

## Oak tree information worksheet

### 1. The Oak Tree

- Oak trees are incredible as they support up to **2,300 species** of wildlife.
- Oaks have the **highest** biodiversity score of all trees.
- The mature tree is **tall and broad** providing lots of shade to protect livestock such as cows and sheep or keep picnickers cool on a hot day.

*You need to add labels to your oak tree poster using the information on this worksheet.*

### 2. Birds in the Oak Tree:

- Oaks provide homes to birds such as the **Chiffchaff**. They feed in the canopy and nest in the understory.
- More familiar birds like **blue tits**, **robins** and **great tits** also visit oak for an insect-based snack.
- In total, oaks can support **38 species of bird**.
- Small birds provide food for predators such as other birds like the **Sparrowhawk**.

*Draw some birds in your oak tree and add labels to your diagram.*

Chiffchaff



Robin



Blue tit



Great tit



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### 3. Insects in the Oak Tree:

- Invertebrates including beetles, butterflies, moths and ants bring life to the tree and create a rich food supply for birds and bats. They also break down dead plants and animals, releasing nutrients into the soil for plants.
- Larvae of the **goat moth**, the heaviest moth in the UK, burrow into the trunk of oaks to hatch beneath the bark and feed on the wood.
- A mature oak tree will support over **280 different species of insects**. Not all are good for the tree and a few are considered to be pests!

*Draw some insects in your oak tree and add labels to your diagram.*

Peacock moth



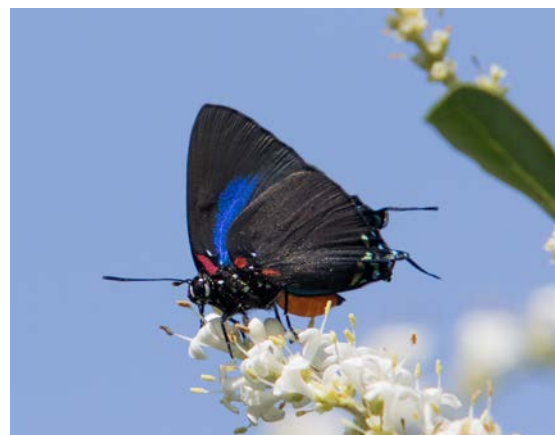
Lace bug



Wood ant



Purple hairstreak butterfly



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### 4. Fungi in the Oak Tree:

- **Sulphur shelf mushrooms** grow on trees in shelf-like clusters. They are edible.
- However, **oak bracket fungus** is found in broadleaf woodland at the base of the tree and is usually poisonous.
- Fly agaric (fairy toadstools) are also poisonous and grow on the ground below the tree.
- Oaks support **108 different types of fungi**.
- **Fungi** are important for **plants** because some help the tree roots to gather nutrients, and others recycle by breaking down dead plants and animals and **returning nutrients to the soil**.

*Draw some fungi in your oak tree and add labels to your diagram.*

Sulphur shelf mushroom



Oak shelf fungus



Fly agaric





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### 5. Flowers and Plants near the Oak Tree:

- In a sunny clearing near the oak you can find lots of flowers including **yellow buttercups**, **white daisies**, **bluebells** and **pink campion**. They are important for wild bees and other insects who use their pollen and nectar for food. Bees and pollinators also help the plants to make new seeds and reproduce.
- In the dark shade of the oak tree you will mainly find green leafy ferns.

*Draw some flowers and plants around your oak tree and add labels to your diagram.*

Buttercups



Bluebell



Campion



Fern



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### 6. Lichens on the Oak Tree:

- **Lichens** grow on the bark of the tree and **only grow at 1-2mm per year**. They don't harm the plant they grow on.
- They're useful to other wildlife, offering nesting material for birds, and food and shelter to lots of insects.
- Woods rich in lichens support more wildlife than any other.
- A single mature oak tree may home up to **30 different species** of lichen.

*Draw some lichen on the trunk of your oak tree and add labels to your diagram.*

Lichen





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### 7. Wild mammals in and around the Oak Tree:

- Ancient oaks support lots of biodiversity including up to 31 different wild mammals.
- Their seeds, acorns, are one of the main attractions. They're a favourite food of many woodland creatures including **badgers, deer** and **wood mice**.
- Mice are eaten by many animals, such as **foxes** and **owls**.
- Noctule bats use tree holes and feed on moths and beetles in the tree

*Draw some wild mammals in and around your oak tree and add labels to your diagram.*

Badger



Roe Deer



Noctule bat



Wood mouse



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### 8. Humans and the Oak Tree:

- Humans are starting to plant lots of young oak trees to store carbon as they take up a gas called **carbon dioxide** from the air.
- This can help to reduce **climate change**.
- The leaves of an oak tree also absorb **air pollution** and the wood from oak is a useful material in buildings or furniture as it is strong and hard.
- Trees can help reduce flooding by draining surface water underground along their roots.
- Farmed animals such as cows and sheep enjoy the shade of the tree.

*Draw some humans planting new young trees near your oak tree and add labels to your diagram.*



Planting trees