

The Countryside Restoration Trust is committed to wildlife-friendly farming and aims to protect and restore Britain's countryside.

Hello young readers!

Welcome to the Summer 2013 edition of our 'Lark Junior' for children. This edition will focus on habitats and food chains.

The word 'habitat' means the type of place where an animal or plant normally lives. Woodlands, ponds, meadows and gardens are all examples of habitats. They can be big or small - a leaf is a habitat for creatures such as caterpillars. They can also be unusual - a skylark likes to nest in the middle of an arable field !

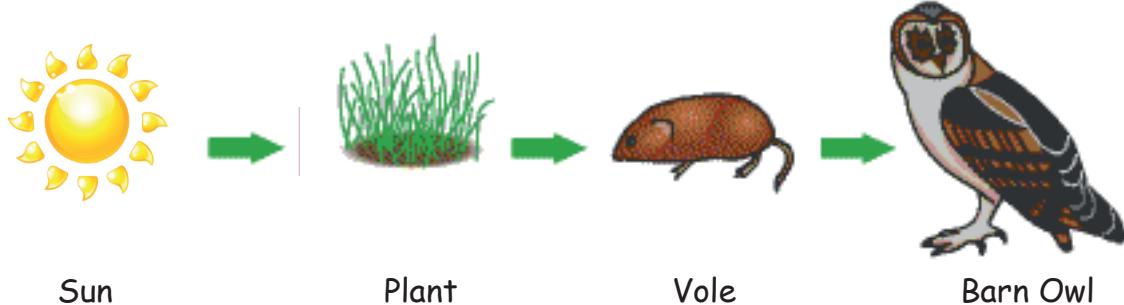
Can you match these creatures with their homes?

RABBIT	HOLT
BADGER	DREY
OTTER	WARREN
MOUSE	SETT
FOX	NEST
SQUIRREL	EARTH

Habitats are important for the existence of food chains. Food chains are vital for nature to proceed. Habitats in decline can have serious consequences for living things.

For example, meadow habitats were created by centuries of traditional farming methods. However, increasing economic pressures to produce profits means farmers need to keep cattle and sheep in increasing numbers and be fed large quantities of high quality food. Therefore grass pastures end up being farmed intensively and herbicides and fertilizers are introduced to do this which in turn can sometimes destroy food chains.

An example of a natural food chain



Here at the CRT we bring wildlife-friendly farming methods back onto our farms and save our habitats and food chains.

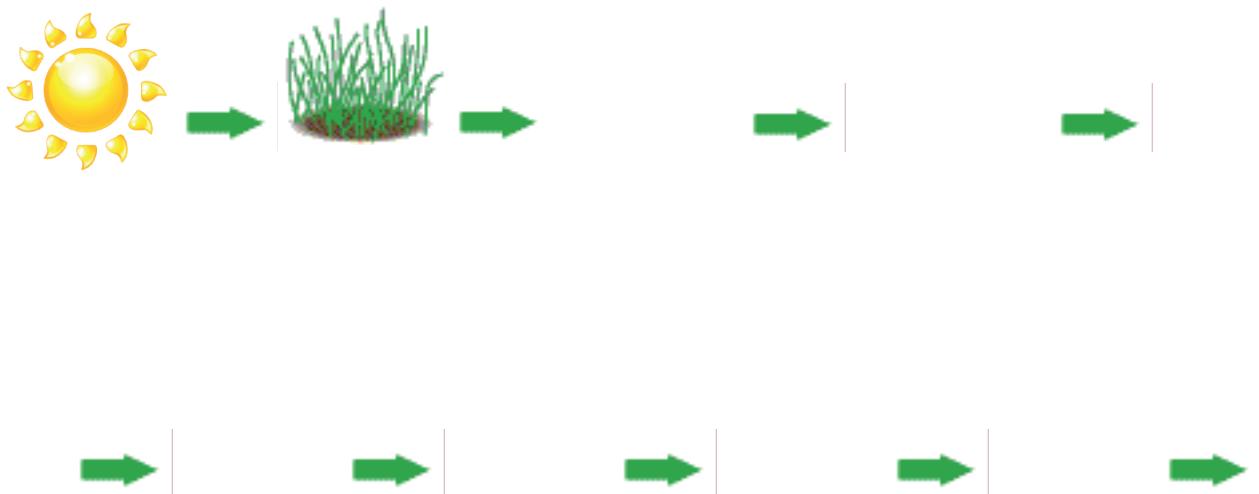
For example, at Lark Rise Farm near Cambridge, we have many acres of restored hay meadows and flood plain where mice and voles thrive - the staple diet of barn owls. But that is not all. We still have several old trees with holes and crannies where barn owls can get shelter during bad weather. We also have several barn owl nest boxes and a redundant old barn which have all helped to give the barn owls shelter. Creating the ideal barn owl habitat!

Food Chain Quiz

1. Which of these animals most likely live in a pond?
a) mayfly nymph b) caterpillar c) ant
2. Which of these living things most likely live in woodland?
a) algae b) cactus c) oak tree
3. Which of these is NOT eaten by a frog?
a) fly b) snail c) pond weed
4. Which animal eats plants?
a) water spider b) caterpillar c) tawny owl

Can you think up your own food chain?

Have a go at drawing one out and think about the Habitat that is involved. Remember to start off with the sun as this is the light source for all living things, followed by a plant which will be the 'producer'.



Life Cycle

Create your own habitat! Find some twigs, branches, feathers, cones and stones / pebbles and arrange them into a pile in the corner of your garden. These will attract all kinds of insects, spiders and other small species creating a natural habitat for them. You can then see for yourself what creatures have set up home there !!