

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HISTORIES AND CULTURES

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
learners first

LIVING CULTURES – MUTTONBIRDING

YEAR 9

The
Orb

MUTTONBIRDING**FEEDING THE WORLD**

Learners explore muttonbirding practices in comparison to farming birds for food. They compare commercial muttonbirding with chicken farming in Australia, and consider, from an ethical and economic perspective, the principles behind cultural connections and food supply, production and distribution.

CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures**

Organising idea 2

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place.

ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS**Geography**

Students analyse interconnections between people, places and environments and explain how these interconnections influence people, and change places and environments.

Students analyse alternative strategies to a geographical challenge using environmental, social and economic criteria.

CONTENT DESCRIPTORS**Geography**

Human alteration of biomes to produce food, industrial materials and fibres, and the use of systems thinking to analyse the environmental effects of these alterations (ACHGK061).

The perceptions people have of place, and how these influence their connections to different places (ACHGK065).

GENERAL CAPABILITIES**Critical and Creative Thinking**

Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas

Identify and clarify information and ideas

Level 6 – clarify complex information and ideas drawn from a range of sources

Ethical Understanding

Understanding ethical concepts and issues

Explore ethical concepts in context

Level 6 – distinguish between the ethical and non-ethical dimensions of complex issues

Intercultural Understanding

Recognising culture and developing respect

Develop respect for cultural diversity

Level 6 – understand the importance of mutual respect in promoting cultural exchange and collaboration in an interconnected world

Learning Goals

Learners will:

- » Compare perceptions and use of places and spaces between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, and reflect on the differences between muttonbirding and chicken farming.
- » Reflect on and evaluate findings of an inquiry to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge: harvesting wild birds and farming chickens.
- » Present an oral response, supported by visual aids including maps, to communicate a reasoned argument about a contemporary geographical issue: 'Consider the ethics and economic viability of food harvesting and farming to meet cultural, biosecurity and food security needs.'

Learning Sequence**Activating and Engaging**

Learning Maps

Land Links

View the clips from the 'Living Cultures – Muttonbirding' section of The Orb.

Ask learners:

- » What are the opportunities and challenges facing Tasmanian Aboriginal mutton birders?
- » What are the threats to the global mutton bird population?
- » Are there enough birds to meet the demands for the sale of fresh mutton birds?
- » What can the mutton birders do to increase their sales of birds?

- » What do birders do to ensure that muttonbirding is an ethical practice?
- » What are the advantages of eating mutton birds as a wild caught food?

Explore the practice of chicken farming in Australia.

Ask learners:

- » What are the different practices in the chicken farming industry in Australia?
- » What are the conditions like for chickens who spend their lives in cages?
- » Which practices demonstrate that care is being taken of the health and wellbeing of the chickens?
- » What are the challenges facing chicken farmers in Australia?
- » Are there particular farming practices that can ensure a plentiful supply of chickens to meet the commercial demand for chicken meat?
- » What can chicken farmers do to ensure the health and well-being of farmed chickens?

Exploring and Discovering

Community Links

Land Links

Invite an Aboriginal Heritage Officer from Parks and Wildlife or a member of the Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK) program to talk about their experience of muttonbirding.

- » In what ways are mutton birds an important food source?
- » How important is the practice of muttonbirding to Tasmanian Aboriginal people?
- » What are conditions like for the commercial birders on the islands?
- » What are the main issues for Aboriginal people regarding commercial birding?

Invite an Aboriginal Heritage Officer from Parks and Wildlife or a member of the Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK) program to take the class to a mutton bird rookery in February or March to show learners a mutton bird chick and to watch the adult birds return from the sea to their burrows at dusk.

Ask Learners:

- » What is the relationship between the mutton birds and the birders?
- » How do the birders ensure that the rookery is kept in good condition for the breeding birds and their chicks?
- » What are conditions like for the commercial birders on the islands?
- » What aspects of connecting to Country are demonstrated by Tasmanian Aboriginal birders?

Organise a visit to a local chicken farm:

- » What is the density of the population of the chickens in the farm that you visit?
- » How are the chickens able to feed, sleep, have access to water, and to follow their natural instincts to explore, forage and communicate?
- » What is the production of chickens for the food market?
- » What do farmers do to ensure that chicken production is practiced ethically?

Compare wild food harvesting with farming.

- » How cost effective is wild food harvesting compared with farming animals for food?
- » What opportunities are there for mutton birds to become a gourmet food item?
- » How might chicken farming change if we were prepared to pay more for our meat?
- » What is the relationship Aboriginal people have with the mutton bird and its habitat?

Synthesising and Applying

Deconstruct–Reconstruct

Choose an element of muttonbirding and that of chicken farming. Consider the parts, purposes, and people who interact with your object or system, and then ask:

- » In what ways could it be made to be more effective?
- » In what ways could it be made to be more efficient?
- » In what ways could it be made to be more ethical?




Success Criteria

Learners:

- » Explain the principles behind cultural food gathering, food production and the health and well-being of the animals we eat.
- » Reflect on and evaluate the findings of an inquiry into the relative challenges and advantages of commercial muttonbirding and chicken farming for food production.
- » Present an argument that considers the ethics and economic viability of food harvesting and farming to meet cultural, biosecurity, and food security needs.


Resources

- » [The Orb](#)
- » [Australian Curriculum](#)
- » [Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge \(ASK Program\) Guidelines](#)
- » [Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge \(ASK Program\) Application Form](#)
- » The Aboriginal Education Library: email Aboriginal.education.library@education.tas.gov.au or telephone 03 6165 5480 for more resources, including the ones listed below.
- » The Eight-Way Framework of Aboriginal Pedagogy
- » ABC News Report: [Ancient muttonbirding harvest kicks off on remote Tasmanian islands](#)
- » ABC News Report: [Babel Island mutton bird harvest affirms ancient food culture](#)
- » TAC Poster: [mulaka yula tayaritja-ta \(Muttonbirding on Bass Strait Islands\)](#)
- » Parks and Wildlife website: [Short-tailed Shearwater Puffinus tenuirostris](#)
- » Wikipedia: [Poultry Farming](#)
- » Website: [Lilydale Free Range Chicken Farming](#)
- » ABC Radio News Report: [Caged-egg farmers defend practice in face of mounting opposition](#)
- » ABC News Report: [Cages are better for chickens than intensive free-range, farmers say, as calls for a ban get louder](#)
- » The Conversation: [Proposed poultry standards leave Australia trailing behind other industrialised countries](#)
- » YouTube clip: [Free range Egg farming Australia. Chicken Caravan Glenburn Victoria](#)

	Dictionary.com
	Oxford Online Dictionary
	Wikipedia

Glossary


Ethics

Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity. 


Mutton bird

A shearwater or petrel of the southern oceans. 

Muttonbirding

The seasonal harvesting of the chicks of petrels, especially shearwater species, for food, oil and feathers by recreational or commercial hunters. 

Rookery

A rookery is a colony of breeding animals, generally birds. ... The word applies to the nesting place of birds, such as crows and rooks, the source of the term. The breeding grounds of colony-forming seabirds and marine mammals (true seals or sea lions) and even some turtles are also referred to as rookeries. 



State of Tasmania (Department of Education)
Published: September 2018