



# High Weald Hero Activity Card

## Pond Dipping



**Equipment:** Pond nets, plastic trays, pots and magnifiers, ID Sheets, plastic spoons, paper and pencils

**Location:** A safe, accessible body of fresh water with some vegetation but not populated by fish or ducks

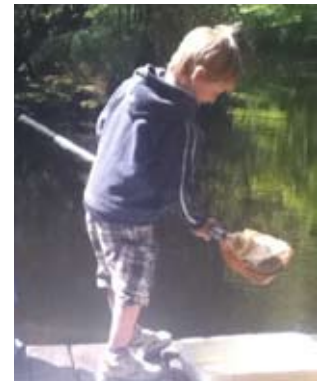
**Audience:** KS 1 & 2

**Time:** 30 minutes

### An investigative activity to learn more about what lives underwater

**Activity Description:** Divide the children into groups of 4 or 5. Give each group a pond dipping net, pots, magnifiers and a set of ID sheets. Before you start, fill trays with pond water and position them on flat and safe areas around the edge of the pond. Send a group of children to each of these 'dipping stations'. The number of groups is limited to the number of trays you can safely distribute round the edge of the pond - ensure there is adequate space between each tray for the children to safely work and move.

Show the children how to sweep the net through the water in a small, gentle 'figure of eight' motion, turning the wrist to keep the mouth of the net pointed in the right direction. They will need to do this 4 or 5 times, being careful not to drag the net on the bottom of the pond. Tell the children to bring the net out of the water and immediately turn it into the tray. Carefully push the net inside out to ensure that you have got everything off the net and into the tray.



Children can now examine the tray for any signs of movement. Sometimes the creatures can be a little stunned and take a few moments to start moving again. To take a closer look, children could use plastic spoons to place particular specimens in a water-filled pot (but don't keep them like this for too long!)



Impress upon the children the importance of treating the captured invertebrates with respect and not causing them harm. Freshwater animals are very sensitive to temperature changes and trays of specimens left in the sun for just a few minutes can really suffer. Even on a cloudy and cool day the water in the trays will become uncomfortably warm for the invertebrates and should be changed regularly throughout the session.

As well as using the ID sheets, children could make notes or sketches on what they have found as well as collecting information on the number of different species found (biodiversity) or the total number of animals found (biomass).

**High Weald Teaching Point:** The Weald has one of the highest concentration of ponds in the South East England. Many ponds have developed because of human activity e.g. quarrying, while others were created as drinking ponds for farm animals. Many ponds in the High Weald are ancient and have rare species in them such as the Great Crested Newt. However, even new ponds can quickly become populated with all sorts of wildlife and are, therefore, a very important habitat.



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