

OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

From November to March, Biodiversity Staff are available to visit schools in the area and deliver outreach programmes on a range of topics. These are most suited to children of primary school age but can be adapted where necessary to suit other groups.

GARDEN BIRDS

This programme looks at the variety of birds visiting our gardens and school grounds. It covers the topics of adaptation, feeding and migration. Children will learn of the threats faced by our garden birds and ways in which they can help them. This programme includes some practical activities aimed at helping birds in the school grounds.

WATER RESOURCES OF LOUGH NEAGH

This programme explores the role Lough Neagh plays in the lives of people living around its shores. It includes the geography of Lough Neagh, water as a resource, wildlife of Lough Neagh and the threats facing this unique ecosystem. This topic is best suited to Key Stage 2.

WILDLIFE, HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY

This programme looks at some of our local habitats, the plants and animals found in our immediate surroundings, and the interdependence between them. It looks at the threats faced by our local wildlife and ways in which people can play a role in protecting wildlife and resources of the area. This topic is best suited to Key Stage 2 children and is beneficial to groups setting out to develop biodiversity projects in their school grounds.

MINIBEASTS

This programme looks into the range of minibeasts that share our world with us. It explores some of our local habitats and the creatures found within them, looking at their characteristics and the benefit they bring to our lives. Practical activities focus on improving the school grounds for invertebrate and insect life.

POLLINATION

This topic explores the world of our pollinating insects. It looks at bees, butterflies and hoverflies and the essential role they play in the pollination of many of our food plants. Learn about the life of the honey bee and take a look inside our virtual hive. Other activities include seed planting and planting for pollinators.

BIODIVERSITY IN SCHOOL GROUNDS

This is a programme designed to help schools make the most of their grounds. Staff from the Biodiversity Service of the Council can help pupils and staff to plan and develop pupil-led projects to enhance areas and promote biodiversity.

- Planting for pollinators
- Making a Minibeast hotel
- Habitat creation to help wildlife and promote biodiversity

MANY OF THE OUTREACH PROGRAMMES ARE A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOLS SETTING OUT TO ACHIEVE THEIR ECO-SCHOOLS GREEN FLAG AWARD. THEY FEED INTO THE ECO-SCHOOL TOPICS OF BIODIVERSITY, SCHOOL GROUNDS, WATER AND HEALTHY LIVING.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS ANY OF THESE PROGRAMMES IN MORE DETAIL OR TO MAKE A BOOKING, PLEASE CONTACT A MEMBER OF THE EDUCATION TEAM ON 0300 0300 900. PLEASE ASK FOR EXTENSION 61566 OR EMAIL BIODIVERSITY.ED@ARMAGHBANBRIDGECRAIGAVON.GOV.UK

Lough Neagh Discovery Centre,
Oxford Island National Nature Reserve,
Annaloiste Road, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT66 6NJ
☎ 028 3832 2205 | 🌐 / Oxford Island Nature Reserve



BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION SERVICES AT OXFORD ISLAND

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Educational and Interpretive Services at Oxford Island

The Education Team at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre offer a comprehensive programme of activities for schools studying aspects of the natural environment and the habitats of the surrounding area.

Programmes for visiting schools and groups run throughout the year but some topics are best suited to particular months/seasons when certain plants and animals are present.

Outreach programmes cover a range of subjects and are delivered at the school to class groups. These run from October to March and are an excellent alternative to school trips during the winter months.

All of the programmes are delivered by experienced and knowledgeable staff from the Biodiversity Service of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

Visits to Oxford Island

Educational activities are available to school groups of all ages and abilities, ranging from nursery and primary schools through to secondary schools and colleges of further education. Programmes can be tailored to suit the needs of individual groups, and staff are always happy to discuss the details of your visit to enable you and your pupils to make the most of your day.

Most visits begin with a short power-point presentation, introducing the group to the area and outlining the topics and activities that will be covered during the day.



PROGRAMMES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

FRESHWATER LIFE

Best studied between March and September

This topic looks at the importance of freshwater to plants, animals and people. The children will have the opportunity to explore the invertebrate life of the ponds and the birdlife associated with Lough Neagh. Life cycles, adaptation, feeding and pollution will be covered using examples from the local environment.

A study of freshwater life involves a pond dipping session in one of our wildlife ponds.

WOODLAND HABITATS

Available throughout the year with plenty to see and do in every season

This topic looks at the importance of trees in our environment and how they benefit our lives. We will explore the woodland habitat looking at the relationship between the plants and animals, food chains and native and non-native species. The children can undertake some basic tree identification and measuring techniques. Woodland games, crafts and sensory activities are included where appropriate. Every season brings different things to see, do and discuss in the woodland environment.

The woodland study links well with the topics of minibeasts and birds.

BIRDS

Available throughout the year

This topic looks at the birdlife of Lough Neagh and the Nature Reserve of Oxford Island. Using binoculars the children can identify and observe birds in their natural habitat taking into account seasonal changes, migration, feeding and adaptation of birds to their natural environment.

MINIBEASTS

Available from March through to the end of October

This topic explores the world of our smaller creatures. Children will have the opportunity to identify, classify and record the minibeasts found in both the woodland and freshwater habitats and to examine predator/prey relationships, food chains and life cycles.

There may be opportunities to look at some of the butterfly species found in the area during May and June. This is weather dependent.

HABITATS AT OXFORD ISLAND

Available throughout the year

This programme explores the woodlands, grasslands and freshwater habitats found at Oxford Island NNR. It looks at the plants and animals found in each, the threats they face and ways in which they can be protected in the future. Activities will include elements from the woodland and freshwater topics with additional activities in the meadows if the weather allows.

Nature awareness games are very popular with younger children. The games are fun and educational, reinforcing some of the topics covered during the visit.

PROGRAMMES FOR PRE SCHOOLS

TEDDY TRAILS PROGRAMME

Especially for the under 5's

A programme dedicated to encouraging the under 5's age group to explore and appreciate the world around them in the beautiful surroundings of Oxford Island. Activities can include woodland discovery walks, minibeast hunts, butterfly spotting, bird watching and arts and crafts.



PROGRAMMES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

HABITATS OF OXFORD ISLAND AND THE ECOSYSTEM OF LOUGH NEAGH

Available in the summer term or early September

This programme looks at the ecosystem of Lough Neagh examining the relationships between the plants, animals and people who depend on the resources of the area. Pupils will have the opportunity to study the woodland and freshwater habitats in more detail using various sampling techniques. These include pit fall traps, sweep nets, pooters and pond dipping nets.

KEY STAGE 3

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Available in the summer term and early September

This programme provides a detailed look at the habitats and environment of Oxford Island and Lough Neagh. It explores the communities of plants and animals in each and the impact of human activities upon them. Vegetation surveys allow the pupils to look at succession and changes in plant communities using transect lines, quadrats and other sampling techniques. The use of additional methods of recording and measuring biodiversity can be demonstrated through the use of pooters, sweep-nets and pit-fall traps.

GCSE AND A-LEVEL