

## **Session Plan – Hickling Habitat Trail (KS1 & KS2)**

**This session lasts one hour and is suitable for a maximum of fifteen children.**



### **Learning Objectives**

- Children understand that natural landscapes change over time
- Children understand that human uses of landscapes have shaped them through history
- Children understand that each organism has specific habitat requirements and that some have become rare through habitat loss
- Children understand that in the case of rare habitats they often need to be managed to prevent them changing

### **Personal Development Objectives**

- Children feel empowered to contribute to the conservation of natural landscapes

### **Curriculum Links**

KS1 – Geography

Pupils should be taught:

- 3a. to identify and describe what places are like
- 3c. to recognise how places have become the way they are and how they are changing

KS1 – Science

Pupils should be taught:

- 5a. to find out about the different kinds of plants and animals in the local environment
- 5b. to identify similarities between local environments and ways in which these affect animals and plants found there
- 5c. to care for the environment

KS2 - Geography

Pupils should be taught:

- 2b. to use appropriate fieldwork techniques
- 3a. to identify and describe what places are like
- 3e. to identify how and why places change

## KS2 – Science

- 4b. how locally occurring plants and animals can be identified and assigned to groups
- 5a. about ways in which living things and the environment need protection
- 5b. about the different plants and animals found in different habitats

## **Safety considerations**

Refer to relevant risk assessments for the site and session.

## **Introduction**

Explain to the children that they will be visiting an important nature reserve. In order not to disturb wildlife and other visitors they must behave respectfully and stay quiet at all times. Explain that they will be visiting several habitats which are home to rare creatures and which are managed by NWT to help these creatures survive.

## **Freshwater Grazing Marsh and Fen**

Explain how drainage and modern agriculture have almost completely removed wet grassland from our landscape. Explain that grazing animals prevent succession to scrub, churn up grass and mud, and create good conditions for insects, making the habitat better for nesting waders and wintering waterfowl. Explain that NWT Hickling Broad the marshes are grazed year-round by our own koniks and during the summer by cattle belonging to local farmers.

## **Reed-bed**

Discuss the colonisation by reed of open water – wind pollination, seed dispersal by wind, pioneer community. Explain that under traditional landscape use there were many areas of reed-bed so specialist species, such as bittern, bearded tit and marsh harrier, were widespread. As a result of drainage and the decline of reed-harvesting, today there are few reed-beds. NWT manages reed-beds by cutting them to mimic traditional harvest and is involved in the creation of new reed-beds.

## **Open water Habitats**

Discuss the importance of open water habitats in the broad, the drains and the scrapes for species such as otter, water vole, kingfisher, ducks and dragonflies. When appropriate explain the formation and history of the Broads and their internationally important status for conservation.

## **Scrapes**

If time allows go into a hide and discuss the importance of scrapes for breeding birds such as lapwings and bitterns and for wintering waterfowl. Also discuss the work involved in maintaining the hides, the boardwalk and the visitor centre and the benefits the reserve has for the local community.

## **Conclusion**

Summarise what the children have learned about the habitats at Hickling and the rare creatures which inhabit them. Repeat how important nature conservation is for everyone's wellbeing. Encourage them to express what they feel about NWT Hickling Broad and about nature conservation.

Updated 5/4/10