

Wren Rescue

Save the purple-crowned fairy-wren!

This teachers' supplement is to be used with Project Pullout #22, which is found in issue 75 of DMAG. Students will develop an understanding of the importance of saving our native flora and fauna.

This supplement encourages students to:

- Understand that people's activities can change the balance of nature
- Use investigative techniques to define and solve a problem
- Understand that living things depend on other living things to survive
- Discover that there are benefits and problems associated with human changes to the physical environment

HSIE

Field Trip: Bird Watching

Tell the class that they will be going on an excursion to either the playground or the local park. Explain that they'll be bird watching – with a mission! Their aim is to find out what birds live there, how many there are, what times



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they visit, what they are doing etc. As a class, brainstorm some column headings for a table each student is to draw up prior to the excursion. Once on the excursion, ask each student to fill in the table and draw the different types of birds that they see.

Maths: Graphs!

Back in the classroom, ask each student to create a bar graph using the information that they have collected.

What birds were most commonly found by the class? Which birds were the rarest? Discuss with the class why they think this is. Some reasons may be that some birds may have more food sources or be more capable of escaping predators.

HSIE

Encouraging biodiversity on school grounds

Ask the class to break into pairs and each pair is to research the birds that

Building better homes for Australian Wildlife

Optus and Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) are working together to help save the purple-crowned fairy-wren. The *Wren Rescue* project pull-out in *DMAG* has been sponsored by Optus to help raise awareness about the birds and to encourage students to learn about Australia's native flora and fauna. The pull-out has been checked by scientists at AWC, who are at the forefront of research into these birds. Visit www.optus.com.au/wildlife to find out more about how Optus is helping AWC.



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used to be in the local area, before it was developed. As a class, pool the results and identify which birds have now disappeared.

Read pages 52-53 of *DMAG's Project Pullout* and ask the class to design a wren habitat, to be built in the school yard. Ask them to consider and research what sort of things will attract wrens to the school yard and what sort of things will protect the wrens from threats that they may encounter. When a suitable habitat has been designed and agreed upon by the whole class, ask them to put it into action.

Extension Exercise

Once built, students can monitor the progress of the wren habitat, making notes daily or weekly. Wrens might not come to the area, but other birds might. These notes can include the

number of birds that are attracted to the habitat, whether any other animals visit it, and if this is affecting the birds' population. Students can then evaluate whether their habitat is successful or not and make adjustments to it accordingly.

Research: Endangered birds

Fairy-wrens aren't the only endangered birds in Australia. Break the class up into groups and ask each to investigate the following threatened birds: Gouldian finch, red goshawk, Major Mitchell's cockatoo and the masked owl. In their research they should find out the following:

- Where the bird is found in Australia
- What the main threats to this species are
- What is being done by sanctuaries/wildlife parks/other groups to help save this species
- What they can do to help conserve this species

Art: Create It

Promoting Conservation

Discuss with the class what conservation is and why it is so important. After reading *DMAG's Project Pullout #22*, ask each student to design his or her own poster promoting conservation. This can be the conservation of the fairy-wren, of an endangered or threatened species within their local environment, or of the need for conservation in general. Once done, hang the posters around the classroom or the school to help promote awareness of the issue.

Extension Exercise: The Big Picture

Brainstorm with the class about other things they can do to help conserve (or promote the conservation of) the environment and our native flora and fauna. Encourage them to think outside the classroom by considering what they can do at home or even in the greater community. Discuss with them which ideas can be put into effect now, or ways in which they can put some of their grander ideas into effect over a longer time period.

English

Creative Writing

Having read *DMAG's Project Pullout #22*, ask each student to write a creative 500-word piece from the perspective of a research scientist – like Anja Skroblin – who is dedicated to saving the purple-crowned fairy-wren. Before they begin, find in *DMAG's Project Pullout #22* all the places where Anja has been quoted – write these on the board. Perhaps their piece could be “A day in the life of Anja” or “My best wren encounter” – the only requirement is that the piece must sound believable.

Further fact sheets

Further fact sheets and colouring-in sheets on the purple-crowned fairy-wren can be found at www.optus.com.au/wildlife

