Masons Field Decaying Wood Habitats

Decaying wood is an important wildlife habitat. A high proportion of insects in woodland are dependent upon decaying or dead wood, in addition to those that live on growing trees and within the woodland canopy.

Fungi have a key role by decomposing wood into material that can be used by other wildlife such as invertebrates. Fungi usually live on already damaged or dead wood though exceptions are Honey Fungus and Dutch Elm Disease. Mosses occur on the outside of both live and decaying wood.

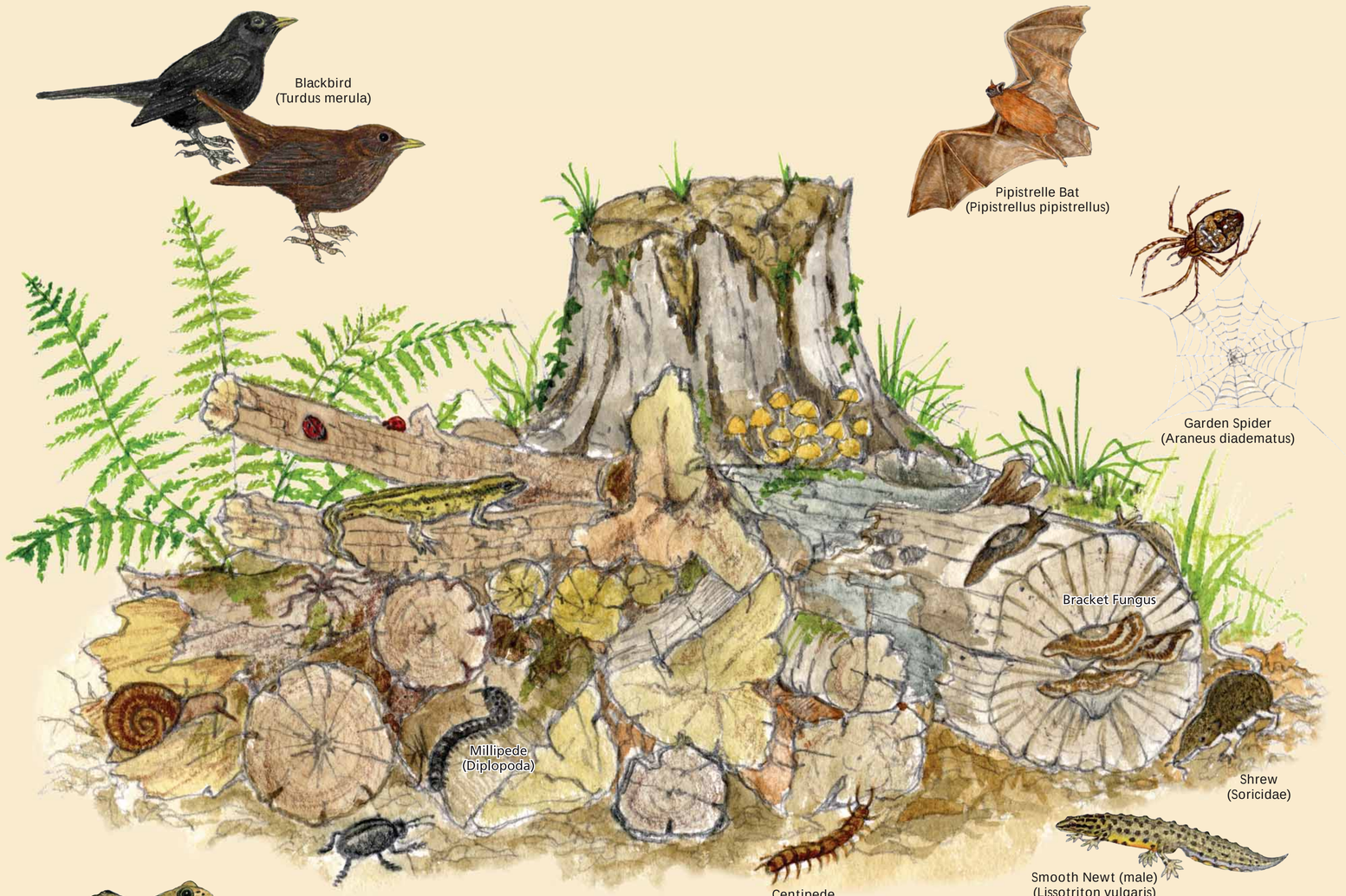
Invertebrates of decaying wood that have been recorded at Masons Field include the Hoverfly Xylotia segnis, the Common Rough Woodlouse, the Striped Woodlouse, the Disc Snail, Garden Snail and spiders.

Smooth Newts, Common Frogs and Common Toads seek shelter in or under decaying wood during the day. Birds and bats make use of holes in wood for nesting and feed on the insects of decaying wood.

At Masons Field, decaying wood habitats have been provided in hedgerows around the field. Wood from a variety of tree species, logs of different sizes and in various stages of decomposition can be seen. Look for log piles, logs with cavities, piles of brush, and large individual logs.

Shade enhances decaying wood habitats. Shade provides a smaller range of temperature extremes, both during the day and the night. In the shade, decaying wood is more likely to retain moisture which can benefit fungi, wood-boring insects and amphibians.

A loggery has been created by partly burying some dead wood to about 60cm in the ground, in an area partially shaded by a hedgerow and Bramble. Loggeries provide undisturbed wood for insects whose larval stages take several years to develop such as the Stag Beetle. The Stag Beetle occurs in parts of west London and it is hoped that they could establish a population at Fryent Country Park. The Lesser Stag Beetle has been recorded at Masons Field.



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