

Ground rules

At the beginning of any topic about animals, it is worth working with your class to develop a code of conduct.

If you are going to study animals in their natural habitat outside the classroom, you need to think about the animals and their wellbeing and the children and their safety.

Sampling from freshwater

You can make a simple pond periscope by cutting the top and bottom off a large plastic bottle. Cover the bottom of the bottle with clear plastic and seal it carefully with tape so it is waterproof.

Make sure you have made any sharp edges safe.

If you feel that it is necessary to remove animals from the pond, carefully scoop up the animals with the water and look at them in a shallow tray by the side of the pond. Make the conditions in the tray as much as possible like the pond.

Avoid using nets because the net itself and the handling needed to collect animals from nets can hurt them.

Remember to take into account health and safety recommendations if you are going to ask the children to work near water.

Seeing animals at the seaside

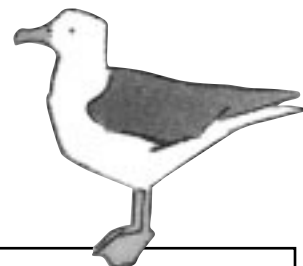
The seashore is a fantastic habitat to investigate. Make sure you time your visit to coincide with low tide. You can get tide information from seaside newsagents or the local paper.

Again health and safety concerns should be carefully considered.

When looking at rockpools encourage children to be patient and look rather than disturb the water.

Whatever habitat you are in – look for signs of animal life as well as for animals themselves. Look for half-eaten food, droppings, fur, feathers and other clues animals have left behind. Remember that humans are animals too!

Use the cartoon strip opposite to help the children draw up some dos and don'ts before you begin studying any animal habitats in depth.



Here are some simple dos and don'ts for the children to think about:

- Do care for all animals – however big or small.
- Do find out about animals' needs – so you can help look after them while you are learning about them.
- Do be quiet – animals are frightened by loud noises.
- Do move slowly so you don't frighten the animals.
- Don't handle animals directly if you can avoid it.
- Do leave animals where you find them – they like living in their homes.
- Do put everything – like logs, stones and leaves – carefully back where you found it.
- Do stay safe – don't put yourself in danger.
- Do wash your hands after working outside.



Remember to take any litter home with you and recycle it.