

PREPARATION

PROPS Ball of string, elastic, or Velcro

The following Heathland Species Cards illustrate the plants and animals of the heathland habitat, which include plants (primary producer), herbivores (primary consumer) and carnivores (secondary consumers) and the sun.

Cut out and laminate the wildlife cards on the following sheets. Attach string so cards can be worn around the neck or head, or attach elastic and Velcro to create headbands.

INTRODUCTION

Introduce how we get our energy (from food) and how plants get energy (from sun).

Explain plants and creatures are linked together through a food chain.

ACTIVITIES

Food Chain Activity



Before the activity, sort the cards into separate food chains.

Give out 4 or 5 cards of a food chain to the same amount of children. Ask them to get themselves in the correct order of the food chain, the rest of the class watching can help.



Food Web Activity



Introduce that all living things are connected to each other and that small insects and tiny plant life are just as valuable to us as the more obvious creatures. The food web demonstrates how we are all interconnected.

Give each child a card to wear around their neck. The children stand in a circle with an adult in the middle wearing the sun card. 'The Sun' player will also hold a ball of string.

The sun passes the string to show the flow of energy through each element of the food chain; from the sun to a plant, from plant to a herbivore and onto a carnivore.

When the food chain reaches the top carnivore, the string is passed back to the sun and another food chain is linked up with the string. This can be built up in a series of food chains, returning to the sun when the top carnivore is reached to start a new chain. This continues until everyone is part of the web.

Not all the species fit together in a food web. Can the children spot the 'wild' cards?

Now demonstrate the fragile balance of nature. Ask the class what are the threats wildlife may face in the heathland habitat. Use the 'threats' cards. Discuss with the class what the impact might be on the heathland food web from that particular threat.

- EXAMPLE**
- Dogs off leads disturbing ground nesting birds.
 - Wild fires destroying plants and the creatures that feed off them or make their homes there.
 - Litter or other pollution eg oil being dumped on the heath.

Now act out the impact of that threat. When each link in the chain is affected they should 'die'. Gently pull on the string as you bend to crouch down. People holding the string either side of the food chain will feel the pull, and they too will crouch. This continues until everyone is crouching, representing that all the wildlife is affected and could, potentially, die.

Can any escape and safely move away?

How can we behave on the heath, to ensure these creatures remain safe, can survive and thrive?

- EXAMPLE**
- Don't light fires, keep dogs under control, and don't drop litter.



silver-studded
blue



I get my energy from heather nectar.

stone chat



I get my energy from insects, seeds and fruit.

adder



I get my energy from mice, lizards and frogs.

Dartford
warbler



I get my energy from spiders, beetles and butterflies.

nightjar



I get my energy from moths, spiders and beetles.

potter wasp



I get my energy from heather nectar.



slow worm



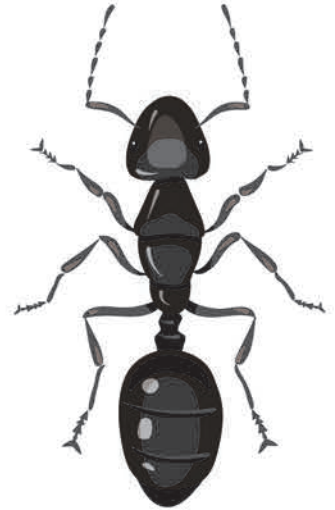
I get my energy from slugs, worms and spiders.

harvest mouse



I get my energy from seeds and fruit.

black ant



I get my energy from fleas, seeds and fruit.

cinnabar moth caterpillar



I get my energy from the leaves and flowers of Ragwort.

labyrinth spider



I get my energy from flies and small insects.

minotaur beetle



I get my energy from droppings and dung.



bog bush cricket



I get my energy from heather.

fly



I get my energy from rotten vegetation.

cattle dung



I help some plants and animals to grow.

ragwort



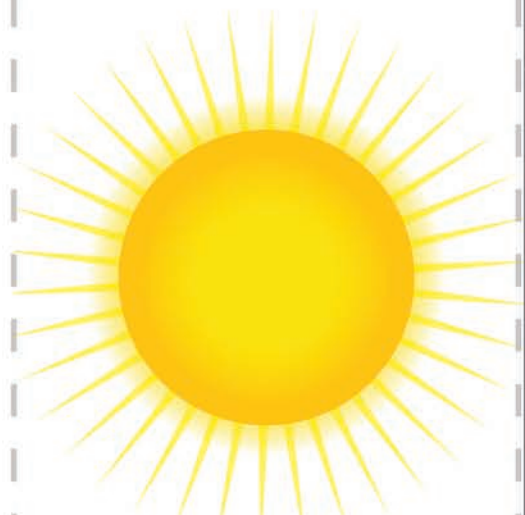
I get my energy from the sun.

bracken



I get my energy from the sun.

sun



I get my energy from explosions on my surface.



cottongrass



I get my energy from the sun.

heather



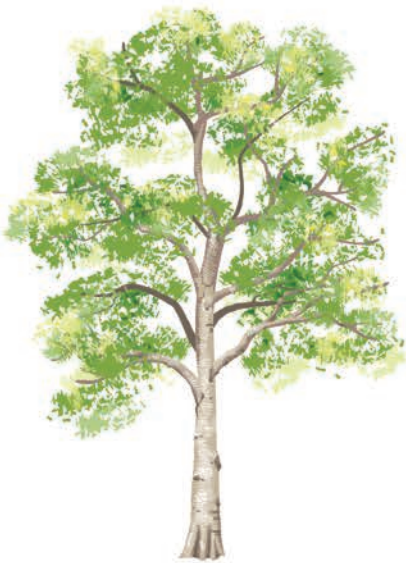
I get my energy from the sun.

gorse



I get my energy from the sun.

birch



I get my energy from the sun.

fly agaric fungi



I get my energy from dead animals and plants.

sundew



I get my energy from the sun and trapped insects.



emperor moth



I get my energy from heather and blackthorn nectar.

common lizard



I get my energy from insects, spiders and worms.

buzzard



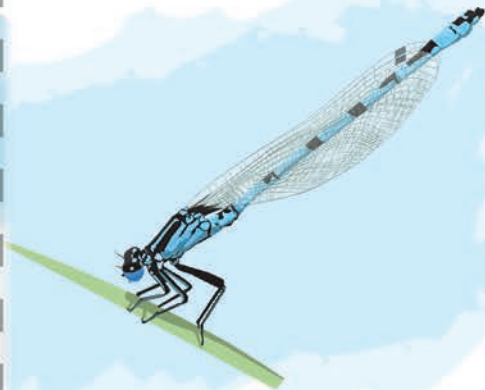
I get my energy from small birds and mice.

hobby



I get my energy from insects and small birds.

southern damselfly



I get my energy from small insects.

greater horseshoe bat



I get my energy from moths, beetles and flies.



dog poo



fire



litter



dogs disturbing
ground-nesting
birds

