

BECOME A MAMMAL DETECTIVE

We have some amazing UK mammals. These animals can often be hard to spot and require a bit of **detective work** to know they're there. Have a go at these activities and let us know what you find:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/my-patch-from-record-lrc>

CHALLENGE 1 - Native or not?

Name each mammal and write down whether or not its a UK native species. You could use books or the internet to help.



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GARDEN EXPLORERS

BECOME A MAMMAL DETECTIVE

CHALLENGE 2 - Think like a garden mammal....

Think about what signs mammals might leave behind. Write some predictions about what you might find in your garden...

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Why do you think we don't see the actual mammals very often? Think about when they come out and how they behave.

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Which areas of your garden do you think are best to look for mammal signs? Draw a map below to illustrate where you'll look:

When being a mammal detective, you need to be... (circle the right answers)

LOUD

CAREFUL

QUIET

QUICK

PATIENT

OBSERVANT



CHALLENGE 3 - Get out and about

Time to get out into the garden and begin your Mammal Detective survey.

Safety first: some mammal signs might not be good to touch! Don't touch anything that looks dirty (such as poo!) and make sure you wash your hands after you've finished. If you're not sure about something, ask an adult.

Be careful: If you find a sign you can pick up, have a look, but return it afterwards - it may be important to the mammal or other animals that it stays there. Be very careful not to disturb or damage any mammal homes like holes or nests.

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Have a walk around and look closely for any mammal signs, here are some ideas of what to look out for:



Footprints

Look in mud or snow. Count the number of toes and look carefully at the shape and size to help with identification



Poo

Look at the size + shape and have a sniff. This will help you identify who did it



Dens + Holes

Look for holes where mammals might live. The size and shape can help tell you what lives there - careful not to disturb anything



Hair or Fur

Think about where this might have got caught. Some mammals have certain colours or patterns which help with identification



Feeding signs

Maybe the mammal has nibbled something and left part of it, like nut shells. Some mammals bite off grass chunks and leave them in piles for later



Runs + paths

Some mammals use the same routes many times, leaving a path, or tunnel in the grass (called a run)

Record what you've found on the next page



BECOME A MAMMAL DETECTIVE

For each sign, draw a picture, label it and write down the details,

Type of sign

Where found?

Size (measure with a ruler)

Who left it? (look at the next page for help)

Type of sign

Where found?

Size (measure with a ruler)

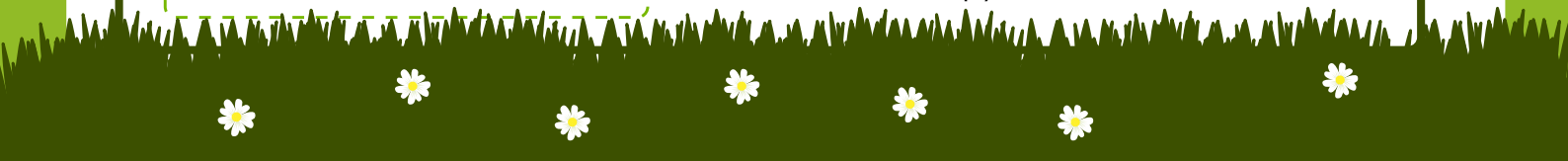
Who left it? (look at the next page for help)

Type of sign

Where found?

Size (measure with a ruler)

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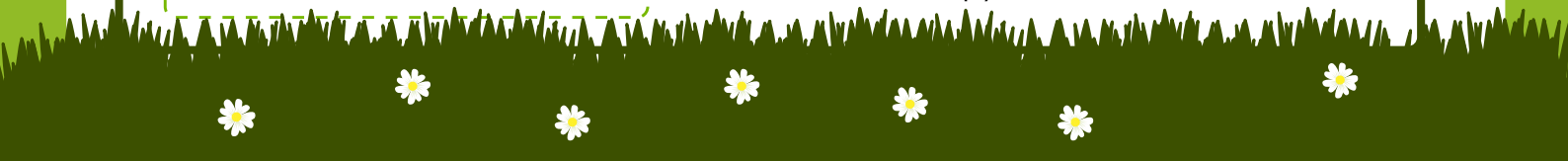
Who left it? (look at the next page for help)

Type of sign

Where found?

Size (measure with a ruler)

Who left it? (look at the next page for help)



CHALLENGE 4 - Identify what you've found

Here are some tips for identifying your mammal signs. You can also find a list of useful links here: http://www.record-lrc.co.uk/c2.aspx?Mod=Article&ArticleID=MyPatch_Links

POO

Pay careful attention to how **big** the poo is. Think about what **size of animal** might have made a poo this size. See if you can spot any **bits of food** in it - thinking about what animals eat may also help. **Have a sniff** (without getting too close!) - some mammals have a certain smell to their poo! For more help, take a look here:

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/how-identify/identify-poo>

FOOTPRINTS

Again, **size is important**. Use what you know about different mammals to think about how big their footprints would be. Count the **number of toes** - this is another important clue. See if you can see any **claw marks** or not. For more help, take a look here: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/natures-home-magazine/birds-and-wildlife-articles/features/animal-tracks/>

DENS and HOLES

Think about **how big** a hole would need to be to allow the mammal into it. Some animals, like badger, make **lots of holes** and some **only make one**. Sometimes it depends if they live in **groups** or not. Have a look around the edge of holes for any **clues** like poo, bedding etc. that might help. Find out more here: <https://www.discoverwildlife.com/how-to/identify-wildlife/how-to-identify-animal-holes/>

HAIR or FUR

Some mammals have **certain coloured fur** that helps you identify them, with others its a bit more tricky. Think about where you found the fur and if there were any **other signs nearby** that might give you a clue. Badger fur is quite distinctive - more information on this here:

<https://www.scottishbadgers.org.uk/badger-surveying.asp>

FEEDING SIGNS

Finding out more about what different mammals **eat** will help you think about what might be left behind. Herbivores might leave **patches in the vegetation** where they've been eating, carnivores might leave **bones**, insectivores might leave **insect wings**. Take a look here for more information:

<https://www.discoverwildlife.com/how-to/identify-wildlife/how-to-identify-wildlife-feeding-signs/>

RUNS and PATHS

The **size of the path** will give you a good idea about what's been using it. Little paths / runs in the grass are quite often made by voles, whereas badgers leave larger paths as they go out foraging and return to their sett.

Don't forget to let add your garden findings to the My Patch project to let us know what you've seen:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/my-patch-from-record-lrc>