

Session Plan – Holme 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:

- 3a. to identify and describe what places are like
- 3e. to identify how and why places change

KS2 – Science

Pupils should be taught

- 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.

Sand Dunes

Explain to the children how sand dunes are formed and colonised by wildlife, which special creatures live in them and how rare they have become. Explain the history of the reserve and how we graze sheep in the dune slacks to promote the right conditions for rare plants and animals. Introduce the flying flock and its work on NWT nature reserves all over the county.

Open water Habitats

Discuss the importance of open water habitats here for species such as water vole, avocet, wintering waterfowl, natterjack toad and dragonflies. Explain the management history of the reserve including the historic change from saltmarsh to fresh water marsh.

Freshwater Grazing Marsh

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. The cattle belong to neighbouring farmers but are on the reserve by agreement during spring and summer. The koniks belong to NWT.

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. Drainage and loss of reed-harvesting mean that today there are few reed-beds. NWT manages reed-bed by cutting them to mimic traditional harvest and is involved in the creation of new reed-beds.

Scrapes

If time allows and the children are not also doing Brilliant Birds, you can go into the hides to see the scrapes and discuss their importance for breeding waders such as avocets and lapwings and for large numbers of 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 Holme 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 Holme Dunes and about nature conservation.

Updated 6/4/10