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Write down three things the bird is doing.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

How big is your bird compared to a loaf of bread?

- 1) Smaller
- 2) Same size
- 3) Larger
- 4) Much larger

Is the bird alone, in pairs or with a group of birds?

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Where is the bird?

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