

Biodiversity Audit

A student centred activity to describe the biodiversity of a school focussing on Mini-creatures, Birds, other animal and plants.

Mini-creatures

It is important to examine the mini-creatures that live in the school grounds, as these creatures are food for larger animals.

Using magnifiers, identification charts and observation clues, examine the mini-creatures that live in the school grounds. Although some creatures cannot be seen, there is evidence of their presence. Include these on the list (e.g. if you see a spider's web, record *spider* on your list).

Take care when moving logs or disturbing leaves, and put everything back in its place when you have finished. Select **three** sites to do this.

Site 1 Location: _____

Mini-creature	Where found?	How does it use the school grounds?
(e.g. worm)	Under a log	Feeds on decaying leaf litter

- How many mini-creatures were found? _____
- What conditions do they like? _____
- How can you attract more of these creatures into the school grounds?

Birds

Complete a bird count in the school grounds. Allocate groups of students to different areas of the school. Do **three** counts: **early in the morning, in the middle of the day and at the end of the day.**

Where possible, identify the bird and count how many specimens of each. Determine if the birds are native or introduced species. Record how they are using the school grounds.

Bird	Tally	Native or introduced?	How were they using the school grounds?
(e.g. Noisy miner)		Native	Getting nectar out of the grevilleas

- What is the total number of birds? _____ Can you see nesting sites? _____
- How many native birds? _____ How many introduced birds? _____
- Why do you think birds are attracted to the school grounds? _____

- List strategies to encourage more native birds into the school grounds

Other creatures in your school

There are many creatures in the school grounds that come out only at night. To find out what they are, it is necessary to set up some "traps". The creatures will not be hurt in these traps, but you must ensure they are released in the same spot where they were captured, after you have recorded them on your audit sheet.

Pitfall traps:

- Dig a hole in the ground.
- Place a container in the hole and ensure the top of the container is flush with the soil level.
- Make a raised roof to go over the container, in case it rains overnight. Four rocks and a lid are ideal. If the school has a sandpit, smooth the sand, place some food in the middle and check for footprints the next day.

Record your information on the following chart:

Name	No. of specimens	Why are they attracted to the school grounds?

- Are there scratch marks on the trunks of trees? _____
- Name some creatures that could have made these marks: _____

- List the creatures that have a negative impact on the school grounds.

Flora

The type of flora will influence the animals that are attracted to the school grounds.

On a map of the school, draw the plants located in the school grounds. Note if the plant is a tree, shrub or ground cover.

• How many trees in the school grounds are over 30m in height _____
Are they healthy (look at the tree's crown for clues)? . _____

If not, why? _____

• Do they provide shade? _____ Are there shrubs and ground covers? _____

• Tally the number of shrubs and ground covers.

Record if they are native, bird-attracting (with flowers and dense foliage), are a source of bush foods or are fragrant.

Name	Native	Number of specimens	Bird-attracting	Bush foods	Fragrant
(e.g. grevillea)	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes

- Do the trees create enough shade? _____
- Is there enough vegetation to attract animals to the school grounds? _____
- Suggest ways to increase vegetation and attract more animals:
