



Mapping water

Water habitats can take many forms, and may be human-made or natural, supporting a range of plants and other wildlife. This session will guide learners through an introductory activity and discussion, supporting them to identify types of water bodies before using a flowchart to identify the exact habitat, which will form an important piece of your overall Nature Park map.

It is essential to prioritise safety when engaging in activities around water. Please be aware that water environments carry specific risks and refer to guidance from your area's health and safety consultant, such as CLEAPSS.

Teaching time

up to 60 minutes

Learning outcomes

- describe some of the ways reeds are used by humans
- use a branching key to classify different types of water habitats

Step by step

Ask learners to work in small groups (three or four works well) and give them each a set of Reed uses cards.

Give the group 10 minutes to read through the different uses on each card and order them by how useful they think they are. Remind the learners that there is no right answer, but they must listen carefully to each other to come to a consensus.

Use the final 5 minutes to ask groups to share and compare the order of their cards, justifying their decisions to the class. (You might prompt your class by asking them to think about how beneficial the uses are to humans, to animals, to the environment, and which uses are more sustainable).

After completing this activity, head to an area of your site that holds water for at least two months of the year. There doesn't need to be water there at the time of the activity. Depending on how much support learners need, if you have multiple areas of water on your site you may wish to ask each group to investigate a different area – this will help you to map multiple areas in one session.

Each group can use the Water habitat flowchart, answering each question to reach a decision on which habitat they have. Repeat this for each area of water on your site, until you have identified them all.

If using a printed map of your site: ask learners to draw and label the habitat they have just identified on the map. If using the Habitat Mapper tool on a mobile device: educators and learners can work together to accurately draw the habitat on the map.

Green Skills



Suitable for

Key Stage 1
Key Stage 2
Key Stage 3
Key Stage 4

Location

Indoors
Outdoors

Season

Spring
Summer
Autumn
Winter

What you'll need

Printed flowcharts and worksheets

Clipboards

Drawing materials

Tablet, laptop, or computer to access the online Habitat Mapper tool

Printed map of your site, if you do not intend to use the Habitat Mapper outdoors

Key vocabulary

Reedbed

Aquatic



Step by step (continued)

If you used a printed map, remember to add the habitats identified to the Nature Park map using the Habitat Mapper tool when you are back in the classroom. This is a really important step to ensure your site and your observations contribute to real-world, groundbreaking research by the Natural History Museum into nature recovery.

Reflection

Encourage learners to reflect on the water habitats present in their surroundings. Consider whether these habitats primarily serve human needs or wildlife. Discuss the significance of water sources for nature - drinking, bathing, breeding (e.g. frogs), or living an entirely aquatic lifestyle. Explore the role of waterbodies in supporting biodiversity and sustaining life.

You could also reflect on the locations of water habitats on your site and whether they contribute to managing water flow and limiting flooding - would rain water flow into them after a heavy storm, for example? Discuss the potential impact of water habitats in mitigating the effects of climate change and extreme weather.



National Education Nature Park



For more quality-assured learning resources visit www.educationnaturepark.org.uk

Led by



Natural History Museum

With



RHS

Working with



esri UK
THE SCIENCE OF WHERE™

Commissioned by



Department for Education

Partners



Learning through Landscapes



Manchester Metropolitan University



NBN Trust
Making data work for nature



Royal Geographical Society with IBG
Advancing geography and geographical learning



UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

THE ROYAL SOCIETY