

Victoria's biodiversity and ecosystems

Field activity

This activity explores Victoria's biodiversity and encourages students to observe features of individual ecosystems. An in class alternative would be to watch a video or observe pictures of different park ecosystems.

Background

Victoria's natural ecosystems are:

1. Alpine
2. Grasslands
3. The Mallee
4. Dry forests and woodlands
5. Wet forests and rainforests
6. Heathlands
7. Inland waters and wetlands
8. Coast.
9. Marine Environments

These ecosystems provide habitat for at least 3140 native plants, 111 mammals, 447 birds, 46 freshwater and 600 marine fish, 133 reptiles, 33 amphibians, and an untold number of invertebrates, fungi and algae.

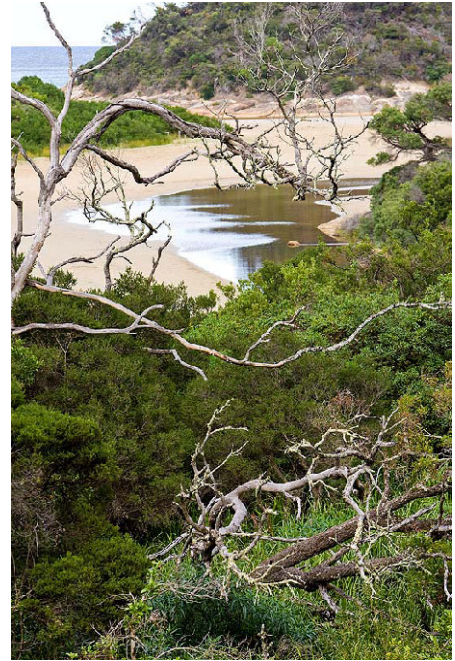
Biodiversity is term used to describe the number of different ecosystems and different species within a region, and the genetic variety they exhibit.

Parks play a crucial role in protecting Victoria's ecosystems including their habitats and ecological processes. 93% of Victoria's native plant species and 86% of native animal species are protected in the parks network.

For detailed information on Victoria's ecosystems visit the [Park Management section of Parks Victoria's website.](#)

Activities

1. Observe one or two different sites in a park to gather information about its major ecosystems. Does the park have more than one ecosystem?
2. Use the table provided below (or prepare your own) to record observations.
3. Take a photograph or sketch of the ecosystem you visit.
4. Draw a profile of the ecosystem.
5. As a class, summarise the main features and living conditions in each ecosystem.
6. As a follow on activity, ask students to prepare wall posters with photos, sketches and key words (e.g. beautiful, cold, hot, sandy) to describe each ecosystem.



Ecosystem record table

Park name:	
Site in park:	
Ecosystem type: <i>Refer to above list</i>	
Topography: <i>E.g. Ridge; lower slopes of Mt...</i>	
Aspect: <i>(e.g. South east)</i>	
Vegetation: <i>(Dominant species)</i>	Canopy:
	Understorey:
	Groundcover:
Fauna: <i>(Dominant species or traces of them living their e.g. scats and footprints)</i>	Mammals :
	Birds:
	Reptiles:
	Amphibians:
	Fish:
Soil:	Soil Type:
	Soil Characteristics
One word to describe this ecosystem – <i>e.g. hot, cold, wet, beautiful, messy</i>	