



Water habitats

Mapping water habitats is part of the *Mapping your site* activities, enabling you to explore and map the habitats your site currently offers for nature. Understanding your starting point is really important and will allow you to measure any nature gains you achieve when you start making enhancements to your site. Mapping water habitats is one of eight habitat mapping sessions in this unit of learning.

Before mapping any water habitats, the introductory activity has been designed to support learners in identifying types of water bodies, allowing them to answer the questions in the *water flowchart* accurately.

These activities can also be used as standalone activities, promoting a positive connection with nature.

It is essential to prioritise safety when engaging in activities around water. Please be aware that water environments carry specific risks and refer to guidance from your area health and safety consultant, such as CLEAPSS.

Teaching time

60 Minutes

Learning outcomes

To learn about different kinds of water bodies and their benefits for nature and people.

To identify learn to identify reeds and some of their uses.

To understand their role and contribution to mapping the habitats on their site as part of the National Education Nature Park.

Step by step

1. Divide learners into small groups (3 or 4 is a good number for this activity) and give them each a set of *Reed Uses* cards.
2. Give the group 10 minutes to read through the different uses on each card and order them by how useful they think they are. Remind the learners that there is no right answer, but they must listen carefully to each other to come to a consensus.
3. Use the final 5 minutes to ask groups to share and compare the order of their cards, justifying their decisions to the class. (You might prompt your class by asking them to think about how beneficial the uses are to humans, to animals, to the environment, and which uses are more sustainable).

Green Skills



Suitable for

Key Stage 1
Key Stage 2
Key Stage 3
Key Stage 4

Location

Indoors and outdoors

Season

Spring
Summer
Autumn
Winter

What you'll need

A printed map of your site

A tablet, laptop or desktop PC to access the online Habitat Mapper tool

Reed uses worksheet

Key vocabulary

Reedbed
Aquatic



Step by step (continued)

4. After completing this activity, head outdoors to an area of your site that holds water for at least two months of the year. There doesn't need to be water there at the time of the activity.

5. Learners can use the *Water flowchart* to decide which type of water habitat you have.

6. Educators can work together with learners to add each area of water habitat to your printed map or (if you have internet connectivity outdoors) directly on to the online Nature Park map using the Habitat mapper tool.

7. Repeat this for each separate area of water on your site, until you have mapped them all.

8. Back indoors as a whole class, transfer the habitats from the printed map on to the online Nature Park map using the Habitat Mapper tool, if you haven't already done so.

Reflection

Encourage learners to reflect on the water habitats present in their surroundings. Consider whether these habitats primarily serve human needs or wildlife. Discuss the significance of water sources for nature - drinking, bathing, breeding (e.g. frogs), or living an entirely aquatic lifestyle. Explore the role of waterbodies in supporting biodiversity and sustaining life.

You could also reflect on the locations of the water habitats on your site and whether they contribute to managing water flow and limiting flooding - would rain water flow into them after a heavy storm for example? Discuss the potential impact of water habitats in mitigating the effects of climate change and extreme weather.



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