

# MINI-BEAST

# HUNT



## NOTES & TIPS:

- Make sure everyone knows not to touch the mini-beasts.
- Adopt quiet and slow “David Attenborough” tones and encourage the troopers to do the same. This will have no effect on the bugs whatsoever, but will avoid startling other kinds of wildlife.
- Move slowly and carefully, making no sudden movements.
- If you’re anxious, don’t show it. Your children take their cues from you, and if you show you’re nervous around mini-beasts, they will learn to be too.
- If you find a mini-beast that could bite or sting, explain to your troopers that it is the creature’s natural defence mechanism.
- Challenge misconceptions about mini-beasts: Bees aren’t just stinging machines, they’re arch pollinators and without them many plants and crops (including the ones we eat) would die. Flies can be a pain, but they are busy workers in the garden, pollinating, helping to dispose of decaying waste and serving as a protein-rich meal for birds, frogs, spiders and other insects. Worms aren’t slimy mini-snakes, they’re “nature’s ploughs” turning waste into nutrient-rich soil. Dung beetles mean that the world isn’t covered in poo!
- Once your mini-beast hunt is complete, don’t forget to thoroughly wash your hands.

## KIT LIST:

- Paper, pencil and clipboard
- Spotting sheet (use sheet below or download more at [www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/spotting-sheets](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/spotting-sheets))
- Wipes or hand sanitiser
- **Optional:** Camera; Magnifying Glass

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Mini-beasts are more active in spring and summer, but it is possible to find them all year round if you know where to look – and you look carefully. Good places to look for mini-beasts in woodland include:

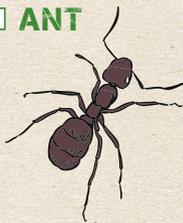
- In or near any kind of flowers or plants
- On leaves, in long grass or in a hedge or bush
- In or near any kind of shelter, including cracks in tree bark, piles of deadwood or leaves
- Under large stones and logs
- In or near any source of water (be careful!)

## HAVE FUN

– and be prepared for squeals of disgust and delight!

## MINI-BEAST SPOT IT SHEET

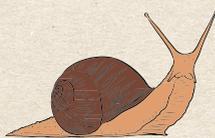
ANT



BUTTERFLY



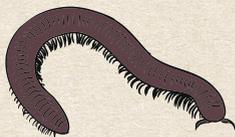
SNAIL



SPIDER



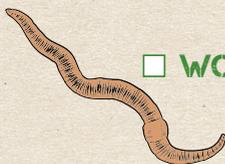
MILLIPEDE



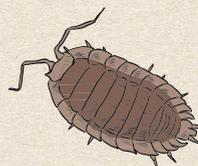
LADYBIRD



WORM



WOODLOUSE



*This is an edited version of the activity, extracted from the best-selling guide, ‘Commando Dad: Forest School’ by Neil Sinclair and his wife Tara and published by VIE. Neil is an ex-commando, qualified Forest School Practitioner and full-time dad to three.*