Life on the Murray River

Activity 3

View the 'Life on the Murray River' VR tour at www.lsv.com.au/vr

LEVELS 3 & 4

Key Learning

During this lesson, students will find out about native plants and animals that are found near the Murray River. They will investigate how these living things support and depend on each other and the environment around them to survive.

Resources

- Speakers
- Computer access for students
- Appendix A: *Creature Connections*

Engage

- Tell students to close their eyes and listen carefully as you play the Murray River Sounds clip (audio only). Afterwards, ask them what animal noises they could hear. Identify as many as possible and make a list on the board. Ask students to highlight any of these animals that they think might be native to Australia.

Explore

- In pairs, students have 15 minutes to find as many species of animal as they can that are native to the Murray River region. They should list these in their workbook, sorting them into the following categories:
- Fish
- Bird
- Mammal
- Reptile
- Insect

Curriculum

Science – Science Understanding
Biological sciences
Levels 3 & 4

- Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things (VCSSU057)
- Different living things have different life cycles and depend on each other and the environment to survive (VCSSU058)

Science – Science Inquiry Skills
Recording and processing
Levels 3 & 4

- Use a range of methods including tables and column graphs to represent data and to identify patterns and trends (VCSIS069)

Science – Science Inquiry Skills
Communicating
Levels 3 & 4

- Represent and communicate observations, ideas and findings to show patterns and relationships using formal and informal scientific language (VCSIS072)

Explain

Discuss as a class how we can distinguish between fish, birds, mammals, reptiles and insects.

Ask students:

- What are the common features of each of these?
- For which group of animals did you find the most species? Which had the least?
- Which of these groups do marsupials belong to? What are their distinguishing features?
- In which group does a platypus fit? What makes this animal tricky to classify? (*Answer: It is a mammal, but belongs to a small group, called monotremes, which lay eggs rather than giving birth to live young.*)

Elaborate

- With their partner, students now need to choose one of these animals to research further. As they investigate, they need to use Appendix A: *Creature Classifications* to show how their chosen animal is connected to other animals, plants and the environment around them.

Evaluate

- Each pair now needs to find another pair to present their findings to. Choose a few groups to present to the whole class.

Discuss as a group:

- What do you think would happen if one species of plant or animal was removed from this ecosystem?

References

YouTube, 2017. *The Murray River in 4K*. [online video] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsP1KFs_hjw [Accessed 12 July 2021]

Appendix A
Creature Connections

Choose an animal that is native to the Murray River region and do some research to find out more about it. As you investigate, fill in the map below with images and text, drawing labelled arrows between the boxes, to show how your chosen creature connects with other plants, animals and the environment.