

FOREST RECYCLING – LEAF LITTER STUDY

Task Instructions

- Move to an area of undisturbed leaf litter, off the track.
- Move slowly through the forest. Be aware of potential hazards.
- Work with/ stay with your partner at all times.
- **Observe, trap, record & release** any animals moving about on the top layer of the leaf litter. The top layer is the layer of *whole leaves*.
- Dig down carefully into the next layer, the *humus layer* (decomposing leaves), estimating the depth of the layers as you dig.
- **Observe, trap, record & release** any animals found in the humus layer.
- Complete the sketches below, recording your estimates of layer depth and contributions of animals found to the decomposition of leaf litter..

Table 1

Layer	Drawing	Estimated depth (cm)
Whole leaf layer		
Humus		
Topsoil		
Subsoil		

Table 2

Layer found in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole leaf • Humus • Topsoil 	Observation of animal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sketch • classification eg insect • name (if known) 	Contribution of animal to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decomposition of leaf litter • soil quality • role in food chain