

Session Plan – Sea Dipping (KS1 & KS2)

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



Learning Objectives

- Children understand that the natural world around them holds a diversity of fascinating organisms
- Children understand that organisms' bodies are adapted to their lifestyles
- Children understand that each organism needs an appropriate habitat in which to live
- Children understand that our lives are linked to the lives of other organisms and their habitats
- Children understand that our actions affect other organisms and their habitats

Personal Development Objectives

- Children work in groups and learn to wait their turn
- Children learn to assess risk and behave accordingly
- Children learn responsibility towards other organisms

Curriculum Links

KS1 – Life processes and living things

Pupils should be taught:

- 1b. that animals move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce
- 1c. to relate life processes to animals and plants found in the local environment
- 4b. to group living things according to observable similarities and differences
- 5a. to find out about the different kinds of plants and animals in the local environment

KS2 – Life processes and living things

Pupils should be taught:

- 1c. to make links between life processes in familiar animals and plants and the environments in which they are found
- 4c. that the variety of plants and animals makes it important to identify them and assign them to groups
- 5. all points covering adaptation, feeding relationships and micro-organisms

Safety Considerations

Refer to relevant risk assessments for session and site. In particular bear the following points in mind:

- Children are encouraged to pick up certain materials from the beach. When doing so they must not pick up materials of human origin and they must wash hands before eating. They may only handle organisms when told to do so and how they are told to do so.
- Children must clearly understand that they may never be closer to the sea than the leader and must always be at least two metres from the water's edge.
- Adults accompanying the group must ensure that children stay in a close group at all times and listen very carefully to the leader as communication on the beach can be very difficult.
- Leaders should take care to watch the tide as it can rise fast. The session should only ever be offered on a falling tide, finishing at the point when the tide turns.

Resources

Dipping net, white trays, identification charts

Introduction

Explain to the group the importance of the Wash as habitat for wildlife. The Wash supports 1,000 common seals and hundreds of thousands of migratory waders. These higher levels of the food chain are sustained by vast supplies of smaller organisms, some of which can be seen by dipping in the sea at low tide. Sea dipping is a great way of learning about creatures we would otherwise never see.

Activities

This session requires two leaders, one on the beach and one in the sea. At no point should children be allowed in the sea.

Walk slowly and carefully down the beach observing the organisms and their remains which are found on the beach, identifying them and explaining their lifestyles to the children. Explain to the children that seeing remains on the beach can be a very good way of finding out which organisms are living in the sea.

On reaching the shore, repeat to the children that they must stay two metres from the water's edge. Explain that the tide is currently low and prompt a discussion of what the tide is, how it happens and what effects it has on the lives of the organisms living in the Wash. One of the leaders should wade carefully into the sea, while the other stays on the beach and fills the white trays with sea-water. The person dipping regularly returns to the white trays with the catch. The two leaders identify the organisms caught, talk about the groups they belong to, explain their lifestyles and discuss how their bodies are adapted for their lifestyles. Allow children time to use identification charts and work out what some of the organisms for themselves.

Try to talk in general terms about the pressures and dangers facing organisms which live in tidal areas. Talk about the conservation of the Wash and the threats which face it and which face marine areas in general. Talk about the importance of marine habitats and coastal areas to humans and our responsibility to look after them. When appropriate discuss the Marine Act.

Conclusion

Ask the children what was the most interesting creature they saw and why. Ask them what threats they think their favourite creature faces and what they think should be done to protect the sea. Ask them how they think they can get involved with marine conservation.

Updated 26/2/10