Endangered Species — Non-Fiction

Non-fiction texts are any bits of writing that tell you facts. They can also be about something that really happened. A science book is non-fiction, and so is a newspaper or magazine. Read the text, read it again, and then go on to the questions.

Endangered Species in Britain

Britain is home to a unique array of wildlife, from beetles to badgers, hawks to hedgehogs. These diverse and fascinating wild animals are a vital part of our natural world. Unfortunately, some humans are seriously damaging the environment in the UK and threatening many of these creatures with extinction. Almost two-thirds of Britain's species have declined in the last 50 years, and if they are not protected, these animals will disappear from the UK forever. Many people believe that much of Britain's wildlife is under threat...

Red Squirrels

It may seem surprising, given how rare they are today, but in the past, the only squirrels in the UK were red squirrels. In the 1870s, however, grey squirrels were introduced to Britain from the USA, and these larger American squirrels have gradually pushed out their smaller British cousins. Today, it is estimated that only around 140,000 red squirrels survive in Britain, compared with over 2.5 million grey squirrels. According to George Percy of the charity *Save the Squirrel*, the ongoing decline in red squirrel numbers represents a national tragedy for the UK.

Bumblebees

Since the 1940s, bumblebee numbers have fallen sharply in the UK. This bumblebee crisis is largely due to loss of habitat. Bumblebees rely on wildflowers to survive, but in recent decades, there has been a serious decline in the numbers of wildflowers throughout Britain. The decline of bumblebees may also be due to some of the chemicals (pesticides) that farmers use to prevent insects from feasting on their crops. However, a link between pesticides and falling bumblebee numbers has not been proved conclusively.

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Conservationists work to protect plants, animals and the natural world.

How are conservationists helping?

Habitat protection and creation
Conservationists protect the natural areas that provide habitats for endangered species. They also create new areas where animals can live safely.

Captive breeding schemes
Animals are bred in captivity (for example, at a zoo), and then reintroduced into the wild. In Britain, captive breeding programmes have helped to protect harvest mice, water voles and Scottish wildcats from extinction.

Raising awareness
By encouraging people to take an interest in the natural world, conservationists inspire members of the public to help protect endangered species.

Otters — a conservation success story

Otters live by lakes, rivers, streams and ponds, and they spend much of their time in the water. In the 1960s and 1970s, Britain's otters came close to extinction. This was mainly a consequence of pesticide pollution — pesticides were washed from farmers' fields into the lakes and rivers where otters live. By 1979, most of these harmful pesticides were banned. Efforts were also made to clean up rivers, and the government introduced laws that made it illegal to kill otters. Thanks to these measures, otters are now thriving throughout Britain.

"Otters were a common sight when I was growing up in the 1950s. It was heartbreaking when they began to disappear from our local streams. Otters are such lovely creatures, and I'm so glad that I've been able to help bring them back to Norfolk's waterways."

— Florence Jamison
Norfolk Otter Trust

How can YOU help?

Become a hedgehog hero — help protect Britain's prickliest mammal by making your garden hedgehog friendly. Create some cosy spots where hedgehogs can hibernate — they love compost heaps, leaf piles and stacks of logs.

Grow flowers for bumblebees — bees need pollen from flowers to survive. Give them a helping hand by planting some of their favourite blooms in your garden. Bumblebees are particularly fond of foxgloves, honeysuckle and lavender.

Take part in a wildlife survey — you'll get to know the animals around you and make a real contribution to conservation. There are surveys focusing on all sorts of species, so whether your passion is for butterflies, birds or bats, there's a survey that's right for you.

Hold a fundraising event — conservation charities rely on donations to do their work. You can raise money to help support your favourite charity by organising a fundraising event, such as a bake sale or a sponsored bike ride.

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Unfold these pages before you start

2b Fact Retrieval Questions

For FACT RETRIEVAL questions, often all you'll need to do is look through the text for the bit of information you are asked for and then write it down. See how you get on with these.

1. When were grey squirrels introduced to the UK?

the 1850s	the 1870s	the 1940s	1979

1 mark

Circle your answer.

2. What is the estimated population of red squirrels in the UK today?

..... **1 mark**

3. List **three** ways in which conservationists are helping to protect endangered species.

..... **3 marks**

.....

.....

4. Name **two** species that have been protected from extinction in the UK by captive breeding programmes.

..... **2 marks**

.....

5. What is believed to have affected both bumblebees and otters?

..... **1 mark**

6. What organisation does Florence Jamison work for?

..... **1 mark**

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2b Fact Retrieval Questions

7. List **three** things that helped to save otters from becoming extinct in the UK.

..... **3 marks**

.....

.....

8. Give **two** places where hedgehogs like to hibernate.

..... **2 marks**

.....

9. According to the text, which **three** types of flower do bumblebees particularly like?

..... **2 marks**

.....

10. How can bake sales help to protect endangered species?

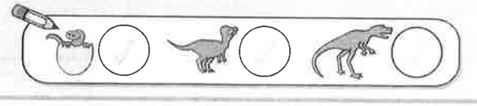
..... **1 mark**

11. Which of the following facts can be found in this text? Tick **two** boxes.

There are over 10 million grey squirrels in the UK	☐
Decline in bumblebee numbers is mostly due to loss of habitat	☐
Conservationists reduce areas of natural habitat for endangered species	☐
Otters were nearly extinct in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s	☐

2 marks

Reading Raptors love a fact retrieval challenge. Do you? Tick to show how these questions went.



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2d Inference Questions

INFERENCE questions can be tricky — you have to work out what's going on instead of just being told the facts. See if you can work out the answers to these questions.

1. **'fascinating'** and **'vital'**
   How do these words make the reader feel about Britain's wildlife?

   ..... **1 mark**

   .....

2. Why do many people believe that Britain's wildlife is under threat?

   ..... **1 mark**

   .....

3. Suggest one reason why grey squirrels have **'pushed out'** red squirrels.

   ..... **1 mark**

4. Over the years, there has been a decline in the amount of wildflowers in Britain. Approximately when did this begin?

   ..... **1 mark**

5. How does Florence Jamison feel about otters? Refer to the text in your answer.

   ..... **2 marks**

   .....

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2d Inference Questions

6. Does the section about otters suggest that there is hope for Britain's other endangered species? Explain your answer, making reference to the text.

   ..... **2 marks**

   .....

   .....

7. Put a tick in the correct box to show whether each of the following statements are fact or opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
Many of Britain's species have declined in the last 50 years.		
The decline of red squirrel numbers is a national tragedy.		
Otters are lovely creatures.		
Bees need pollen from flowers to survive.		

1 mark

8. What might cause the amount of hedgehogs in the UK to decrease?

   ..... **1 mark**

9. Reread the section entitled **'How can <u>YOU</u> help?'**
   Find and copy a phrase that suggests anyone can do a wildlife survey.

   ..... **1 mark**

Reading Raptors can do inference questions blindfolded. How did you get on with these questions?

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2a Word Meaning Questions

For these questions, you'll need to think about what specific words MEAN.
Read the article again before you try to answer these questions.

1. **'diverse and fascinating wild animals'**

a) Which word could the writer have used instead of **'diverse'** in this phrase?

opposite	large	varied	unequal

1 mark

Circle your answer.

b) What does the word **'fascinating'** mean in this phrase?

interesting	beautiful	strange	unusual

1 mark

Circle your answer.

2. **'Since the 1940s, bumblebee numbers have fallen sharply'**

What does the word **'sharply'** mean in this sentence?

.....

1 mark

3. **'Britain's prickliest mammal'**

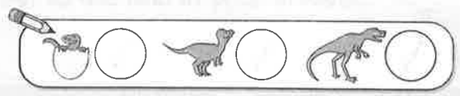
In this sentence, the word **'prickliest'** means the same as

Tick **one** box.

- most angry ☐
- most spiky ☐
- most dangerous ☐
- most ticklish ☐

1 mark

Reading Raptors can swallow word meaning questions whole. How did you find them?



The last few questions on Endangered Species are under here. ➡

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