

CANAL EXPLORER:

EXPLORING HABITATS

Habitats are the places that plants and animals live. The world is full of lots of different habitats - but what habitats exist around the canal? Let's explore the world on, in and around the waterways!

A **habitat** is a place where animals and plants live. The things that live there are well suited or **adapted** to their **environment**, which makes that habitat the perfect place for them to live. Animals and plants within a habitat rely on one another for **food** and **shelter**.

The waterways are home to lots of different plants and animals. Here are just some of the living things that call the canals home.

Ducks, **moorhens** and **coots** swim around on the water, eating plants and insects.

Duckweed, **lily pads** and **bulrushes** provide food for animals but also shelter for birds, frogs and fish to build their homes and nests. **Algae** floats on top of the water for things to eat.

Fish such as **carp** and **pike** swim in the canals, eating insects and smaller fish.

Frogs and **toads** make their homes near the water's edge where they can hatch their young.

Big birds like **herons** and **kingfishers** catch fish swimming in the water for their dinner.

Insects like **dragonflies**, **spiders**, **pond skaters** and more live around the water.

On the next page you can find an activity that will get you to identify some of these animals and plants - can you name them all?

All of these animals rely on another plant or animal within their **ecosystem** (another word for a habitat or environment) for food. We can use a **food chain** to create a diagram of how these plants and animals relate to one another.

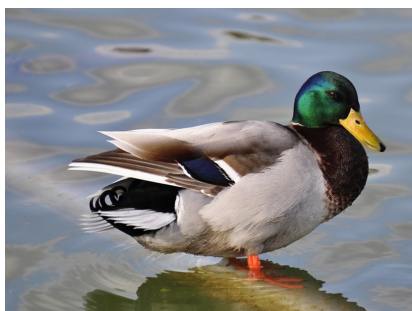
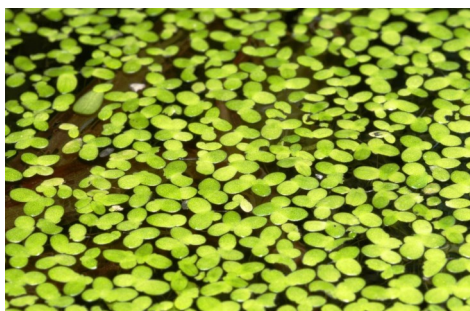
In a food chain, the plants always come first. Animals eat other things for **energy**, so we use arrows to show what direction the energy is travelling within the food chain. Food chains can be small with just two or three living things in them, or big and complicated with lots of living things and the relationships between them shown.

Turn over for some activities to do at home!

Let's identify! Can you work out what all of these plants and animals are called? They're all named in the list on the first page.

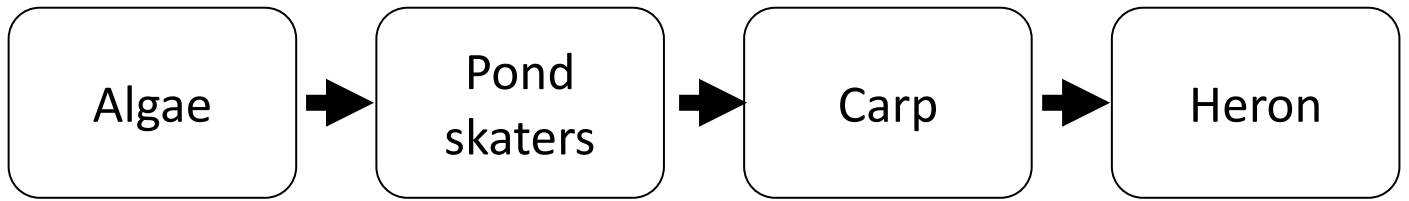
You can write their names in the spaces below the pictures.

Stuck? There are clues in the descriptions on the first page that might help you!



Food chains describe the relationship between living things in a habitat. Can you create your own food chains showing what eats what on the waterways?

Here's an example food chain with three animals and a plant in it. The pond skaters eat the algae. The carp eat the pond skaters. The heron eats the carp. We can draw that like this;



Using the animals and plants we've listed on the first page, can you create some food chains for the waterways? There are lots of right answers!

