

Fur, Feathers and Scales



Badger



Goldfinch



Buzzard



Grass snake



Yellowhammer



Rabbit



Weasel



Barn owl



Common lizard



Fox

Animals have all sorts of traits that help them do certain things. Some animals have:

Fur to keep them warm

Feathers to help them fly

Scales to protect their bodies

These traits help us put animals into groups:

Mammals have fur

Birds have feathers

Reptiles have scales

Here are some of the animals that you might see at Coombe Bissett Down nature reserve.

How many animals from each group can you see?

I can see ___ mammals.

I can see ___ birds.

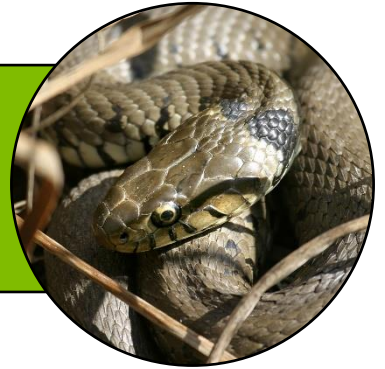
I can see ___ reptiles.

Can you think of any other animals that belong to these groups?

.....

Did you know?

Grass snakes are not dangerous, but they have markings on their head that trick birds into thinking they are.



P	C	A	M	O	U	F	L	A	G	E	S	T	E
F	E	A	P	R	E	P	T	I	L	E	S	H	T
L	N	G	O	R	T	T	R	L	B	M	A	A	R
M	S	L	M	G	O	A	L	R	I	P	H	I	T
G	A	R	I	F	F	T	A	R	R	S	F	U	R
R	A	M	A	N	O	E	E	P	D	S	F	E	R
F	R	T	M	A	R	F	T	C	S	E	R	S	C
M	A	A	F	A	R	D	E	A	T	C	R	A	O
T	L	H	L	M	L	S	T	A	R	I	C	S	S
E	S	E	I	E	E	S	T	O	T	R	O	E	D
H	L	T	G	W	A	R	M	T	H	H	L	N	R
R	E	C	H	E	A	D	S	C	R	A	E	H	E
U	A	A	T	R	P	S	R	L	C	A	L	R	E
E	R	F	E	T	S	F	L	S	L	C	D	I	S

Can you find these words in this word search?

- FUR
- MAMMALS
- WARMTH
- FEATHERS
- FLIGHT
- BIRDS
- SCALES
- REPTILES
- PROTECTION
- CAMOUFLAGE

What is camouflage?

Animals have colours and shapes on them that help them hide in their surroundings: some mammals are brown so that they can hide in woodland; some birds are spotty so that they can hide in trees; and some reptiles are green and stripy so that they can hide in grass.



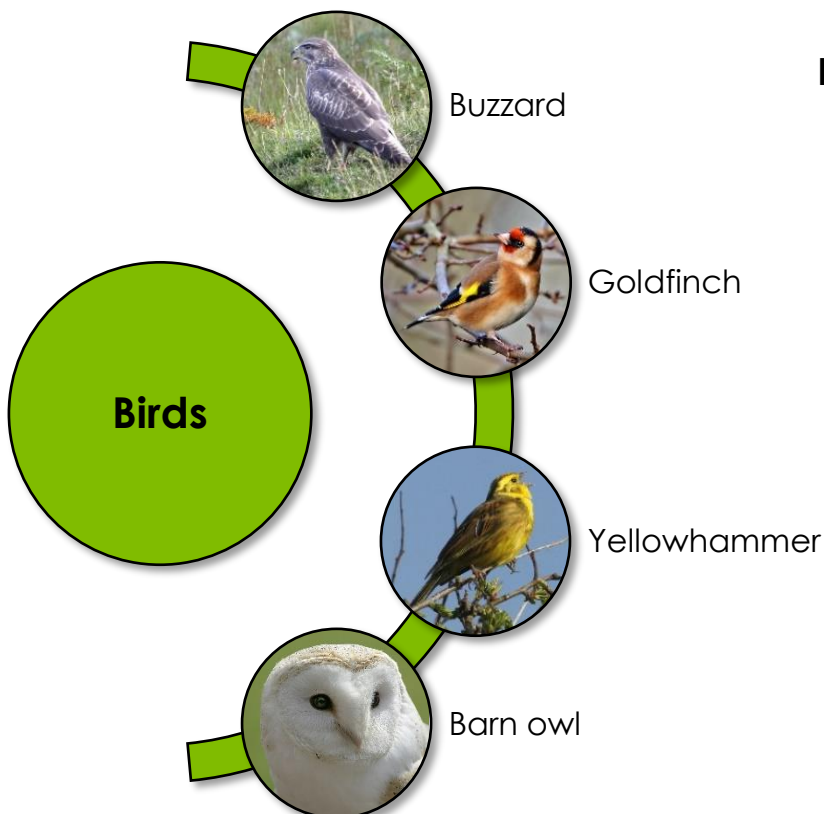
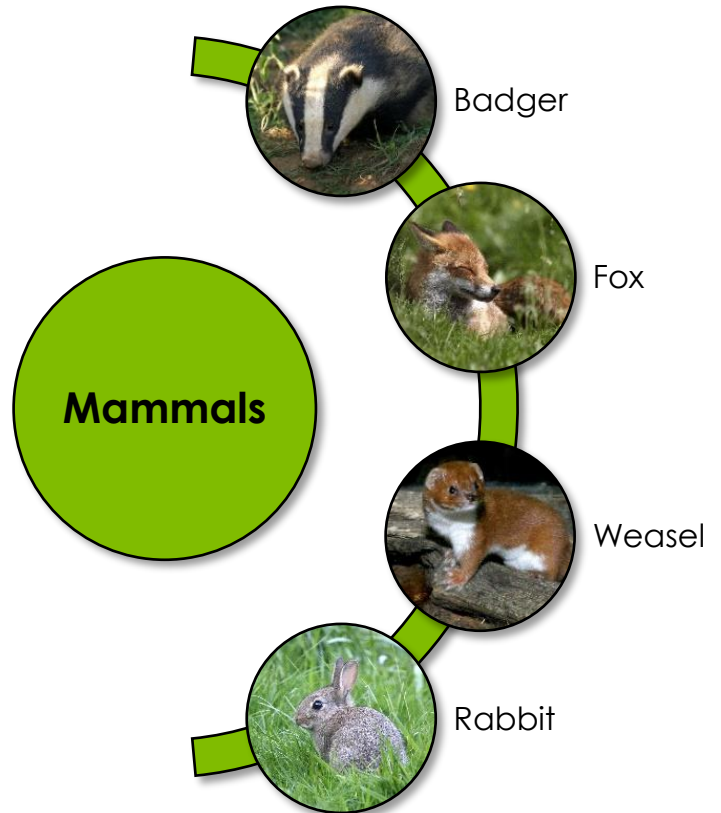
Did you know?

Barn owl feathers are not waterproof, which is why they like to take shelter in buildings.

Fur, feathers and scales have many uses. Here are some experiments you can do at home to test how fur, feathers and scales work:

Fur

- Warmth
 - Pour warm water into two jars/mugs and wrap one up in a jumper. Which is warmest after 5 minutes?
- Camouflage
 - How well can you hide yourself, using clothes and blankets that are the same colour as your surroundings?
- Communication
 - Rabbits have a white tail that flashes when a predator chases them, which warns other rabbits to run away. Can you give someone similar instructions, using a cushion?

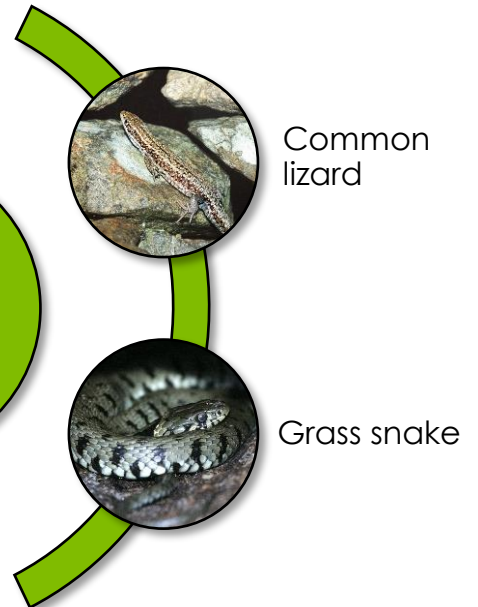
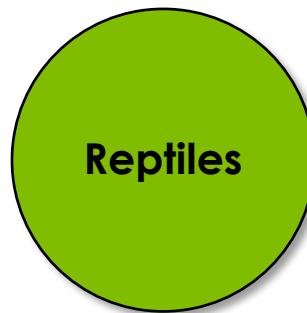


Feathers

- Flight
 - Find a feather and hold it in your hand. Which action is best for pushing air with the feather?
- Waterproofing
 - Run the feather under a tap. Does the water stick to the feather?
- Attraction
 - Birds use brightly coloured feathers to attract other birds. How colourfully can you dress up?

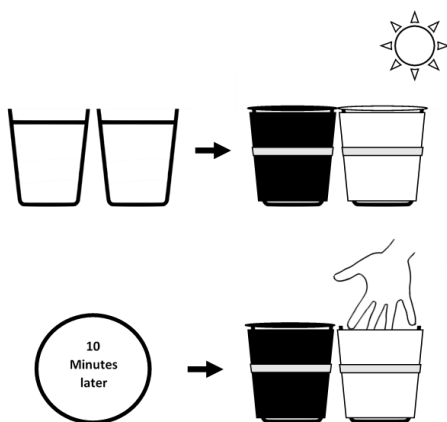
Scales

- Protection
 - Gently brush your hand against something rough, like tree bark or a brick wall. Now try it again but with some paper or card 'armour' on your hand. Does it feel different?
- Camouflage
 - How well can you hide yourself, using hard objects that are the same colour as your surroundings?
- Warning colours
 - Can you think of any animals that have warning colours, which let other animals know that they may be dangerous?
- Warming up
 - Reptiles use the sun to warm up through their skin, but some colours are better at warming up than others:



Common lizard

Grass snake



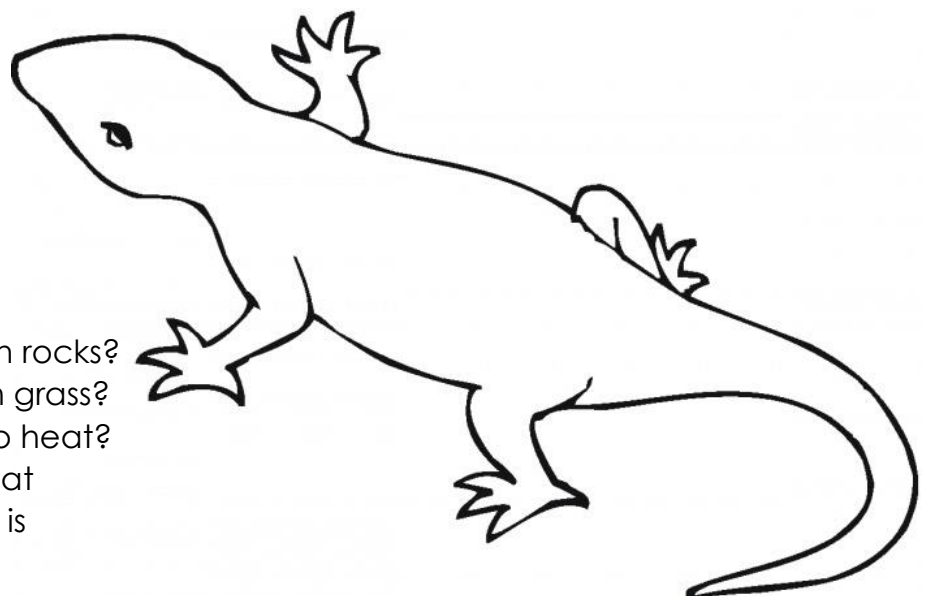
Fill two evenly sized glasses with water. Cover one in black paper and the other in white paper (use an elastic band to help wrap the sides of the glasses). Then put the two glasses out in the sun. After 10 minutes, test which water is warmest, using a thermometer or your hands.

(Alternatively, you can paint some stones in different colours and leave those out in the sun, instead of the glasses of water.)

Colouring Activity

Draw some scales on this lizard, but think about what colours might be best for its survival. Are you going to make it...

- Grey so that it can hide on rocks?
- Stripy so that it can hide in grass?
- Black so that it can absorb heat?
- Colourful like a wasp so that other animals know that it is dangerous?



How well do you know these animals? Draw lines between the close up images and the animals they come from, followed by the animals' names.



Badger



Grass snake



Buzzard










































Fox



Yellowhammer

Which group do each of these animals belong to? Tick the boxes to show whether they have fur, feathers or scales.

 <p>Badger</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p>Goldfinch</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>Buzzard</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p>Grass snake</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>Yellowhammer</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p>Rabbit</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>Weasel</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p>Barn owl</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>Common lizard</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	 <p>Fox</p>	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>

Images: badger; buzzard; grass snake; rabbit; weasel; barn owl; fox; common lizard; fox. Darin Smith; Goldfinch, Tim Tapley