

La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary

Education Experiences

Living Water



Your students will feel as if they are deep in the Australian bush at the La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary. They will explore our extensive network of wetlands and be provided with a valuable learning experience.

Thick stands of wetland plants protect quiet pools of water teeming with tiny wildlife. Students will be excited when their nets capture new and curious creatures that have bizarre shapes and fascinating ways of moving around in their watery world. They will be able to compare the intricate structures of different creatures and experience the animals' habitats, the living water and a variety of unusual aquatic plants.

Your students will 'kick up a storm' as they imitate the local frogs. They will imitate frog calls and learn how to detect and protect our last remaining urban frogs. This will provide them with the skills to conduct their own 'Frog Watch' in their local wetlands and waterways.

Students will identify some of the properties of aquatic plants in our above ground pond. This pond enables students to come face to face with features of aquatic plants and how they are 'used' to keep our wetlands healthy and clean.

Our learning centre has video equipment to examine the creatures in detail. We will find out how various creature features enable survival in the Australian environment. We will be able to explore some differences between creatures and observe many forms of movement including walking on water. Students can then use this knowledge to construct their own theoretical wetland.

Our expert presenters will take full advantage of anything your class might bump into. There may be a mob of kangaroos, an orb weaver spinning an intricate web, a swamp-hen with gangly feet or a flock of ducks landing on the water. We might look at some of the artificial hollows (Nesting Boxes) that have video cameras and can be viewed from the internet (www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife – Webcam)

Along the way students will see how our environment is damaged particularly by stormwater pollution. We will learn how we can all help to protect our environment by making sure the wrong things are not washed into the stormwater system.

Your educational experience at the Sanctuary is designed to stimulate the imagination and curiosity of your students and provide them with ways to safely explore, learn about and look after their environment.

Your school ground

The La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary is able to assist your school with school ground projects. We have an excellent Indigenous Plant Nursery that can provide plant and tips for developing Australian habitat gardens - including wetlands. Some of our other experiences can show you how easy it can be to create Australian wildlife habitat in school grounds.

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An Engaging Experience

The La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary offers a range of engaging activities to fulfill the two hours. A standard Ponding experience will consist of four 20-25 minute activities.

1. Dip Netting Activity
 - Using dip nets to locate small moving animals.
 - Name and describe some of the animal features.
2. Close Encounters I (Video, Food Webs, Wetland Structure)
 - We use our video microscope to have a really close look at some of the “usual suspects”.
 - The class is encouraged to construct their own food web and theoretical wetland.
3. Circle of Sound, Frog Calling, Pollution Table
 - Focus activity to gain an appreciation of natural and unnatural sounds.
 - Students get to act like “sexy” frogs and learn at least 3 frog calls. These calls can then be used to conduct your own Frog Census – Visit www.melbournewater.com.au
 - Understanding the importance of clean & clear wetlands.
 - Investigation into the effects of litter in our waterways.
4. Wetlands Walk
 - A walk through our wetlands to bring together all the above activities.

The number of activities is dependant on the number of class groups that attend a single two hour session. For five or more class groups we will run extra activities and shorten the length of time for each activity. Additional activities that can be included in a Ponding experience are:

1. Boat Building (Levels 3+)
 - Understanding the properties of plants
 - Constructing a small boat from reeds and testing it's floating ability
2. Whose Habitat (Levels 3+)
 - Group activity to investigate particular wetland animals and prepare a small presentation
 - Students use our library to prepare a short report on a wetland animal.
3. Close Encounters II (Levels 4+)
 - Using our quality microscopes to allow individual investigation of wetland Minibeasts.
4. Constructing a Frog Bog (Levels 2+)
 - A demonstration of how to construct your own small ‘frog bog’ or wetland at home or at school.

Program Extension

Engage your students further by extending the education experience to include one or more extra activities. You could come for the day and include a morning and afternoon component and create your own mix of activities. You could also inquire about our range of other experiences and give your students the benefit of both our wetland and woodland environments. Contact our bookings office for details regarding extending or tailoring programs.

Resources

Melbourne Water – www.melbournewater.com.au

Amphibian Research Centre – www.frogs.org.au

La Trobe University – La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary – www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife

Gould League Victoria – www.gould.edu.au