

Hedgerows and Wildlife

Hedgerows are a very important habitat for wildlife and plants . They provide a home, food and shelter for many birds and animals.

Walk along a hedgerow in summer and you will see and hear lots of birds and insects along with many flowers to see and smell. In winter when there are no leaves on the bushes , you may be able to see oldbird nests.

There are over 500, 000 kilometres of hedgerow in Britain. That is a very large habitat!

Hedgerows can also be thought of as 'wildlife roads' along which animals and birds can travel safely between other habitats.

Different features of a hedgerow will be important to different species. The more variety of flowering plants and trees there are in a hedge then the more types of animals will live there or visit the hedge.

Because plants flower and produce seeds and fruit at different times there is always food for animals and birds.

Typical plants that make up a good hedge are hawthorn, field maple, hazel and blackthorn.

In spring the flowers of the hawthorn tree are visited by insects such as butterflies collecting nectar. In autumn and winter their fruit are food for mice and birds such as blackbirds and song thrushes. Their rough bark is home to many invertebrates such as spiders. The blackthorn is the food plant of the brimstone butterfly.

Older hedges may contain dead wood and leaf litter at their base where invertebrates and small mammals such as hedgehogs and mice can live.

A few taller trees in a hedge can provide a home for animals such as owls and bats.

The hedgerow habitat activity that you have done shows just a few of the many animals and plants that can be found in a hedgerow.

Do some research of your own and find out more about some of the plants and animals that can be found in a hedge.