

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
HISTORIES AND CULTURES

DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
*learners first*

# LIVING CULTURES – MUTTONBIRDING

YEAR 4

The  
**Orb**

**MUTTONBIRDING****MUTTON BIRD HABITATS**

Learners explore the concepts of place, interconnection and sustainability. They explore how landforms and human actions influence the environmental characteristics of mutton bird rookeries and the relationship Tasmanian Aboriginal people have with mutton birds and their habitat.

**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 identify the interconnections between components of the environment and between people and the environment. Students recognise the importance of the environment and identify different possible responses to a geographical challenge.

Students develop geographical questions to investigate and locate, collect and sort information and data from different sources to answer these questions. They record and represent data and the location of places and their characteristics in simple graphic forms.

**CONTENT DESCRIPTORS****Geography**

The importance of environments, including natural vegetation, to animals and people (ACHASSK088).

The custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability (ACHASSK089).

**GENERAL CAPABILITIES****Critical and Creative Thinking**

*Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas*

Pose questions

Level 3 - pose questions to expand their knowledge about the world

**Ethical Understanding**

*Exploring values, rights and responsibilities*

Examine values

Level 3 - identify and describe shared values in familiar and unfamiliar contexts

**Intercultural Understanding**

*Recognising culture and developing respect*

Explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs practices

Level 3 - describe and compare a range of cultural stories, events and artefacts

**Learning Goals**

*Learners will:*

- » Identify mutton bird rookeries in Tasmania.
- » Describe the life and habitat of the short-tailed shearwater (mutton bird) and its relationship with Aboriginal people in Tasmania.
- » Explore global environmental hazards affecting short-tailed shearwaters.
- » Describe how people and environments influence one another.
- » Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges in relation to muttonbirding in Tasmania.

**Learning Sequence****Activating and Engaging**

*Learning Maps*

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

Ask learners:

- » Where are the mutton bird rookeries in Tasmania?
- » When do the adult birds first arrive at the rookery?
- » What is their purpose for living in the rookery, and how long do they stay?
- » What do returning birds have to do when they first arrive?
- » What are the physical characteristics of a rookery?

- » Where do the birds go when they leave Tasmania?
- » What parts of the world do Mutton birds visit once they leave Tasmania and are there any recognised patterns in their travels?
- » How do we know where the mutton bird goes, and how far they fly?

### 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 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:

- » How do Tasmanian Aboriginal people ensure that the rookery is kept in good condition for the breeding birds and their chicks?
- » What human and environmental threats are faced by the birds, both in the rookery and when they travel out to sea?
- » What aspects of connecting to Country are demonstrated by Tasmanian Aboriginal people?
- » What can be done collectively and globally to protect the population of mutton birds (short-tailed shearwaters) during all phases of their lives?
- » How do Aboriginal birders ensure their muttonbirding practice does not endanger the long-term bird population?

Visit the *ningina tunapri* exhibition at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to explore the relationship between the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and the mutton bird.

Ask learners:

- » What are the contemporary and historic connections that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have with mutton birds and the practice of birding?

#### Learning Maps

Share with learners the maps from *Return to the Islands* and *Big Dog Connection*. Have learners draw an illustrated map describing the life and journey of a mutton bird.

### Synthesising and Applying

#### Deconstruct-Reconstruct

Have learners:

- » Describe a mutton bird rookery and explain its characteristics.
- » Illustrate and describe their own experience of visiting a rookery.

- » Re-tell what they learned about the relationship Aboriginal people have with mutton birds and the land and Country where the rookeries are located.

Have learners read together the book *Circle* by Jeannie Baker.

Ask learners to pose questions about the role humans play in global habitats of migratory birds.

### Success Criteria

Learners:

- » Explain the relationship Aboriginal people in Tasmania have with mutton birds and their rookeries.
- » Describe the influence of Tasmanian Aboriginal people on the environmental characteristics of the mutton bird rookeries on their Country.
- » Describe key events that have led to the return of Land to Tasmania's Aboriginal people.
- » Identify the effects of these interconnections on the characteristics of rookeries and mutton birds.
- » Identify and describe different possible responses to the challenge of global industrialisation and over fishing in the feeding grounds of the mutton bird.

## 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](mailto: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
- » *Circle*, Jeannie Baker, 2016
- » *Return to the Islands [kit] : the story of Aborigines and the tradition of muttonbirding*, Department of Education, Tasmania
- » DVD – *The Big Dog Connection*, Aboriginal Education Services, Tasmania
- » [TMAG Online Resources](#)

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|----|--------------------------------|
| AM | Australian Museum              |
| C  | Cambridge Dictionary           |
| D  | <a href="#">Dictionary.com</a> |
| G  | General understanding          |
| WP | <a href="#">Wikipedia</a>      |

## Glossary

### Country

In Aboriginal English, a person's land, sea, sky, rivers, sites, seasons, plants and animals; place of heritage, belonging and spirituality; is called 'Country'. AM

### Industrialisation

The development of industries in a country or region on a wide scale. D

### Interconnection

Our knowledge of the interconnection of natural processes. C

### Mutton bird

A shearwater or petrel of the southern oceans. D

### Muttonbirding

The activity of catching mutton birds for food or sale. WP

### 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. WP

### Short-tailed shearwater

The short-tailed shearwater or slender-billed shearwater, also called yolla or moonbird, and commonly known as the mutton bird in Australia, is the most abundant seabird species in Australian waters. WP



State of Tasmania (Department of Education)  
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