

Freshwater Habitat Activities

Things you may need:

- Sieves
 - Nets
 - Ice cream tubs/yoghurt pots
 - Notebook and pencil
 - White plastic tray
 - Jam jars
 - Plastic gloves
 - Plastic spoons
 - Wellington boots
 - Identification key
 - Hand lenses
 - Pond dipping
-
- Approach the pond quietly as you may see birds, frogs or mammals around the edge. Spend some time looking for activity on and below the surface.
 - Put some clean pond water in a pot or tray.
 - Use sieves for surface skimming and nets for deeper dipping. Ice cream or yoghurt cartons will do if you don't have either of these.
 - Collect creatures from different parts of the pond, e.g. the surface, from submerged plants, along the stems of emerging plants at the edge of the pond and along the bottom of the pond. Sweep with your sieve/net firmly, quickly and in straight lines.
 - Very carefully put the creatures in clean water by turning the net inside out into the tray/pot or gently lifting them out with a plastic spoon.
 - Don't hold any creatures with your fingers - in case you hurt them or they hurt you. Make sure you always keep them in water and in the shade and don't forget to keep carnivores away from other creatures!
 - Return the creatures to their natural habitat as quickly as possible.
 - You could try other places in the pond too, e.g. shaded and light areas. Also try dipping at different times of the year or in different ponds.

Pond pollution

- How clean is the water in the pond? Pond dip, as above, in different areas of the pond, observing and identifying the creatures you find. Certain species can only survive in clean water, and others can survive in much dirtier ponds. So these will give you a good indication of how clean the water is.

Examples are:

- Stonefly nymph, mayfly nymph, flatworm and mussel = very clean water
- Caddis fly larvae, freshwater shrimp = quite clean water
- Water louse, bloodworm, leech, great pond snail, water boatman = little bit of pollution
- Rat-tailed maggot, sludge worm, mosquito larvae = Dirty water (NB if you only find these last species then the water is badly polluted)