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Foreword



Primary school education plays a very important role in increasing community understanding and informing the future custodians of the environment. The aim of this kit is to raise awareness, understanding and support for conservation; and to engage students in the management of Lord Howe Island.

The Lord Howe Island Education Kit is designed to conform to the NSW Education and Communities curriculum, addressing some of the key learning areas in Connected Group A - Exploring Our Place. The kit is a structured and directed primary level teaching resource that incorporates Fact Sheets, Teacher Activity Plans, Student Activity Sheets, Identification Guides, Extension Exercises and Resources for a comprehensive learning experience. The kit offers an interactive learning experience that is not only relevant to students located on Lord Howe Island, but can be adapted and used by schools on mainland Australia.

The Lord Howe Island Education Kit currently contains two modules; Module 1 is on biodiversity and Module 2 is on threats. Other modules are planned for the future.



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Module 1 Biodiversity



Biodiversity

Biodiversity or biological diversity is the variety of all life forms on earth - the different plants, animals and micro organisms; and the ecosystems in which they are part.

They provide essential natural ecosystem services that are vital for our wellbeing, such as food production, soil fertility, climate regulation and carbon storage. Biodiversity, which largely makes up our natural environment, is also the basis for much of our recreation and tourism.

The term biodiversity comes from two words "biological" and "diversity"

Bio = a prefix meaning life (plants and animals)

Diversity = a variety of things (lots of different plants and animals).



Biodiversity can be classed into three categories:

- Genetic diversity: the variety of genetic information contained in individual plants, animals and micro-organisms.
- 2. **Species diversity:** the variety of species within a habitat or region.
- **3. Ecosystem diversity:** the variety of habitats, ecological communities and ecological processes.

Over the past 200 years Australia has suffered the largest documented decline in biodiversity of any continent. Efforts to manage threats and pressures to biodiversity in Australia are in place, but biodiversity is still in decline.

Australia is an island continent, Islands are special places with ecosystems that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of invasive species and any human induced changes to the environment. Islands only make up 5% of the earths surface but they are

Biodiversity

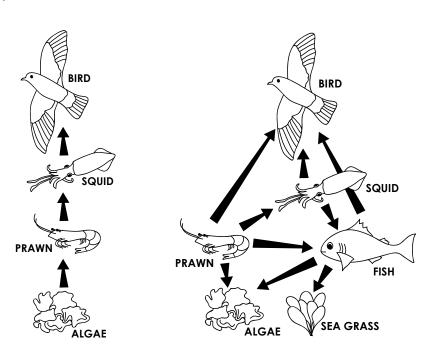
known to support 20% of all known terrestrial species and half of the world's endangered species. The threats that Australia has experienced is increased on islands because of their small size and isolation. In fact 70-95% of the world's terrestrial species extinctions have occurred on islands, and most of these (55-67%) were directly caused or facilitated by invasive alien species.

Some of the threats to our biodiversity include:

- loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat;
- the competition and predation from invasive species;
- unsustainable use of natural resources;
- climate change (increased temperature variation, loss of microclimate, sea level rise);
- inappropriate fire regimes;
- changes to the aquatic environment and water flows;
- pollution (chemical or human wastes), salinisation, sedimentation; and
- human destruction of ecosystems.

Biodiversity conservation is an essential component of responsible environmental and natural resources management. Conserving biodiversity is fundamental to ensuring quality of life and economic wellbeing for present and future generations to enjoy. The implications of lost biodiversity include negative impacts on our health and wellbeing due to the disruption of essential ecosystem services.

An important aspect of biodiversity is the interconnectedness between all species. A food chain is a "chain" of organisms which depend on each other in their feeding habits and for survival. A food web (far right) is a series of food chains (right).



Biodiversity

Habitats provide important areas for survival of a species providing shelter and a safe place to live. A habitat is made up of abiotic factors such as soil, moisture, range of temperature and availability of light as well as biotic factors such as availability of food and presence of predators.

Habitat = Home

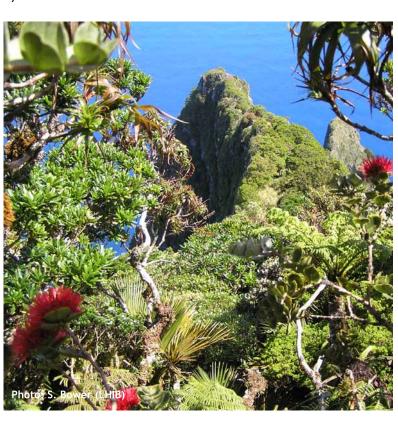
The community of plants and animals and the interactions that occur between them and their surrounding environment make up an ecosystem. Each ecosystem and the species within it are perfectly adapted to suit the conditions where they live.

When an ecosystem is healthy it is classed as sustainable, meaning all elements are in balance and are capable of reproducing themselves. There is usually biodiversity with a variety of living species and organisms in that environment.

Biodiversity of species depends on the health of the habitats and ecosystems that support them. The loss of biodiversity can disrupt food chains which in turn can change essential relationships for species survival. Extinction is one of the greatest losses of biodiversity. Once lost, it cannot be recovered.

To help protect and conserve biodiversity for future generations to enjoy, everyone can play their part and try and live sustainably.

- Be mindful of what you do and how it affects the Earth's carrying capacity.
- Use only the resources you need and leave the rest.
- Be energy efficient.
- Find out how you can improve biodiversity in your own backyard, like not planting weeds.
- Join community conservation groups.
- Learn about the natural environment in your local area.



The Biodiversity of Lord Howe Island

The Lord Howe Island Group (LHIG) is located 760 kilometres north-east of Sydney. It consists of a main island (Lord Howe Island) that is surrounded by smaller outlying groups of islands and rocks. It is due to this isolated geographic location in the Tasman Sea that Lord Howe Island has rich biodiversity (with 80% cover of native vegetation) and the reason it has been World Heritage Listed since 1982. Lord Howe Island is 11 kilometres long, 2.8 kilometres wide and the total area of the island is 1455 hectares.



Lord Howe Island is the eroded remnant of a large shield volcano that erupted from the top of Lord Howe Island Rise around 7 million years ago. Mount Gower (875 m) and Mount Lidgbird (777 m) are the result of two basalt flows from volcanic activity that occurred approximately 6.3 million years ago. Balls Pyramid is 23 kilometres to the south-east of Lord Howe Island. This 551 m pinnacle is where the Lord Howe Island phasmid (*Dryococelus australis*) - a large stick insect - was rediscovered in 2001 after being thought to be extinct.

Almost 75% of the LHIG is protected under the Permanent Park Preserve (PPP). The Preserve has a similar status to that of a national park. The LHIG supports a high level of endemic and significant species and communities, including terrestrial and marine ecosystems and landscapes.



The Biodiversity of Lord Howe Island

Invertebrates

Invertebrates are one of the most diverse groups of animals on Lord Howe Island. There are over 1600 species recorded, including 157 land and freshwater snails, 515 beetles, 27 ants, 183 spiders, 21 earthworms, 137 butterflies and moths and 71 springtails. There is a high degree of endemism - up to 60% in some groups. The Lord Howe placostylus (a land snail), the Lord Howe Island earthworm (Pericryptodrilus nanus), the Lord Howe Island woodfeeding cockroach (Panesthia lata) and the Lord Howe Island phasmid (Dryococelus australis - right) are all listed as endangered species.



Vertebrates

Large vertebrate animals are absent due to the great distance of Lord Howe Island from any large land mass. Two species of reptile, the Lord Howe Island Gecko (*Christinus guentheri*) and the Lord Howe Island Skink (*Cyclodina lichenigera*) are found on the offshore islets in reasonable numbers but are rare on the mainland. The last surviving

bat species the Large Forest Bat (Vespadelus darlingtoni) is found on the island but is also found widely in south eastern Australia.

There is a rich diversity of birdlife with over 182 species recorded on Lord Howe Island. There are 15 species of land bird on Lord Howe Island including one of the world's rarest birds, the Lord Howe Island woodhen (Gallirallus sylvestris - right).

Lord Howe Island supports the most diverse and largest seabird breeding colonies in the southern hemisphere, a factor that contributed to the islands World Heritage listing. There are 14 species of seabird which nest on the Island and islets that make up the LHIG. The seabird population often numbers in the hundreds of thousands, with the ocean surrounding Lord Howe Island providing an abundance of food for seabirds to rear their young. Some of the seabirds which are found on Lord Howe Island are petrels, shearwaters, terns, noddies and large seabirds such as the masked booby (Sula dactylatra tasmani - right) and the red-tailed tropicbird (Phaethon rubricauda).





The Biodiversity of Lord Howe Island

Plants

The unique natural land formations and features such as rainforest and palm forest are home to 241 native plant species. Almost half (105) of these plant species are endemic (only occurring on Lord Howe Island). There are four endemic palm species on Lord Howe Island, with the thatch palm (Howea forsteriana) exported by islanders as part of a thriving industry. The banyan tree (Ficus macrophylla ssp. columnaris) has enormous aerial roots and is one of the most noticeable trees around the lowlands. There are a variety of orchids, ferns, flowers and fruits which are an important food source for some species of wildlife on the Island.



Marine Environment

The marine environment is included in the World Heritage Area, with conservation values reinforced in 1999 when the State government declared a marine park in these waters. The Lord Howe Island Marine Park has an unusual mix of temperate and tropical marine species, including the world's most southerly coral reef. In the near pristine condition of the Island waters there are over 500 species of fish, 318 species of marine algae, 1,500 species of mollusc, 110 species of echinoderms, 70 species of crustacean and over 86 species of hard coral.

Additional Resource: NSW Marine Parks Education Kit - Lord Howe Island http://www.mpa.nsw.gov.au/lordhowe kit.html







The Biodiversity of Lord Howe Island

Lord Howe Island Board

The Lord Howe Island Board is responsible for the care, control and management of Lord Howe Island, offshore islands and neighbouring coral reefs. In the past 30 years the Board has undertaken a wide range of projects aimed at restoring Lord Howe Island's ecosystems. Its responsibilities include:

- protection of World Heritage values;
- development control;
- administration of all crown land, including the island protected area, the Permanent Park Reserve;
- the provision of community services and infrastructure; and
- the delivery of sustainable tourism.

The Lord Howe Island Biodiversity Management Plan has been developed in recognition of the important and significant habitats which provide for in situ conservation of biodiversity found on Lord Howe Island. This includes a range of threatened and endemic species which are exceptionally valuable from a scientific and conservation viewpoint. The plan assesses threats and management actions relevant to the Island group's overall biodiversity, with a focus on rare and significant species and communities. The Lord Howe Island Biodiversity Management Plan can be downloaded from:

http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/recovery/lord-howe/index.html

Lord Howe

References

Hutton, I. 1991, Birds of Lord Howe Island, Past and Present.

Hutton, I. 2008, A guide to the World Heritage Lord Howe Island.



Stage 1 Local Places Teacher Activity Plan

Outcomes and Indicators

VAS1.1 Makes artworks in a particular way about experiences of real and imaginary things.

 constructs an artwork using recorded information from the biodiversity walk

VAS1.2 Uses the forms to make artworks according to varying requirements.

- uses media (such as sketches, rubbings and text) to record woodhen sites
- uses different types of media to create an artwork on the woodhen

VAS1.3 Realises what artists do, who they are and what they make.

 understands that they have recorded a journey using images

VAS1.4 Begins to interpret the meaning of artworks, acknowledging the roles of artist and audience.

 explains to their audience how their artwork represents the woodhen in its habitat

Equipment Used

- A4 and A3 Paper
- coloured pencils
- charcoal
- tracing paper
- camera
- computer
- colour photo printer

Teacher Resource

http://www.lordhoweisland.info/library/woodhen.pdf

Activity 1 - Woodhen locations excursion

Introduce students to the concept of biodiversity using the Teacher Fact Sheet. Explain the importance of the woodhen using the Teacher Resource. Prior to the excursion ask students if they have a woodhen in their backyard, why they come into their backyards (water and food) and where they think woodhens should live. Take students on a short biodiversity walk around the settlement area. When students come across a woodhen, ask them to record the sighting on Activity Sheet 1 and use a variety of different mediums, including descriptive words and phrases, sketches, rubbings and photographs. In the classroom, students discuss and compare their recordings and consider how to put all of the information together to create an artwork of the woodhen.

Activity 2 - Woodhen artwork

Using Activity Sheet 2, ask students to create an artwork on the woodhen using the information collected during the walk. This activity can be done as individuals or in a small group. The artworks can be two or three dimensional and use a variety of techniques and media. Ask students to discuss their artwork with the class and describe where they think the woodhen likes to live, what it likes to eat, and why once they almost became extinct. Inform students that woodhens lay eggs on the ground and are flightless. With the eradication of cats and pigs on the island they have had no predators. Now focus on the environment it is depicted in, ask students how the woodhen uses its environment to survive, where it sleeps and where it gets its food from.

Extension Exercise

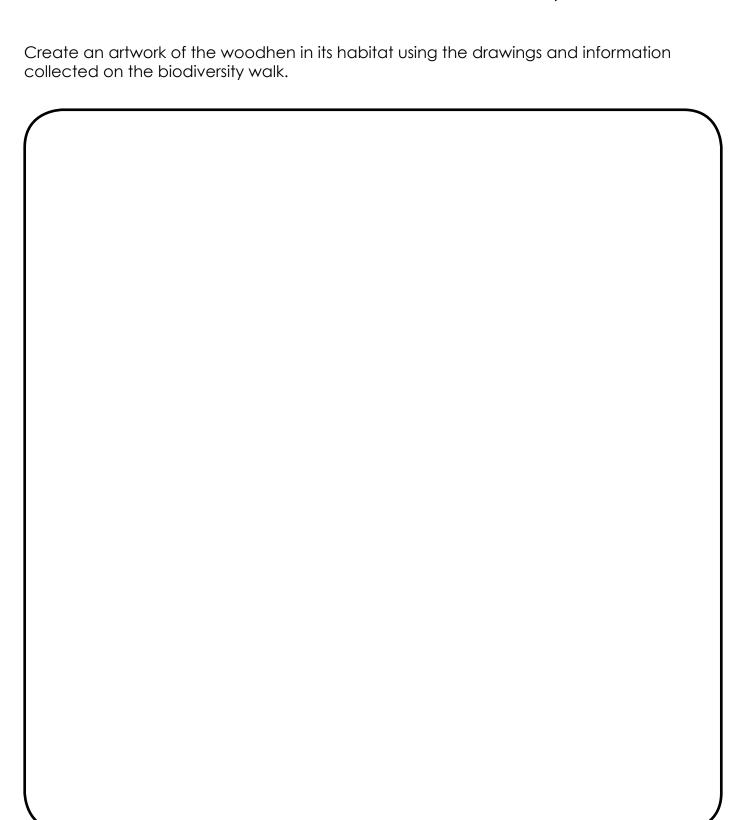
Students are to develop an acrostic poem using the word 'biodiversity'. The word biodiversity is to run down the left hand side of the poem. Each letter is to have a new thought relating to the importance of biodiversity that runs off the side from left to right. Students are to do this activity at home and discuss with parents/siblings.

Activity Sheet 1 Woodhen locations

Record your observations at each of the sites where a woodhen was located.

	Feelings e.g calm and relaxed
SITE 1	Sounds e.g I can hear birds singing
	Smells e.g flower blossoms
7	Feelings
SITE 2	Sounds
<i>O</i> ,	Smells
~	Feelings
SITE 3	Sounds
<i>O</i> ,	Smells
4	Feelings
SITE 4	Sounds
0,	Smells
f you w	ere a woodhen where would you most like to live?

Activity Sheet 2 Woodhen artwork



Fast Fact

The natural diet of the woodhen is mostly insects & worms. They use their bill instead of their feet to forage for food.

Stage 2 Local Environments Teacher Activity Plan

Outcomes and Indicators

BES2.1 Creates, models and evaluates built environments reflecting consideration of functional and aesthetic factors.

- determines the processes involved with designing and constructing a suitable enclosure for the Lord Howe Island phasmid
- evaluates the building site's suitability in terms of minimising impacts on existing biodiversity
- uses established techniques to sketch a phasmid enclosure

UTS2.9 Selects and uses a range of equipment, computer-based technology, materials and other resources with developing skill to enhance investigation and design.

 uses a computer to research flora and fauna found in the biodiversity audit and for determining the materials used for the design of the phasmid enclosure

DMS2.8 Develops, implements and evaluates ideas using drawings, models and prototypes at appropriate stages of the design process.

- designs and makes a model of a phasmid enclosure
- works collaboratively to generate ideas for the design of a phasmid enclosure
- describes how sustainable materials are used to build a phasmid enclosure
- suggests how design processes can be improved to protect biodiversity

Activity 1- Lord Howe Island phasmid excursion

Use the Teachers Resources to explain the importance of the Lord Howe Island phasmid. Explain to students that the best option for phasmid survival is to eradicate rodents. Until this happens there is a need to hold them in captivity. Arrange a field trip to the Lord Howe Island Nursery, invite a ranger to come along and talk to students about the Lord Howe Island phasmid. Prior to the excursion ask students to create a list of questions to ask the ranger about how they protect biodiversity during the course of their work and record their answers on Activity Sheet 1.

Activity 2 - Biodiversity audit

Students are to conduct an audit of the biodiversity of their school using Activity Sheet 2. Explain to students that they are finding a suitable location for a hypothetical phasmid enclosure which is to be the new home for a breeding pair of Lord Howe Island phasmids. In groups, ask students to discuss what they think the necessary steps are to improve/conserve biodiversity during the design process, and present their findings to the class. Tally up the top five responses and formulate as questions for all groups to consider when selecting the site and the design of the phasmid enclosure. Students are to clearly map out four possible sites for the enclosure on Activity Sheet 2, this will be used for the final site selection.

In groups, students are to research the flora and fauna found in the biodiversity audit. Ask each group to determine what the impacts on each species would be if the enclosure was to be situated where that species is found. Ask students to design a 3D model of the phasmid enclosure using environmentally friendly materials, and use the internet to research these materials. Inform students that the enclosure needs to be designed to prevent access by rodents, have retreats where the phasmid can hide during heat of day and during dry periods and that the phasmids need access to moisture and dark damp hollows.

Stage 2 Local Environments Teacher Activity Plan

Equipment used

- computer with access to the internet
- A3 paper
- pencils
- field identification books

Teacher Resources

http://www.friendsofthephasmid.org.au

http://www.environment. gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/ publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=66752

http://www.publish.csiro.au/samples/Complete%20FG%20to%20Stick%20and%20Leaf%20Insects.pdf

http://www. australasianzookeeping.org/ Husbandry%20Manuals/Lord%20 Howe%20Island%20Stick%20 Insect.pdf

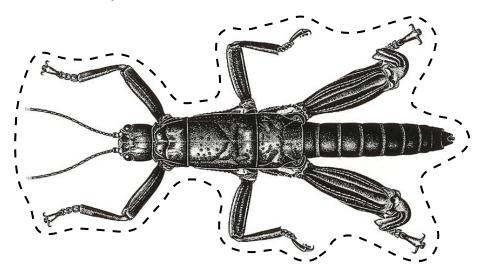
http://www.zoo.org.au/ Conservation/Programs/ Australian/LHI_Phasmid Once the model is constructed, the group is to present to the class and explain the reasons why they chose the materials they did, and how their design reduced the impacts on biodiversity at their building site. They are also required to explain what they incorporated into the enclosure to ensure the wellbeing of their phasmids, including what phasmids need for shelter, food and protection from predators.

Optional Excursion

Follow up this activity by taking students to a few sites where the Lord Howe Island phasmid could possibly live. For example, visit the Phasmid enclosure at the LHIB Nursery and invite a Ranger, Naturalist etc. to talk about the breeding program. Using Activity Sheet 3, ask students to determine how healthy the habitat at the site is, and discuss whether or not it would be a suitable site for the hypothetical release of the Lord Howe Island phasmid back into the wild.

Extension Exercise

Ask students to think of ten reasons why biodiversity is important, go home and discuss with their parents/siblings. The next day at school discuss their findings with the class. Tally the results and create a large poster to be displayed in the classroom of the top five reasons for conserving biodiversity.



Students can use this phasmid drawing to help illustrate their activity sheets.

Activity Sheet 1 Lord Howe Island phasmid

What are three questions you are go	ing to ask the ranger on the excursion?
1	
2	
3	
During the excursion answer the que	stions below.
Why did the Lord Howe Island phasmid nearly become extinct?	
What do phasmids like to eat?	
How is the Lord Howe Island phasmids looked after, housed and fed?	
When would it be suitable for the Lord Howe Island phasmid to be released back into the wild?	

Fast Fact

The Lord Howe Island phasmid was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered at Balls Pyramid in 2001.

Activity Sheet 2 Biodiversity audit

Conduct a biodiversity audit of your school grounds. Use the data sheet below to record each species identified and number of each species.

Animals

Animals Name	Number	Location (label on map)	B ic	L Se Ct	Crustacean	Arachnid	Re ptile	Amphibian
				/ -				

Plants

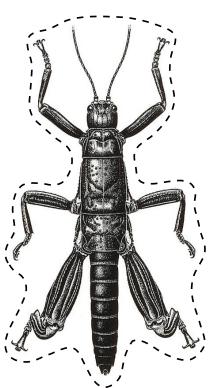
Plants Name	Number	Location (label on map)			Ground Cover		Ø ∧;iok €	
			,	ou have	identified	1	native o	

Activity Sheet 3 Design a phasmid enclosure

Use the grid below to draw a map of your school grounds. Mark on the map where you would locate your phasmid enclosure.



construction.
Natural:
Non-natural:
What materials will you use for the following phasmid requirements?
Food Source:
Shelter:
Protection (e.g. no predation on eggs from ants or rats):



Activity Sheet 3 Design a phasmid enclosure

Draw a sketch of your phasmid enclosure from two different view-points.

Make sure to include a scale and identify features.

Top-down or bird's-eye view	
Front view	`
Front view	

Activity Sheet 4 Rate your habitat

Is the area you are looking at good for biodiversity? Rate each habitat type from 0 to 10 and work out the habitat score.

Trees	0	No trees Introduced species A mixture of introduced and native species Native trees only	
Shrubs	0	No shrubs Introduced species A mixture of introduced and native species Native shrubs only	
Ground	0	No ground covers Introduced species A mixture of introduced and native species Native ground covers plus leaf litter	
Rocks & Hollows	0	Dirt or rock Introduced grass only Leaf litter with a mixture of native and introduced plants A mixture of native plants growing together with rocks, logs, tree hollows or nest boxes.	
Water	0	No water Small puddles filled with water A pond A pond with algae, water plants and rocks	
Habitat Score		The higher your score, the healthier the habitat.	-

Stage 3 Living Land Teacher Activity Plan

Outcomes and Indicators

ENS3.5 Demonstrates an understanding of the interconnectedness between Australia and global environments and how individuals and groups can act in an ecologically responsible manner.

 identifies the effects of human and natural changes on ecosystems

ENS3.6 Explains how various beliefs and practices influence the ways in which people interact with, change and value the environment.

- identifies key features of the biodiversity of Lord Howe Island
- researches and presents nature calendar reflecting the biodiversity of Lord Howe Island
- evaluates the necessity for conserving biodiversity on Lord Howe Island
- generates ides for improving protection of habitats on Lord Howe Island

PSS3.5 Suggests, considers and selects appropriate alternatives when resolving problems.

 determines how habitat can be protected to ensure species survival

Activity 1 - Nature's Calendar - Excursion

Students are to develop a nature calendar that showcases the biodiversity of Lord Howe Island. Each month take students to an area where species are known to be active (refer to Resource 1, Lord Howe Island's Nature Calendar Poster) and record the results on Activity Sheet 1. Explain to students that they are looking for things such as what plants are currently in flower, animal behaviour, insect life cycles, weather phenomena and its impact on species etc.

Whilst on an excursion, students are to explore where species live. Students are to look at what different species require from their habitats in order to get their needs met, e.g. protection from predators, food and shelter. Using the habitat cards ask students to record their additional observations of species and habitat interactions on Activity Sheet 2.

In the classroom ask students to form groups and discuss what species likes to live in that habitat and what would happen if that habitat was destroyed by a development. They are to come up with possible solutions as to how they can protect their species habitat and map these areas on the 3D model of Lord Howe Island (photo opposite).

Activity 2 - Create a Food Chain and a Food Web

From the species identified students are to create a food chain, using Activity Sheet 3, of different species depicting who eats who and then progress to a food web. Explain to students that there needs to be a balance in the natural order of things to ensure each species survival. Once the food chain is constructed ask students to discuss what would happen if one of the species was eliminated from the food chain, repeat this with the food web.

Stage 3 Living Land Teacher Activity Plan

Equipment used

- clipboards
- A3 Paper
- 3D Model of Lord Howe Island

Teachers Resource

http://www.lakemac.com.au/downloads/Nature%20Watch%20Diary.pdf

http://www.environment.nsw. gov.au/resources/education/ BiodiversityTeachersGuide.pdf

Extension Exercise

Students take Activity Sheet 4 home to ask parents/ siblings about the biodiversity of Lord Howe Island. In class, students share their answers and devise strategies to increase awareness of the unique biodiversity on the Island, and where possible implement the strategies.



Activity Sheet 1 Nature's Calendar

Create a diary of your observations below.
Month:

Date	Observations	Location	Weather

Activity Sheet 1 Nature's Calendar

Using observations from your diary, record what is happening in nature during each month.



Activity Sheet 2 Habitats

Their Habitat is their Home.

All animals have a particular place or area where they live called their habitat.

	Who lives here?	Why?	How can we protect this habitat?
Trees			
Shrubs			
Ground			
Cover			
Rocks and			
Hollows			
Water			

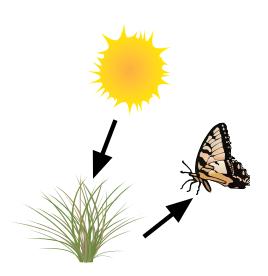
Activity Sheet 3 Food chains and webs

Create your own food chain by answering the questions below.

The animal is:
I live in:
It eats:
It is eaten by:
It is protected by:

* adapted from National Parks and Wildlife Service 2003, Biodiversity for Kids Teachers Guide.

From your four food chains create a food web. Use the example to get you started.



Activity Sheet 4 Lord Howe Island-A special place

why is Lord Howe Island so special?
 It has numerous endemic species It is classified as a World Heritage Area It is a major breeding area for seabirds, some of which are rare or endangered. All of the above
Name five endemic species of Lord Howe Island
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
Why do we need to protect the Woodhen?
What recreational activities could impact upon the Wooden and how can they be minimise or eliminate these impacts?
Why is the Lord Howe Island phasmid special?
Why is the flesh-footed shearwater classified as a threatened species?
What are the top three threats to biodiversity on Lord Howe Island?
(1) (2) (3)
How can you protect biodiversity on Lord Howe Island?