THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

AGES 5-7

Curriculum resource pack for life cycles

WWT is one of the UK's leading providers of outdoor learning. We welcome over 50,000 learners per year to our Wetland Centres where we provide unique opportunities for learners of all ages and abilities to interact with wetland wildlife from the UK and across the world.

We are open all year round with sessions for every season. Whether you're looking for curriculum-linked learning or simply a fun day out, there really is something for everyone. To find out more about our school visits programme please visit **learningzone.wwt.org.uk.**

Why wetlands?

WWT works across the UK to save, restore and build wetlands for wildlife and people. Wetlands are one of the most important habitats on earth – storing huge amounts of CO_2, providing a natural way of stopping flooding and serving as a home for huge numbers of different creatures. Spending time in wetlands is also proven to improve mental health and wellbeing!

Using this resource pack

This resource pack contains activities designed to cover key curriculum content as well as outdoor activities designed to promote nature connection and a love of the natural world. This is accompanied by supporting resources that can be printed or used on screen with your pupils. At the end of the pack you will find a short quiz that can be used to reinforce and assess pupils' learning.

CURRICULUM LINKS

England

KS1: Science

- Notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults

Northern Ireland

KS1: The world around us

- Ways in which change occurs in the natural world

Wales

Foundation Phase: Science and Technology

- I can recognise that plants and animals are living things which grow
- I can explore relationships between living things, their habitats and their life cycles

Scotland

First: Social Issues

- By comparing generations of families of humans, plants and animals, I can begin to understand how characteristics are inherited

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

YOU WILL NEED:

Life cycle visuals (one set per group – see the end of this pack)
Scissors
Glue

Other relevant resources

Activities:

- Make your own frog and toad hall
- Make your own mini pond

School visits:

- Some of our centres offer sessions focusing on life cycles at KS1. Visit our Learning Zone to find out more **learningzone.wwt.org.uk**

NOTE: **Where you see a Q this indicates a question to ask your pupils.**

Activity 1: Comparing life cycles

What is a lifecycle?

- A life cycle shows how a living thing is born, grows into an adult and then has babies of its own. All living things have a life cycle. Whilst they have similarities, they can also be quite different. This activity compares the life cycle of an otter, a goose and a frog.
- Hand out one set of life cycle visuals to each group and look at each in turn.

Q **Which group of creatures does each animal belong to? *(mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile, fish)***

Otters are mammals. Geese are birds. Frogs are amphibians.

An otter life cycle

- Look at the otter life cycle together as a class. This is a very simple life cycle. The mother otter gives birth to babies which then grow into adults and have their own babies. The baby otters look like miniature versions of the adults.

Q **Do you know what a baby otter is called?**

A baby otter is called a pup (or sometimes a kit or kitten).

A goose life cycle

- Look at the goose life cycle together as a class. The goose shown is a Canada goose. You can often see them in parks across the UK.

Q **How is this different to the otter life cycle?**

The female goose lays eggs rather than giving birth to babies.

Q **Do you know what a baby goose is called?**

A baby goose is called a gosling. They are covered in soft, fluffy down feathers and are unable to fly at first.

A frog life cycle

- Now look at the frog life cycle.

Q **How is this different to other life cycles?**

The eggs are laid in water and are surrounded by a soft jelly rather than a shell.
The young look very different to the adults.

Q **Do you know what frogs' eggs are called?**

Frogs' eggs are called spawn. Frogs can lay up to 4,000 eggs at one time!

Q **Do you know what we call the animals at the next stage?**

Tadpoles develop from the spawn. Frog tadpoles have gills like a fish meaning that they don't have to come to the surface to breathe.

Q **Do you know what we call the animals at the next stage?**

The tadpoles gradually change into 'froglets'. They grow legs and the tail starts to shrink. They develop lungs andneed to come to the surface to breathe (just like the adults). The froglets grow bigger and completely lose their tails, becoming adult frogs. The life cycle then starts all over again.

Review: Re-creating the life cylce

- Give out one set of life cycle visuals to each group.
- Ask them to work as a team to cut out the individual stages of each and jumble them up
- Challenge each group to re-create each of the life cycles:

1. Sort the cut pieces according to which animal life cycle they are part of. Taking each animal in turn...
2. Place the different stages in the correct order.
3. Stick them onto a separate blank piece of paper in the correct order.
4. Add arrows showing which way the cycle goes.
5. Label each of the stages as follows:

OTTER: PUP > ADULT OTTER

GOOSE: EGGS > GOSLING > ADULT GOOSE

FROG: SPAWN > TADPOLE > FROGLET > ADULT FROG

Activity 2: Create a lifestyle

- Ask the class if they know the lifecycle of any other animal. A human? A butterfly? A chicken?
- Discuss the different stages as a class verbally and then set the challenge of creating their own lifecycle.
- Learners work as a team, with each person completing one stage. Can you organise yourselves to create a complete lifecycle? Can you get them in the correct order and add arrows and labels too?

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Activity 3: Build a nest

- Lots of animals build a nest to protect their eggs and their young as they develop.
- Challenge each group to use natural materials to build a nest for a garden bird (they could choose an actual bird they can see).
- As they build it, get them to think about:
  - Which materials will be best for the outside of the nest? How will they hold together?
  - Which materials will be best for lining the inside of the nest? How will you make it comfortable, warm and cosy for the birds?
  - How big will the nest need to be to fit in an adult and several chicks?
  - How deep will it need to be to stop the eggs from rolling out?
  - Where will you place the nest? Think about how you will keep it hidden away and sheltered from bad weather.
- Get each group to share their nest and explain what they think the bird would like about it.
- Pupils could write a poem or story describing how the bird felt when it discovered the nest, ready built, ready for them to move in.
- Have a look for young birds. The following will help you to identify them as youngsters:
  - The feathers on their tummy are usually still quite fluffy.
  - They often look a bit of a mess because their adult feathers are still growing through.
  - Their beaks often look too large for their heads because their beak grows faster than their head.
  - Their colours aren't usually as bright.
  - They tend to spend a lot of time hopping around on the ground.

Q **How did watching the baby birds make you feel?**

Q **How do you think the baby birds feel, taking their first few steps out into the big, wide world?** ***(Pupils could write a poem or story describing their feelings.)***

Q **Which was your favourite baby bird and why?**

Activity 4: Which life cycle?

- Print the three different life cycles.
- Go outside and peg them up in three different areas.
- Give clues e.g. this lifecycle has eggs in it, this lifecycle has four stages, this animal changes from a larva to a pupa. It's a…..ladybird! As soon as learners think they know which lifecycle the clues are about, they can run to the pegged picture of it.

OTTER

Life cycle

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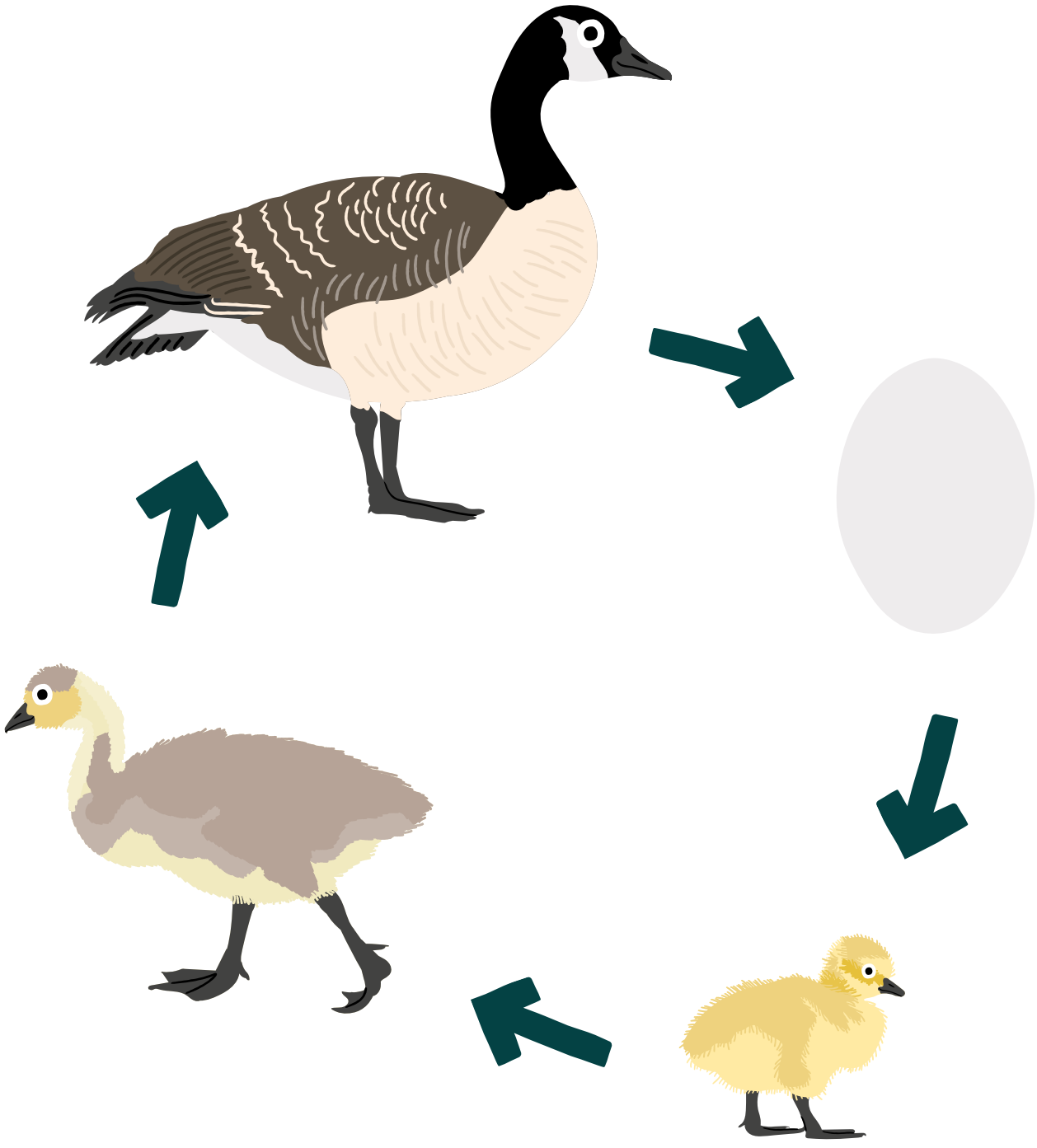
GOOSE

Life cycle



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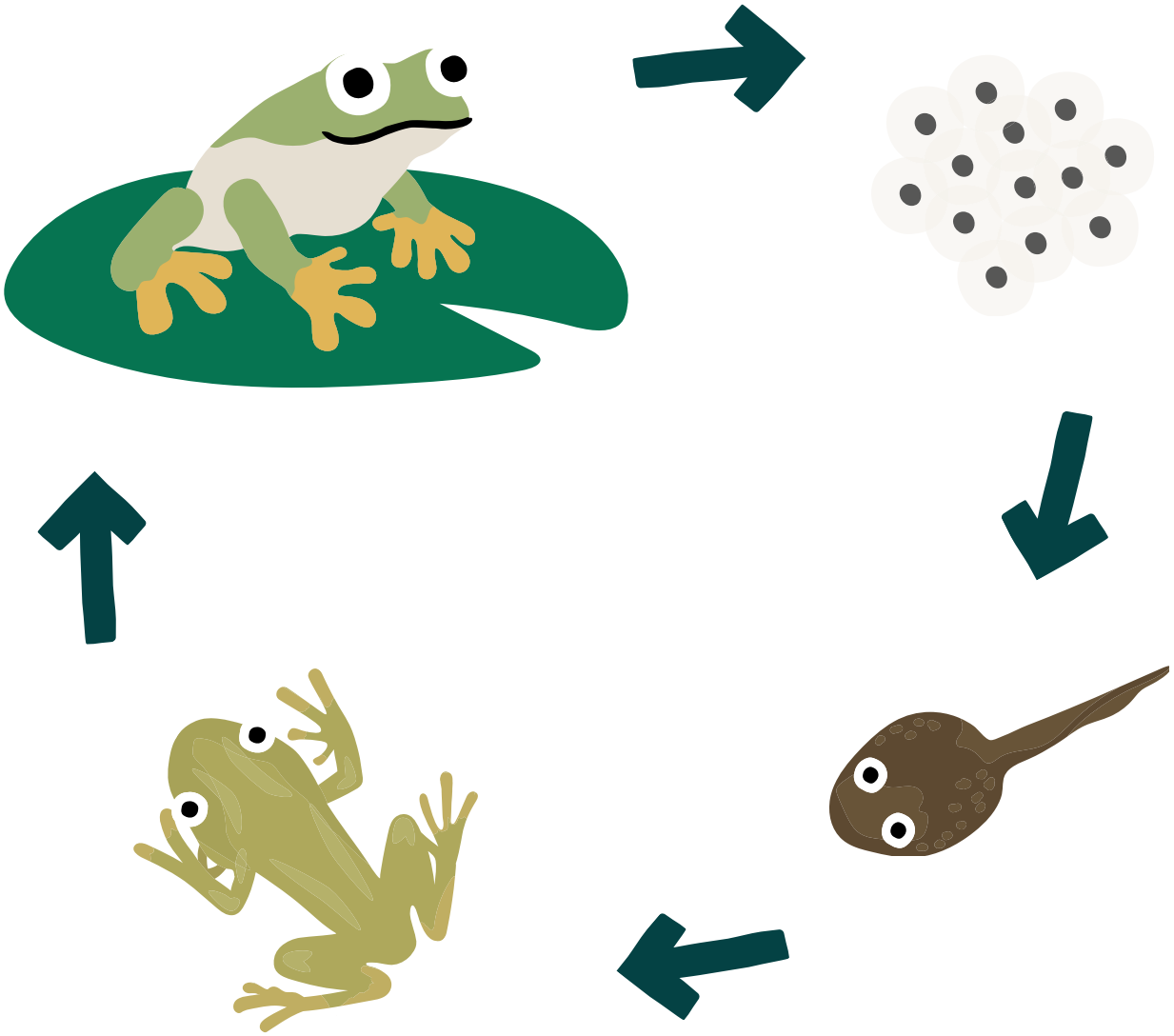
FROG

Life cycle



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QUIZ: THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

Round 1: Picture round

Q Can you name each of the following?

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

Round 2: Baby animal round

Q What are the young of each of the following animals called?

6 **Adult:** Otter
Young: .....

7 **Adult:** Swan
Young: .....

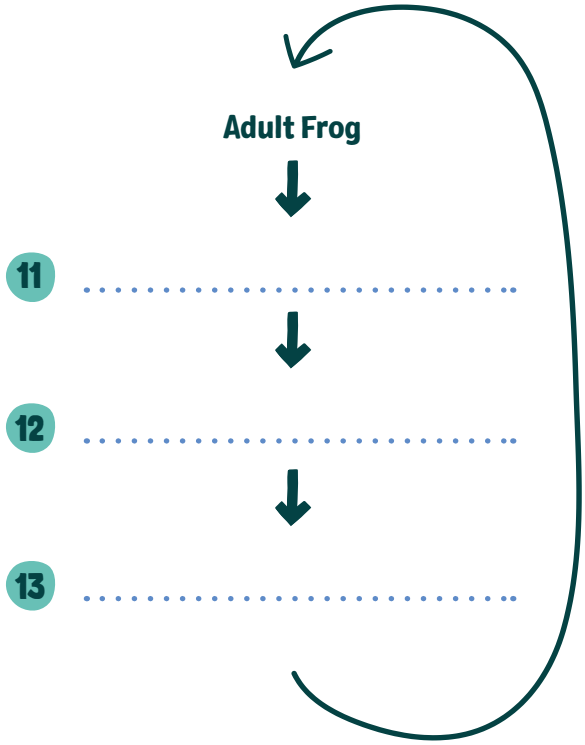
8 **Adult:** Duck
Young: .....

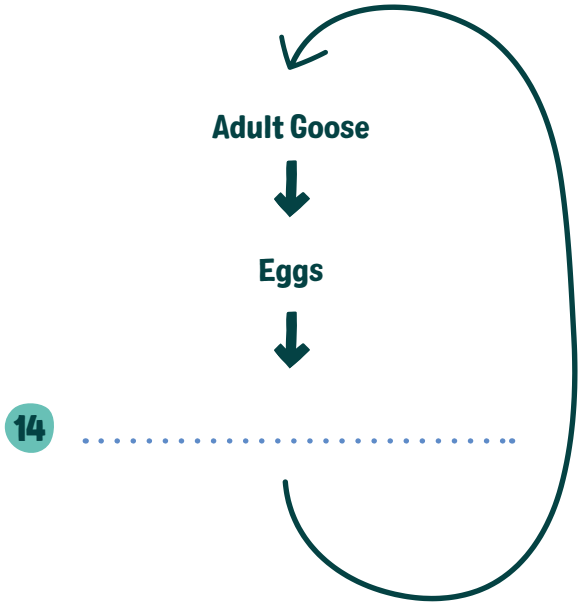
9 **Adult:** Frog
Young: .....

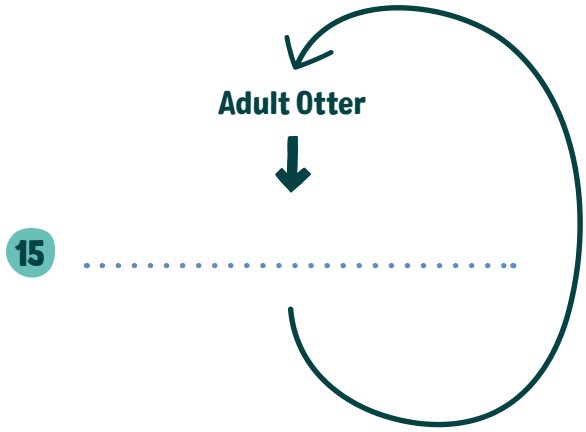
10 **Adult:** Goose
Young: .....

Round 3: Complete the life cycle round

Complete the missing parts of each of the following life cycles.







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Have fun and do share your score to our social media accounts

We'd love to find out how you got on!

ANSWERS: THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

Round 1: Picture round

Q Can you name each of the following?

1 Canada goose

2 Frogspawn

3 Dragonfly nymph (accept larva)

4 Otter

5 Tadpole

Round 2: Baby animal round

Q What are the young of each of the following animals called?

6 **Adult:** Otter
Young: Pup (allow kit or kitten)

7 **Adult:** Swan
Young: Cygnet

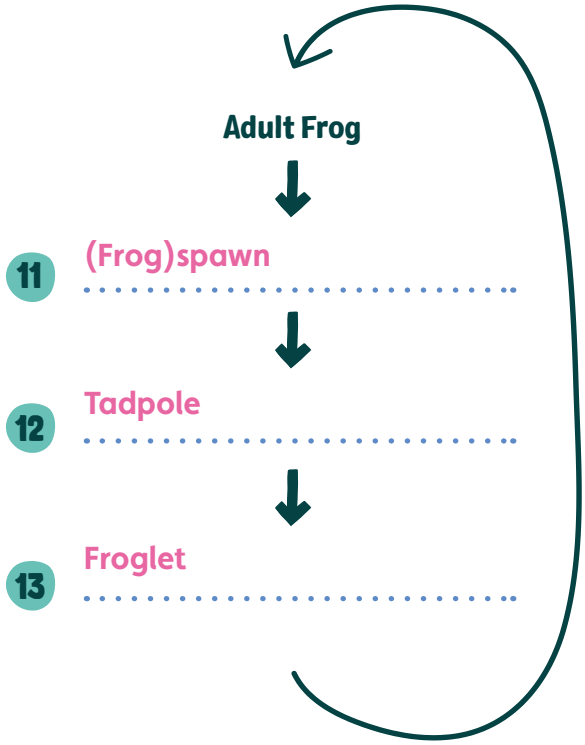
8 **Adult:** Duck
Young: Duckling

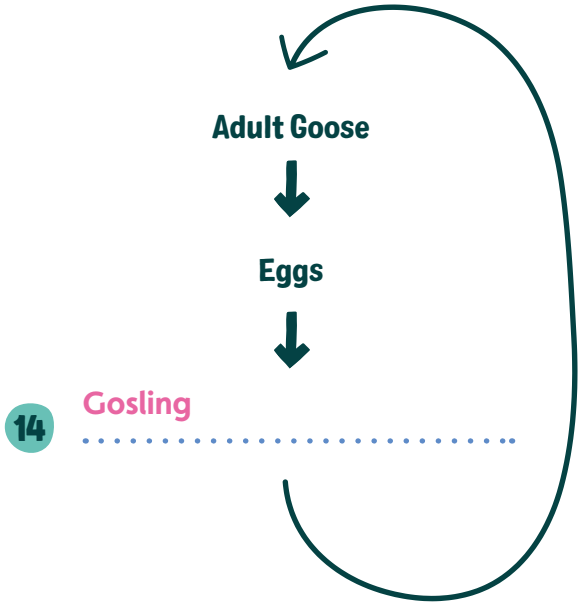
9 **Adult:** Frog
Young: Froglet (allow tadpole)

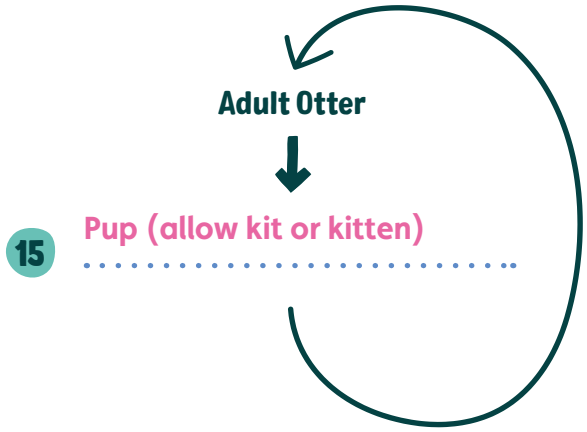
10 **Adult:** Goose
Young: Gosling

Round 3: Complete the life cycle round

Complete the missing parts of each of the following life cycles.







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