

# MEADOW EXPLORER

USE THIS GUIDE TO EXPLORE + INVESTIGATE MEADOW HABITATS

## WHAT IS A MEADOW?

Meadows are species-rich habitats. They are a type of grassland which is maintained by traditional farming practices.

This means that they (tick which is true):

- Are home to many animals and plants
- Are NOT home to many animals or plants
- Need to be left alone by humans to do well
- Need careful help from people like farmers and conservationists



Have a go at these meadow challenges whilst visiting a local meadow...

## NOT JUST 'GRASS'!

Most meadows have lots of grass. But did you know that **not all grass is the same**? We actually have around 600 different types of grass in the UK!

As you walk through the meadow look closely at the grass and see how many different types you can count. Look for differences in the leaves, the colours and the flowers.

Tally of different types of grass seen: .....

Pick one grass and use this space to draw it. Pay close attention to what it looks like + note down where it was growing.



You could try using the internet to identify your grass from your drawing

## STOP + LISTEN...

Stay still and quiet for 5 minutes. Listen carefully, what can you hear?

Are there birds singing? How many different songs can you hear? Any other sounds? Describe what you hear.



RECORD



# MEADOW EXPLORER

## BE A BOTANIST!

A BOTANIST is someone who studies (tick the correct answer):

- Plants
- Animals
- Fungi

Can you find any of these meadow plants?



YELLOW RATTLE

This plant is a 'friendly' parasite! It helps other meadow plants to grow by attacking the roots of grasses. This stops the grasses outcompeting other plants.



BETONY

Here in Cheshire, this plant is our official county flower!



COMMON SPOTTED-ORCHID



CUCKOOFLOWER



MEADOWSWEET



BIRD'S-FOOT-TREFOIL



You might not spot them all at once! Try visiting different times of year and different meadows

Here are some places you could look to help you identify any other plants you find:

Plantlife:

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/plant-fungi-species>

Wildlife Trust:

<https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/spotting-sheets>



# MEADOW EXPLORER

## POLLINATOR COUNT

Find a flowery, sunny patch and spend a few minutes watching to see if any pollinators visit the flowers. Tally how many of each type you see:



### BEES

4 wings  
Often stripy  
Small eyes

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



### BUTTERFLIES + MOTHS

Big, colourful wings  
Tube for a mouth  
6 Legs

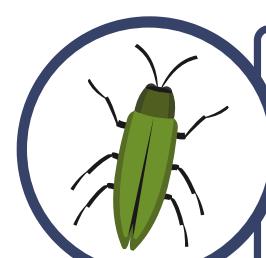
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### FLIES (eg. Hoverflies)

Only 2 wings  
Sometimes stripy  
Large eyes

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### BEETLES

Shiny wing cases  
6 Legs  
Often colourful

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What was the most common type of pollinator? .....

Why do you think pollinators are important? .....

## FLOWER FOLKLORE

Meadow plants are often part of traditional folklore. For example in the past it was believed that betony could keep away goblins and ghosts!

Pick a meadow flower and use your imagination to come up with a story about it.



# MEADOW EXPLORER

## WHO EATS WHO?

Can you sort these meadow animals and plants into where they should go on the food web? Think about who eats what...



SWALLOW



RABBIT



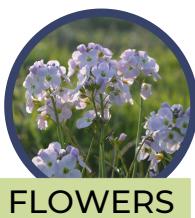
KESTREL



GRASS



FOX



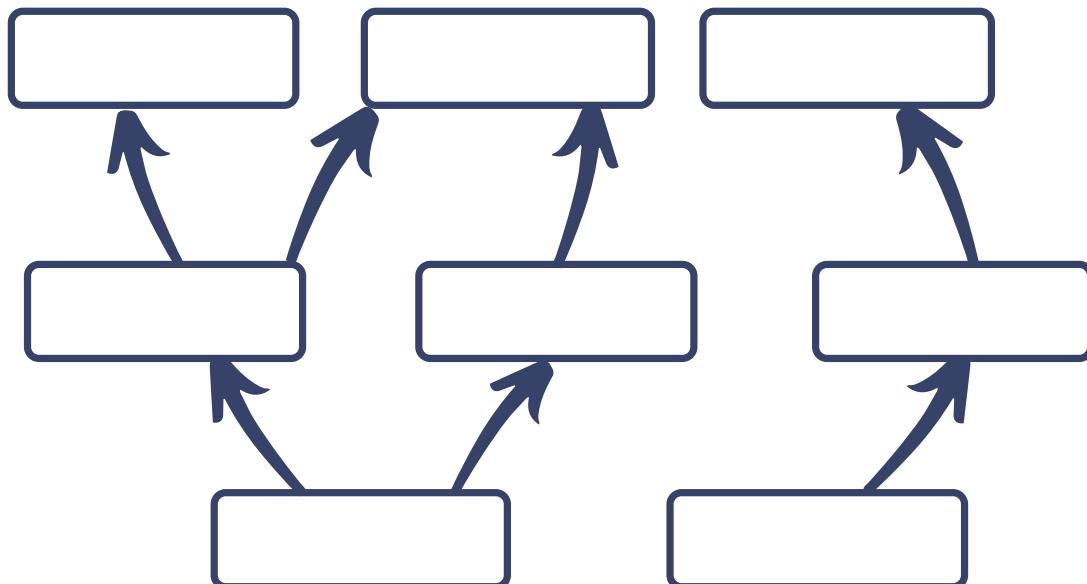
FLOWERS



VOLE



BEE



## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MEADOWS

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk>

<http://coronationmeadows.org.uk/>

<http://www.magnificentmeadows.org.uk/>

## LET US KNOW WHY YOU'VE SEEN

Make a note of the wildlife you spot and where you saw it. We'd love to know what you spotted.

Find out how to send us your sightings:

[http://www.record-lrc.co.uk/c2.aspx?Mod=Article&ArticleID=MyPatch\\_Spotted](http://www.record-lrc.co.uk/c2.aspx?Mod=Article&ArticleID=MyPatch_Spotted)



RECORD!

PHOTOS (c) Chloe Aldridge (grass); Sue Tatman (vole); Roy Lowry (bee)

# MEADOW EXPLORER - ANSWERS

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This means that they:

Are home to many animals and plants ✓

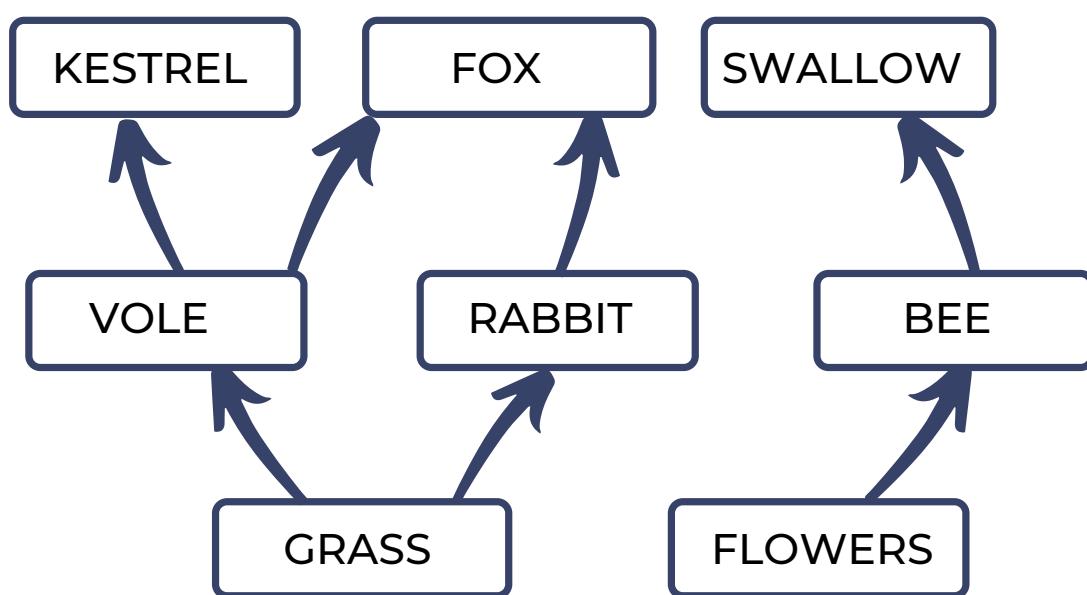
Need careful help from people like farmers and conservationists ✓

'Species-rich' literally means 'rich in species', ie there are many animals and plants that live there. Whilst sometimes wildlife prefers to be left alone, meadow habitats thrive with help from people - cutting the vegetation at certain times of year helps the right plants to grow.

## BE A BOTANIST

A botanist is someone who studies... PLANTS

## WHO EATS WHO?



*In reality there will be many more animals and plants in the food web of a meadow. Also all meadows are different and will have a different group of wildlife living there.*

