



Information for visitors

Waterborne diseases
(all year-round)

Ticks
(March to November)

Harvest mites
(August to October)

Wild Parsnip **(March to September)**

Caterpillars, Oak Processionary Moth
(May to July)

We recommend that you share this information to parents or guardians of children taking part in fieldwork

The seasons/months stated in this document are guidelines and may vary due to local weather conditions

FSC Values: Delivering first-hand experience Providing opportunities for everyone
Sustainability for the future A caring attitude.

Waterborne diseases, all year-round

To reduce the risk of contracting waterborne disease at river sites:

- • No hand-mouth contact (includes eating/drinking during fieldwork)
- • Cleaning hands prior to meals and on return to the Centre
- • Covering open cuts that are likely to come into contact with infected water with tape, waterproof dressings and protective gloves

If individuals wish to wear gloves for their own peace of mind they may do so.

The infection that carries the greatest risk is Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) however the chances of contracting this disease are very low. Symptoms include

- • A feeling of having a 'flu-like' illness
- • Above normal temperature and/or a feeling of chill
- • Pains in joints and muscles – calf and back muscle pains being particularly noticeable
- • May sometimes be accompanied by a skin rash (similar to that of meningitis)

If course participants develop any of these symptoms within four weeks of their return from the field course they are advised to consult their family doctor, mentioning the possibility of Leptospirosis. Treatment by antibiotics in the early stages is highly effective. **01306 734500**

Ticks - March to November most common



Ticks are small, spider like creatures that feed on the blood of animals, including people and can transmit bacteria that cause diseases.

Ticks vary in size from about 1mm to 1cm long and are usually found in woodlands and grassland.

Tick bites can transmit Lyme disease which can lead to very serious conditions if left untreated so it is important to go to your GP if you have **flu like symptoms or an expanding rash** around a bite after spending time in tick prevalent areas.

Lyme disease can be treated with a course of antibiotics, so prevention and early detection are crucial.

Perform a tick check after returning from spending time outdoors by looking and feeling your body as you may not always notice being bitten. Ticks prefer warm, moist places on your body, especially the groin area, waist, arm pits, behind the knee and along hair lines, so look out for anything as tiny as a freckle or a speck of dirt.

Young children are more commonly bitten on the head/scalp so they would need to be carefully checked around the neck, behind the ears and along the hairline.

If you have been bitten it is important to remove the tick correctly as soon as possible. The safest way to remove a tick is by using a tick removal tool. If you do not have a tick removal tool, using a pair of tweezers grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull upwards slowly and firmly so ensure all of the tick including mouthparts is removed.

Once removed, apply antiseptic to the bite area, or wash with soap and water and keep an eye on it for several weeks for any changes.

Harvest mites - August to October most common



How do you know if you have been attacked by harvest mites?

Harvest mite bites are always in areas covered by clothes and never on exposed skin and often in moist hidden folds of the body or for where clothing forms a constriction. The bites cause extremely irritating heat lumps lasting from four to fourteen days which become even itchier after a warm bath or vigorous exercise. The mites are very selective preferring humans with soft delicate skin. Bite and sting cream or antihistamine can help to reduce irritation from harvest mite bites.

Wild Parsnip - March to September



Wild parsnip can be found in grassland and waste ground, predominately chalky / limestone areas.

You should avoid touching wild parsnip as the sap within the leaves can cause skin irritation similar to a chemical burn – reddening, blisters and burning which can remain visible for several weeks.

Caterpillars, Oak Processionary Moth



May to July

Caterpillars of the Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) are a pest which can be a hazard to the health of oak trees, people and animals. Their tiny hairs can be blown about by the wind and cause itchy skin rashes, eye and throat irritations and, occasionally, breathing difficulties in people and animals. Caterpillars of the Oak Processionary Moth live and feed almost exclusively on oak trees.

Avoid touching or approaching nests or caterpillars.

You can report an OPM sighting to the Forestry Commission by

- Emailing your sighting to opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk
- Telephone it to 0300 067 4442