



The Importance of National Parks

UNIT OVERVIEW

The Theme

National parks help to take care of places with natural and historical value. Unlike humans, who are extremely good at surviving in all sorts of conditions, some plants and animals find it very difficult, or impossible, to survive in areas where their habitat has been disturbed or changed.

National parks preserve habitats for a wide range of native plants and wildlife. Parks maintain biodiversity and protect endangered species. They provide people with opportunities to learn about natural flora and fauna as well as to explore and admire the beauty of diverse environments.

* Activities with a star have a detailed lesson plan page.

Getting Started

Create a concept map - to find out what the students already know about national parks, or the specific park to be visited.

* Native Animal Research - What is special about Tasmanian native animals? Choose one to investigate.

* All About Trees - Discovering trees through growth rings, transpiration and mathematics. For further information see the 'Tree Ring' activity in the Value of Rainforest E-Set.

Where Are The Parks?

- On a map of Tasmania, colour and label all of the national parks. Highlight the park you are going to visit.
- Which are the mountain parks? Do rivers originate in them?
- Which are the coastal parks? What are they famous for?
- Which looks to be the largest park? What are its neighbouring land uses?

Draw a Timeline that shows the history of the park you are to visit. You could interview people who have lived in the area a long time to find out what they know.

Flora Investigation - Choose a plant that grows within the park you are to visit. Research where in the park it grows and which animals rely on the plant for habitat. Flora lists for specific parks are often available.

* Biodiversity Football - A running ball game to illustrate the concept of biodiversity.

Site Activities

Parks and Wildlife Service Discovery Rangers are often available to conduct these and other activities at the site. Please contact the Parks and Wildlife Service Education Section via email: parkseducation@parks.tas.gov.au

* Native Animal Investigations and Footprint Plaster Casts - Create footprint souvenirs and learn more about animal habits.



Precious Parks E-Set suited to lower secondary students.

* Roving Reporter - Conduct interviews with park visitors and staff.

* Park Survey - Familiarisation with the National Park.

Photo Opportunities - Take digital pictures as you explore the park.

Follow-up Activities

Threatened Species - Find out about threatened species in Tasmania. Find out what the following classifications mean and which plants and animals fall into these categories: Extinct, Extinct in the wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Least Concern.

Are there any threatened plants or animals found in the park you visited?

Write down your ideas about what could be done to help save some of Tasmania's threatened species.

Extinct Inventions - Invent an extinct species and draw it. What was it called? Give its scientific name. Write an 'extinct species' entry for an encyclopaedia.

Where did it live?

What did it feed on?

How was it unique?

Why did the animal become extinct? What threatened it?

What could have been done to save it?

What are the closest relatives living today?

Construct-A-Habitat - Choose an animal that lives in the national park - perhaps the one researched before the visit. What habitat requirements does it have? Construct a 3D habitat for the animal, or draw a diagram that illustrates the animal home (eg a wombat tunnel system)

Some interesting animal homes to investigate: different types of bird nests, tree hollows, the tunnel and trap door of a wolf spider, ringtail possum or bettong nest.

Paint The Park - Choose one of the photos taken during the visit on which to base a painting or pastel drawing.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Head Office; 134 Macquarie Street Hobart Tasmania 7000

Internet: www.parks.tas.gov.au August 2007 © State of Tasmania

Create a Who-Am-I game - Ask each student to think of a Tasmanian plant or animal (or even to draw a plant/animal name out of a hat to give diversity) and write 5 - 6 clues about it, each one starting with "I am..." Play the game as a class - each student is to read out their clues, the others in the class are to guess 'who' it is.

Writing activities:

If your town was a suburb of a larger city like Sydney in 100 years how would you feel about it? How would the place have changed? What would you do?

Write in your own words how a native animal might feel living inside compared to outside the national park.



Write down the conclusions you have drawn from your park visitor interviews.

School Ground Plan - Draw up a plan for changing the environment within your school. This might involve things like planting native plants that are known to provide habitat for native animals, creating a frog friendly garden, building habitat boxes, or providing recycling bins. You could show these changes on a map of the school and grounds.

Personal Positions - Ask the students: what is your personal position on the importance of national parks? Ask them to explain the feelings of an environmentalist wanting to have land set aside. Explain the feelings of a forestry worker wanting to be able to use the land.

Create a Class Concept Map - this should reflect what the students have learned through the unit..

Precious Parks E-Set - Unit Overview

E-Sets are an Electronic Environmental and Educational set of notes for teachers