

How's your Nature Knowledge?

Student Introduction

- ▶ This resource will help you to practise your reading skills
- ▶ You will gain a better understanding of the wildlife living at Robin Hill Country Park!



TASK

- ✓ Let's see what you can find out about the mammals at Robin Hill!
- ✓ Read the information below, from Robin Hill's *Nature Notes: Mammals*
- ✓ Then complete the questions on page 2

Badger

The black and white striped face of the badger makes it one of our most distinctive large mammals, but unless you are very lucky you will be unlikely to see one at Robin Hill during the day as they are nocturnal.

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Fox

In the wild, foxes can live for up to 10 years, but most foxes only live for 2 to 3 years due to road accidents and diseases. Reynards (male foxes) weigh 5.9kg on average, and vixens (female foxes) weigh less, at around 5.2kg. They happily live in the countryside as well as urban areas, and can become tame.

Mole

Spending its whole life underground in the tunnels that it digs, the mole is almost blind and could hardly tell day from night – even if it wanted to! Their saliva contains a toxin that can paralyse earthworms so they can store these alive for later consumption. They construct special underground 'larders' for just this purpose.

Common Shrew

Tiny common shrews need to consume 200-300% of their body weight each day in order to survive. A shrew must eat every two to three hours to achieve this. This means that, in the summer-autumn period, a shrew can starve if it finds no food for 5 hours. They do not hibernate in the winter months because their bodies are too small to hold sufficient fat reserves.

Stoat

With their smaller relatives (the weasels) they are one of the few mammals that are true carnivores. You might be lucky enough to see one hunting through the woodland or hedgerows of Robin Hill in search of their favourite prey, the rabbit. Stoats have long bodies and have a black tip on their tail, unlike weasels. They are sometimes called Ermines.

Weasel

Weasels look very similar to stoats, but are smaller when fully grown and prefer smaller prey like mice, voles and young birds. Weasels often hunt in pairs or small parties, which has given rise to a number of collective nouns to describe a group, including a boogle, gang, pack, and a confusion!



1. Which mammal is described as 'almost blind and could hardly tell night from day if it wanted to'?

2. Which mammal needs to consume 200-300% of its body weight each day?

3. What food does the Stoat love to eat?

5. Which mammal is described as 'one of our most distinctive'?

4. What are the Weasel's favourite foods?

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6. For how long does a dormouse hibernate?

7a. What is the name for a male fox?

b. What is the name for a female fox?

8. List the Badger's food choices:

9. Why does a Shrew need to eat every few hours?

10. Why do foxes often die young?

