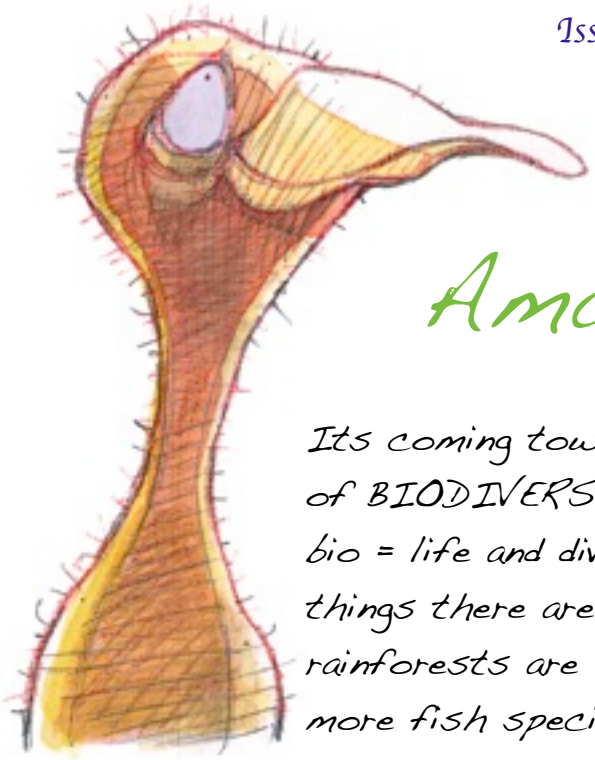
Charity number 284885

ISSN 2042-2482 (online)

The Yippittee!

for kids who are crazy about conservation!

Issue 5 December 2010



Our Amazing World

Its coming towards the end of 2010 - the international year of BIODIVERSITY. Its a big word with a simple meaning, bio = life and diversity = how many different and amazing living things there are in the world! For example, the tropical rainforests are TEEMING with life. The Amazon river has more fish species in it than the whole of the Atlantic ocean.

Without nature, we wouldn't be able to breathe, eat or live! We need nature to clean our air, do our recycling, water our plants, give us medicines and much, much more! Its pretty amazing how all the plants and animals live together and need each other to survive, not to mention how good it makes us feel when we get out into the fresh air, see the green of the countryside, splash in muddy puddles and get our hands dirty!

In the modern world we sometimes forget how much we need nature because we don't have to go to a stream to get our water, we turn on a tap and we don't grow much of our food, we buy it at the supermarket where it is all wrapped up in plastic packaging. We don't see the people, animals and places that could have been hurt to give us what we want!

What's Inside...

Air conditioning!

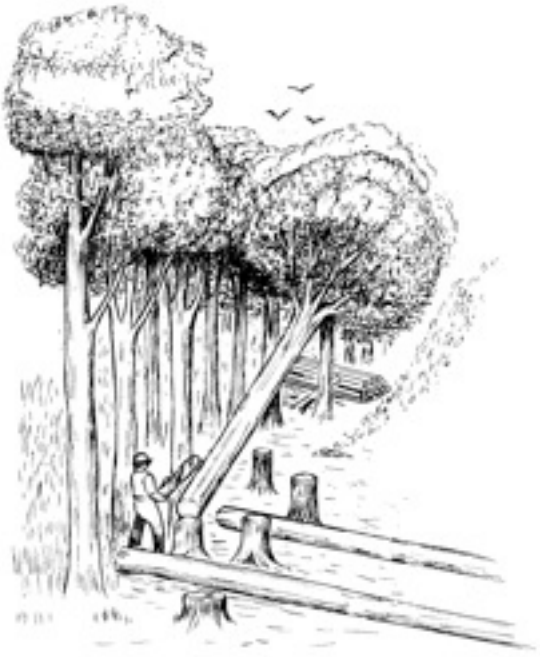
Plants are great at clearing the air of all the pollution we put into it. Everyday we add more carbon dioxide to the air when we travel in cars, trains and aeroplanes and as we use electricity, if its been made by burning coal.

So it's a good job really that we have plenty of plants to suck it all up! A good reason to protect our forests I think. But when we burn and cut trees down, what we call "deforestation", all the carbon they stored goes straight back into the atmosphere. There it can add to a big invisible blanket of gases in our atmosphere, around the world and cause "global warming" and "climate change".

Did you know....?
The Amazon rainforest alone provides about 20% of the world's oxygen.

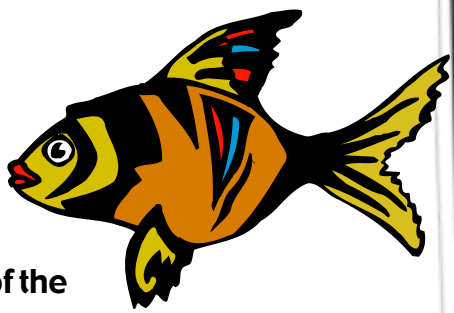
A Breath Of Fresh Air!

Take a deep breath. What your body needs from the air is the oxygen. Breathe out and you release a gas called carbon dioxide. Trees and all plants are the opposite to us; during the day they breathe in carbon dioxide and release oxygen. So we need them and they need us - perfect!

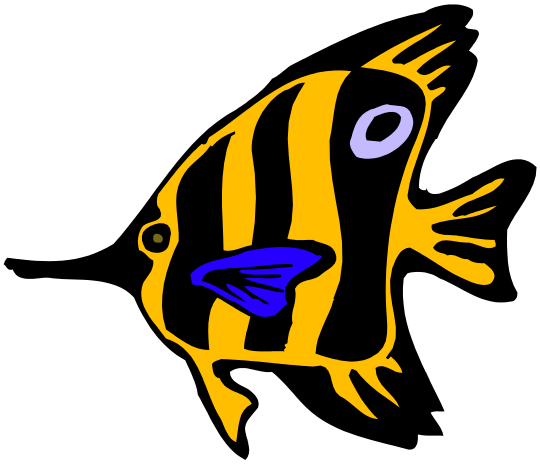


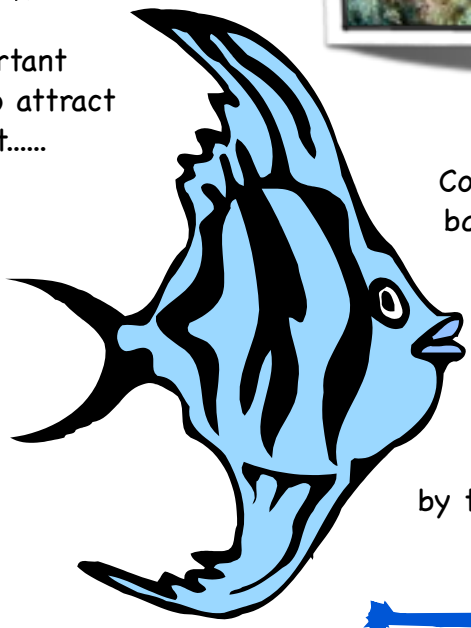
Did you know....?
Deforestation releases more carbon dioxide than all the world's transport put together!

Natural Defences



Coral reefs are amazing colourful places that contain **a quarter** of all marine (underwater) life! These colourful places are also called the **rainforests of the sea** because they contain so much life! So you can imagine how important they are to fishermen/women and to attract tourists. Yet they do more than that.....





Coral reefs are an under sea barrier. They break the force of the waves before they reach the land, protecting many coastlines from flooding and storm damage. Since half of all the people in the world live by the sea, you can imagine how important they are!

Marvellous medicines

Ever been stung by a nettle? What's the first thing you do? Say OW!!? And the second thing? You'd probably look for a dock leaf to rub on the sting and make it go away. Well rainforests are full of plants which could be used to cure many ailments and illnesses.

Already, one quarter of all medicines are made from ingredients first found in rainforest plants.

The chinchona tree from the rainforest in Peru's bark has been used to make something called "quinine" which is used to treat malaria, a deadly disease which comes from mosquito bites in tropical countries. There's also the "sausage tree" which has been used to treat eczma and the rosy periwinkle of Madagascar which has been successfully used to treat leukemia.

Soaking it up!

Elsewhere trees and other plants act like a giant sponge, soaking up rain water so that it doesn't cause floods. The canopy (tree tops) of the rainforest is like a big umbrella, so that when the raindrops hit the leaves, it takes a while for the water to drip down to the ground, otherwise if it all hit at once there'd be a big flood! The plant roots also hold the soil together so that it doesn't wash away.

Did you know....?

Only 1% of rainforest plants have been studied. That leaves the other 99% which may hold the cures to many diseases.

Waste not, want not

Perhaps we should take a lesson from nature and recycle our own rubbish more. So many things that we use come from the ground - like the stuff used to make an aluminium drinks can, a tin for baked beans or the metals in a mobile telephone. Plastic is made from oil - that's right, the same thing that makes petrol for a car! The trouble is that damage can be done to the environment to get these "resources", not to mention that one day they'll run out.

A lot of energy (like electricity") is used to get these resources and make them into something useful. If we just turn our old stuff into new stuff we could save a lot of that energy.

So next time you're about to throw something in the bin ask yourself, can it be recycled or used again?

Nature's recyclers.

They creep, they crawl, they slither. They may be small but "minibeasts" or invertebrates, to give them their proper name, do an extremely important job. Among the fallen autumn leaves you will find woodlice, millipedes, slugs and snails. They're known as "detritivores" which means that they eat things that are dead and rotting!

Earthworms are particulary remarkable as they eat old vegetation and turn it back into soil. What goes in one end as food comes out the other as compost! They break down the plants' nutrients which are returned to the soil to help other plants grow.

In nature, nothing gets wasted! Even dung beetles lay their eggs in the poo of cows and horses so that their babies have a tasty snack to eat when they are born!

Did you know

that in Britain at least 60% of what we throw away could be recycled but at the moment only 40% is. This is much better than it was a few years ago, so well done humans, but there's still room for improvement!

Food For Thought

I don't bee-lieve it!

Bees may give us honey, which you'll probably agree is a pretty good thing, but they have an even more important job than that! They pollinate plants which in turn, give us food.

Think of an apple tree. In the spring time grows the blossom (white flowers). Bees land on the flowers and the yellow pollen dust sticks to their hairy bodies. When they land on other flowers it brushes off. So essentially they are helping the flowers to swap pollen. Once they've done that, the trees can make seeds.

Did you know....?
that bees pollinate one out of every three of the things we eat!

So, where are the seeds of an apple tree? In the fruit of course! So without the pollination there'd be no fruit, so no apples, blackberries, strawberries.... thank goodness for bees!

Bee-ware!

Three British bumble bee species have already become extinct! That's right, gone, forever. So what's happened? Well partly it could be that they've lost much of their wild flower habitats, it could be disease, but another factor may be at play. Some pesticides, designed to kill certain insects may also harm bees.

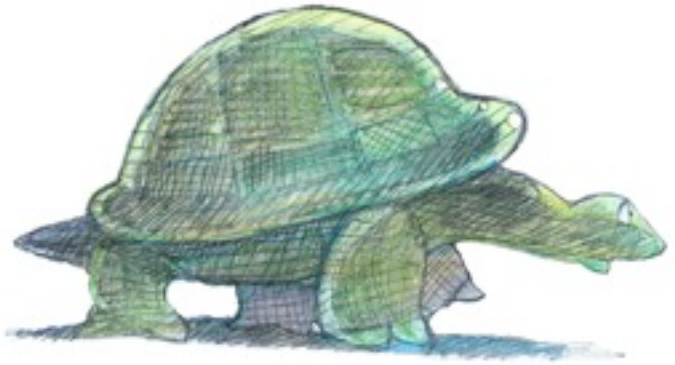
See Yippittee Issue 4 for more bee information.

Money, money, money

£

Imagine if we didn't have the trees to clean the air, the bees to pollinate, the bugs to eat the detritus - we'd have to do it all ourselves which would not only be impossible, but would also cost us a lot of money! One estimate suggests that it could cost as much as $33 trillion dollars! Plus without the trees and other natural defences like coral reefs preventing erosion, we'd have a lot of cleaning up to do after storms!

$



Lonesome George

Lonesome George is a Giant Pinta Tortoise living on the Galapagos Islands in South America. He is a rare sub-species. On the islands are many sub-species of tortoise. That means they are all tortoise species but have slight differences which make them separate sub-species. Due to hunting and loss of habitat Lonesome George is the only one of his subspecies left.

A world full of life!

There are a staggering 10 MILLION different species of plants and animals on earth. Of these about 250,000 are plants, 9,865 are birds and 750,000 are insects. Yet many are threatened with extinction - about.....
1 out of every 5 plants
1 out of 5 mammals,
1 in 3 amphibians (frogs, toads and newts) and
one in seven birds.

That's why its important we take care of where they live!

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."
John Muir

Think of a plant or animal. Now describe it and how it makes you feel using as many descriptive words (adjectives) as possible.

Butterfly - colourful, delicate, floating, fleeting, gentle, beautiful.
Lion - roaring, strong, powerful, golden, sharp teeth, fierce, beautiful.
Giraffe - gentle, tall, lolloping, intriguing.

Invent your own animal - will it have a tail, claws, a beak, fur, scales or a mane? Will it be tall or crawl, be noisy, mischievous or sleepy? Can it climb, swim, run, jump or fly?

Giant Jigsaw

The world is full of eco-systems which are a bit like jigsaws, with all the pieces fitting together perfectly. If some of the pieces are taken away, the jigsaw still holds together, even though there are gaps. But if you take too many pieces away, it starts to fall apart. This is a bit like an eco-system. If some smaller kinds of animal don't survive, all the things that eat them struggle to survive too.

Missing Links

Can you fill in the missing links to show what eats what?

bluetit fish slug

sparrowhawk moth

cabbage → caterpillar →

flower → → bat

nymph → → otter

worm → blackbird →

→ frog → snake

People, people, everywhere!

The number of people in the world is growing all the time. Another one and a half billion people are living on the planet than there were 20 years ago and the human population is continuing to rise as more people are born and people live longer.

Everyone needs some basic things to live, like clean water, food and shelter. The more people there are, the more space they use up, to live and to grow the food they eat.

Territory

When people move into a tiger's territory, it increases the likelihood that they will get attacked! And if people plant crops in an elephant's territory, they shouldn't be surprised if the elephant thinks those crops are a tasty snack planted especially for it!! If it doesn't eat the crops it may still trample them with its very big feet!

News flash!
Nature makes us feel good!

Its a fact: people need green places, green spaces, views and contact with nature. People with mental illness actually feel better when they get back in touch with nature. Why do people climb mountains, paddle in the sea and run through meadows? There is something in doing all of those things that makes us feel good. Perhaps we like the adventure of climbing a mountain or the peacefulness of a sunny meadow that makes us feel alive!

Look Around!

If things don't go your way and
you're feeling sad,
There's something all around that
will make you glad;
Take a look out the window with me,
You'll be surprised what you might
see.

A squirrel scurries up the
old oak tree,
On its branches a thrush
sings with glee.

From behind a cloud the
sun bursts through,
Lighting up a
magnificent view.

Lets go outside and see some more,
As in the breeze the swallows soar.

People with dogs go
wandering by,
While swallows race
through the bright
blue sky.
Flowers display their
colours bright,
Ants are working
with all their might.

Water sparkles in the stream,
Making all it touches gleam,
It gushes and gurgles over the rocks,
Lets go for a paddle,
first take off your socks!

A busy bee goes buzzing by,
Then a flash of blue from a dragonfly.

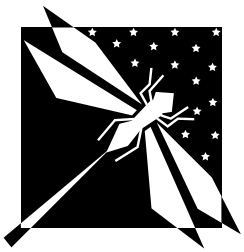
The ducks they quack, the crows do squawk,
Hovering above, watch out, its a hawk!
The rabbits hop, the mice all scurry,
Before he dives, quick, run, hurry!

A spider spins her web with skill,
All of a sudden I'm feeling brill!
I realise that there's so much around,
To touch, to smell, the sights and sounds.

My troubles seem to have blown away,
I'm sure to come back here another day!

By Vanessa Adnitt.

I spy...



Get outside and see what you can spy. It could be birds, bugs or different kinds of trees. Have a competition to see who can spy the most!

Inspired By Nature

Many artists have been inspired by nature.
Henri Rousseau was fascinated with jungle scenes; one famous picture is called "Tiger in a Storm" (Surprised!).

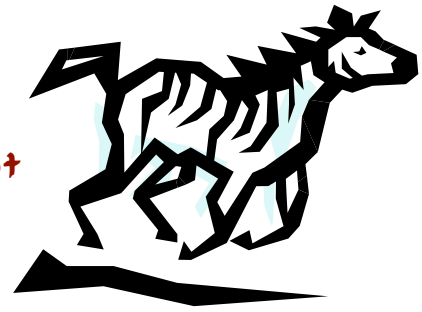
Edwin Landseer was a painter and sculpture of animals, especially horses, dogs and stags (male deer). He made the lion sculptures in Trafalgar Square in London.

Monet painted the same bridge over a pond of water lilies in a garden many, many times.

In modern times, **Andy Goldsworthy** uses natural things to make his sculptures which celebrate nature.

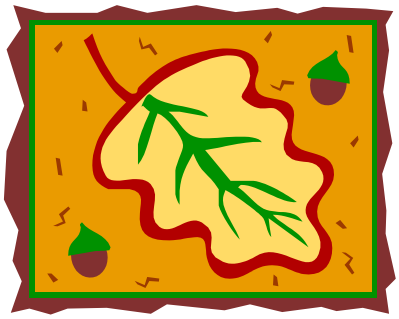
Even in **fashion** many designs have been stolen from the patterns of animals. In the past this was bad news because the animals were killed so that their skins could be used! Now thankfully most designers just copy them!

Its not just artists, but **scientists and engineers** often look to nature to solve a problem or work out how to do something. That's why birds and aeroplanes both have wings to fly and boats have rudders to steer with, just like the tail of a fish!



Design your own hat, plant plant pot or anything you like using patterns from nature. Try looking at zebra, giraffe tiger and poison arrow frogs to get you started!

Make a collage out of natural things such as the autumn leaves and twigs.



Or make your own natural sculpture, using leaves, twigs, stones, even mud ... whatever you can find!

Crazy About Conservation!

We'd love to include some of your letters, jokes, poems, stories and pictures in the Yippittee, so if you have any then please write to us or e-mail them. We'd also love to hear your ideas for future editions of Yippittee - please, let us know!!

Crazy about Conservation! YPTE, 3A Market Square, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7LE.

or e-mail us at... info@ypte.org.uk

Can you think of the name of a plant, animal or habitat for each letter of "biodiversity"?

B

I

O

D

I

V

E

R

S

I

T

Y

You're joking!

What do you call a flock of birds that fly in formation?
The red sparrows!

Why didn't the two worms get onto Noah's Ark in an apple?
Because they had to go on in pairs!

What didi the lion say to her cubs when she was teaching them to hunt?
Don't go over the road until you see the zebra crossing!

Which bird is always out of breath?
A puffin!

See if you can unjumble these words to make the names of some eco-systems:

eoclr erfe

sftniorrae

awdemo

virre

auitnomn

tdelawn

Web sites:

Biodiversity and Conservation - http://www.countrysideinfo.co.uk/biodvy.htm
Natural History Museum - http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/biodiversity/
Ec-friendly Kids - http://www.ecofriendlykids.co.uk/BiodiversityNature.html
CBBC Wild - http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/wild/

Written and designed by Vanessa Adnitt.