



Ulster Wildlife Trust



The Search for the Mini-Beasts

Get active with an exciting game based around the habits of mini-beasts - fun for everyone.

INSTRUCTIONS

Split the class into two groups and ask them to line up, one behind the other.

Each group should be shown a spot where they must run up to before returning to their group, at the back of the line.

As the story is being read out, they must listen for any mini-beast name, for example

“They kept going back to check on the sleeping ladybirds”

As soon as one is read out, the person at the top of each line must run up to the pre-determined spot.

The first one back to their line wins a point for their team.



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Spiders, Slug, Centipede, Hedgerow, Earwigs, Millipedes,

Ants, Worms, Beetles, Woodlice, Snails, Ladybirds

It was a very cold day in the middle of winter when Becca and her younger brother Peter went for a walk in the park and so they had on their hats, scarves and gloves to keep warm. They wanted to find out if anyone else was brave enough to go out on such a miserable day and wanted to see if they could find anything interesting.

No-one else was brave enough to go outside, so they decided to look for any interesting mini-beasts.

They looked in the rough bark of the old oak tree – yes they saw a few **spiders'** webs, but found nothing living in them anymore, they looked under leaves, but still, nothing to be found – not a **slug** nor a **centipede**. How sad they felt.

They did not give up their search though! They were determined to find their creepy crawly friends and so off they went to look under the hedgerow. Did they find any **earwigs, millipedes** or **ants** do you think? No, they did not. They were becoming very irritated indeed! How hard can it be to find tiny mini-beasts?!

They decided that the last place they would look would be under log piles. They remembered that lots of mini-beasts like to live in dark damp places, so under the logs would be perfect! But no – they still had no luck. They did not find any **worms, beetles, woodlice**, or even any **snails**. They were very upset – what a waste of a day!

They began to head home, full of gloom when Peter suddenly looked up into a small tree. What do you think he saw on the bark? Lots and lots of small, colourful insects all snuggled up close together to keep warm - yes, so many beautiful hibernating **ladybirds**.

Becca and Peter were delighted! Finally they had found something interesting! They ran home and told all their friends their great news!

They kept going back to check on the sleeping **ladybirds**, just to make sure they were still there. After a few months, they noticed them starting to wake up from their deep sleep. It was the beginning of spring and the trees were growing their leaves once more.

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As time passed into April the insects started to mate, so that new **ladybirds** would soon arrive. In May, Becca and Peter were able to see lots of little eggs laid in neat rows beside one another, in a cluster on the underside of the leaves. These little eggs only lasted a few weeks until early June when they hatched into larvae. The larvae then turned into pupae by July, and in August new adult ladybirds could be seen all over the park, much to Becca's and Peter's delight.

They decided to have another look for other mini-beasts, and so went back to the log pile, hedgerow and old oak tree.

And what do you think they found? YES – they found everything they wanted to! All the lovely mini-beasts had come out for the warmer months, and so Becca and Peter found, **spiders, snails, slugs, woodlice, beetles, worms, centipedes, millipedes**, crawly **ants** and many more!

The children were so happy they told all their friends to come with them that summer to the park to carefully find their new playmates. How happy they were.

THE END

