



LOCAL BIRD LIFE STUDY

(This study can be conducted throughout the day)

INTRODUCTION

The Gold Coast is home to an amazing variety of bird life. The types of birds can vary depending on their proximity to the ocean or the mountains. Many species that depend on the ocean for food have made a home here. Along the shores of Currumbin it is possible to observe a range of fish eaters including terns, seagulls, pelicans and kites.

Inside the Sanctuary itself, the lagoon and wetlands play host to water lovers such as the pelicans, ducks, swamp hens and darters.

Despite the rapid suburban development on the coast we are still privileged to be able to observe a large number of bird populations in their natural environment.

AIMS

- (i) To learn to identify a number of the local birds
- (ii) To identify the preferred habitat of the different birds
- (iii) To study some of the behaviours of birds in the wild at different times of the day
- (iv) To learn to appreciate the natural environment
- (v) To develop an interest in different methods of science



EQUIPMENT

- Sunscreen and Hat
- Mosquito repellent
- Water Bottle
- Clipboard folder
- Notepad, pen and pencil
- Bird identification kit and field guides
- Binoculars if possible
- A portable tape recorder (optional)
- Patience and curiosity!

PROCEDURE

- Early morning is a good time to begin a study of birds. Walk slowly along the beach, or in the sanctuary, and note the different species you find.
- If you are looking for wild birds in the sanctuary then you will want to choose species which remain at the sanctuary for the day. Lorikeets, Ibis and Swamp hens tend to stay for the day. There are a number of wild species in the lagoon which are fed in the morning and remain for the day. Some of these include the Pelicans, Cormorants and Seagulls. Refer to the map in Figure one for the location of the lagoon where Pelicans are fed. The Sub-tropical Rainforest Aviary and the Forest Fringe Aviary are also great places to conduct behaviour studies on birds. See your park map for their location.
- Choose one or two birds that interest you. Note their features such as the size, colour, leg colour and size, beak shape and colour and the length of their neck, and then use these features to identify them
- Watch the birds for about 15 minutes, taking note of the time. It would be good to watch the birds at feeding time. Note all the different behaviours you observe during this period and copy your notes into table 1. You should have one table per bird.
- If you choose two species of birds and observe interaction between the two species, this should also be recorded.
- Repeat this activity with the same species of birds at least two more times during the day, preferably the middle of the day and then later in the afternoon. Place all notes neatly into table 1
- After completing the table/s answer the questions that follow



Table 1

Time of Day			
Name of bird (Scientific and common name)			
Physical features of the bird			
Precise habitat in which it was observed			
	Morning watch	Midday watch	Afternoon watch
Behaviours which the bird displayed (e.g. preening, swimming, eating, calling)			



Figure 1



Exercise 1

1. Have a close look at the list of behaviours you recorded in Table 1 above. Did you notice a change in the behaviour between the morning observation and the midday observation? Explain why you think these changes occurred.

2. Now compare the behaviours you recorded in the middle of the day with those you observed in the afternoon. Was there a significant change in activity levels? Explain your results, making reference to the physical factors in the environment.

3. Do you think that the season plays a part in the animal's pattern of behaviour? Give reasons for your answer.



4. Suggest other factors that may influence the pattern of behaviour of the bird that you are studying.

5. Did the birds exhibit any territorial behaviour? If so, please describe the behaviour in detail.

6. Were you able to distinguish between younger and older birds of the particular species that you studied? If so, was it because of physical features or behaviour? Give reasons for your answer and include as much detail as possible.

7. Can you work out the **range** of the species you studied, within the pond or lake? You may like to use the map to identify where the birds were found.

