

# Heron Island

Explore an island wonderland!

**This teachers' supplement should be used in conjunction with Project Pullout #20: Heron Island, which is found in DMAG's issue 73, April 2008. The Project Pullout will inspire students to learn about the Great Barrier Reef and Heron Island – its formation, flora and fauna, and the need for conservation.**



IMAGE © QUEENSLAND TOURISM

**These activities encourage students to:**

- Learn that plants and animals live in environments that supply their needs
- See how living things depend on other living things to survive
- See how the activities of people can change the balance of nature
- Manage and care for Australia's national heritage
- Use library books or Internet sites to find information

**HSIE: Australian Environments The Great Barrier Reef**

Brainstorm as a class and develop a mind-map about what the class knows about the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). Discuss reefs, coral, islands, size, location, flora, fauna, human use and threats. Read the Project Pull-out in issue 73 of DMAG. Discuss the GBR again to see what can be added to the mind-map.

**Flora and Fauna**

Heron Island is home to many unique plants and animals. Split the classroom into five groups and assign each group one of the following to research: *loggerhead turtle, Pisonia forest, ruddy turnstone, shovel-nosed ray and butterfly fish*. In their research they must include:

- Any distinguishing marks or features
- The animal's diet / plant's needs
- What country/ocean it is native to
- What other countries it can be found in
- The most likely means of how it made its way onto Heron Island

Each group is then to present their findings to the class. Being a small island, it is very likely that these creatures interact with and/or depend on each other for survival. Using the students' findings, discuss as a class the many interactions each share with one another.

**Extension: Help a friend**

There are three types of interactive relationships that animals can have with each other: *mutualism, commensalism and parasitism*. Split the class into three groups and ask each to research these relationships, finding out what they are and examples of their occurrence on Heron Island and/or the GBR.

**Field trip: Bird watching**

Take the class on an excursion to the local park, playground, wetland or coastal area to have a look at the different types of birds. See if they can find both land and sea birds. Ask them to draw the feet of both birds (if possible). Are there any similarities between them? Are there any differences? As a class, think about the birds' environment and lifestyle and discuss the reasons why its feet may be the size and shape that it is.

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## Explore an island wonderland!

### Maths & HSIE Mapping:

#### Location, location!

Discuss geographical terminology such as north, south, east and west, latitude and longitude with the students. Ask them to complete the mapping exercise on the Student Activity Sheet.

### Extension exercise:

#### Globe trotting

Ask groups of students to research the migratory patterns of the loggerhead turtle, ruddy turnstone and humpback whale. Each group is to photocopy a map of the world and mark the three migration journeys, using a different colour for each animal. After they have completed this, using the map's scale, ask them to calculate how far each creature travels when migrating.

### Art: Draw it

#### My coral home

Each student is to design and draw his or her own coral cay island. Make sure that they consider how their island was formed and the different flora and fauna that will be living on and around it and how they all got there. (Remember, coral cays were never connected to the mainland so all their flora and fauna must have migrated there somehow.)

### English: To the rescue!

Brainstorm with the class the many things that can be done to help conserve the environment. For some ideas, head to



your local wetland to help remove weeds. Discuss how even schools not near the GBR can affect the health of the reef (e.g. rubbish in stormwater drains).

### HSIE: State and National Parks – Design a brochure

Discuss why half of Heron Island is a National Park. What does it mean to be a National Park? Are there things you can or cannot do? What does it mean for the future of the island? After discussing this, ask each student to design a brochure for Heron Island. Brochures should include: How to get to Heron Island and a map; accommodation and tourist facilities; things to do on the island; unique flora and fauna to look out for; times of the

year that are good to visit for different reasons; who to contact for further information; and guidelines for visiting the park (eg not allowed to touch the baby turtles).

Students should pay particular attention to the layout of the brochure with respect to headings, introductions, pictures and maps.

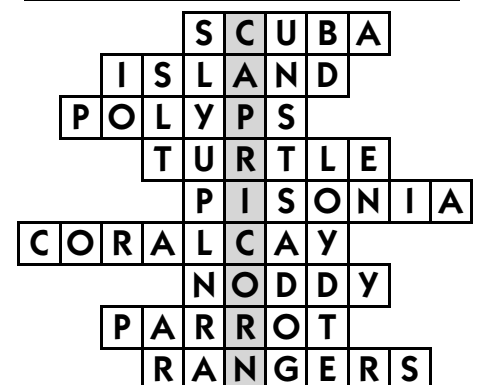
[www.reefed.edu.au](http://www.reefed.edu.au) or

[www.iyor.org](http://www.iyor.org). Using this as

inspiration, ask each student to write a two-page exposition on what he or she can do in their everyday lives to help conserve the environment and how each of these initiatives will affect the environment.

### HSIE: Investigating and Enhancing Biodiversity of the School Grounds

Become a more sustainable school. Now that you've brainstormed, ask the class to put a few ideas into action in and around your school. For example, to minimise energy wastage, ask the class to make signs reminding teachers and students to turn off the lights when they're not needed. Or, to help improve the environment, take an excursion with the class to



Answer to Student Activity Sheet exercise.