

North Downs animal identification key

Did you know....? Animals can be classified as either vertebrates or invertebrates. Once you have matched the North Downs animal address cards with their profile pictures, use the key below to help you decide:

- if the animal is vertebrate or invertebrate
- if it is a vertebrate, which animal group does it belong to?

Does the animal have a backbone?

IF NO, INVERTEBRATE

Invertebrates are animals that do not have a backbone. Some have soft bodies like worms, slugs and jellyfish. Other invertebrates, like insects, spiders and crustaceans have a hard outer-casing. This protects their body a bit like a suit of armour and is called an exoskeleton.

If YES, VERTEBRATE

Vertebrates are animals that have a backbone inside their body. The major groups include fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

Animal group/vertebrate identification key

Does the animal have scales?

No

Yes

Does the animal have feathers?

Yes

BIRD

No

Does it lay its eggs in water?
Does it have damp skin?
Does it have 2 stages in its life cycle?

Yes

AMPHIBIAN

No

Young are born alive and fed on milk. Have 'warm blood' and a steady body temperature.

MAMMAL

Does the animal have gills or fins?
Does it lay its eggs in water?

No

Has lungs and lays its eggs on land.
REPTILE

Yes

FISH