

happenin' heaths

This programme contains suggestions fieldwork activities for Keystage 3 and 4 pupils

Visitor surveys

Devise and undertake a visitor survey of your chosen heathland site.

- Plan your questions carefully. What would you like to know? E.g. the different reasons for visiting, the distance the visitor has travelled and frequency of visits. How aware of the heathland habitat is the visitor?
- Build a visitor profile (age, gender, etc.).
- Consider how many responses you need to obtain a representative sample.
- Consider the type of questions you could use in your survey and the type of responses that will be useful e.g. open-ended questions, yes/no questions and tick box responses.
- Consider how you will eventually present and analyse your data as this may help in your question choice.

Counting populations

It is very difficult to measure the number of plants and animals that live in a community, but taking a sample can give you an estimate. Random sampling is important to avoid bias as far as possible.

- Use a **transect** (a straight line, along which you can take samples at uniform intervals) to measure a change in the plant populations in an area. Transects are used when abiotic factors (non living factors such as rainfall, temperature and soil) vary.

Estimate the population of a certain plant species using the frequency it occurs along your transect.

Can you use transects to identify areas of erosion on any heathland sites?

- Use a **quadrat** (a frame of a known size, usually 1m² divided into 100 sections) to estimate a population size in an area, for example the number of heather plants in a certain area.
Estimate population according to density (organisms per m² quadrat), frequency (number of quadrat as that contain the organism) or percentage cover within the quadrat.

Studying ground dwelling insects

For a closer look at ground dwelling insects you may consider using a pit fall trap. Take care to release animals found to their habitat as soon as you can.

- Dig a hole using a trowel or small spade. Place a small container (e.g. plastic cups) buried in the ground so the top is level with the soil. Balance a small board, flat stone or cover, over the cup on a few stones to prevent water getting in. Set traps for a few hours or overnight and compare species found in different locations. You must check traps at least every 24 hours and then remove anything caught.
- Make a list of the different species and numbers you find of each, in a table.

Please note:

It is important to obtain the permission of site managers before visiting a site to carry out fieldwork. Managers can also provide specific information relating to the site, which may help you to plan fieldwork projects. The contact details for site managers can be found in the 'information for teachers' section of this programme.

It may not be possible to undertake all activities at all of the heathland sites indicated on the map. Some are better suited to some investigations than others.



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