

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
HISTORIES AND CULTURES

# LIVING CULTURES – MUTTONBIRDING

DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
*learners first*

YEAR 6

The  
**Orb**

MUTTONBIRDING

# COMMERCIAL BIRDING

Learners explore the concepts of wild-food harvest and cultural practice. They examine the practice of muttonbirding by Tasmania's Aboriginal people and consider, from an ethical and economic perspective, the principles of commercial birding.

## CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place.

## ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

### Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)

Students explain the significance of an event/development, an individual and/or group.

They identify the purpose of business and recognise the different ways that businesses choose to provide goods and services.

## CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

### Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)

Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges (ACHASSI122).

Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children (ACHASSK135).

## GENERAL CAPABILITIES

### Critical and Creative Thinking

Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas

Pose questions

Level 4 – pose questions to clarify and interpret information and probe for causes and consequences

### Ethical Understanding

*Understanding ethical concepts and issues*

Explore ethical concepts in context

Level 4 – explain what constitutes an ethically better or worse outcome and how it might be accomplished

## Intercultural Understanding

*Reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility*

Mediate cultural difference

Level 4 – discuss ways of reconciling differing cultural values and perspectives in addressing common concerns

## Learning Goals

*Learners will:*

- » Describe the practice of muttonbirding.
- » Understand the key principles behind commercial muttonbirding being exclusively Aboriginal owned and operated businesses.
- » Identify areas in Tasmania where muttonbirding takes place.

## Learning Sequence

### Activating and Engaging

*Land Links*

*Learning Maps*

View the clips from the 'Living Cultures – Muttonbirding' section of The Orb.

Ask learners:

- » Where are the mutton bird rookeries in Tasmania?
- » When and where do Aboriginal people go to practice commercial and cultural muttonbirding?
- » What are the birders on the video telling us about their connection to land and Country?
- » What are the stages of muttonbirding and the jobs of the birders?
- » How are the birders operating as a team when they catch and process the birds?
- » Why do the birders refer to birding as 'the season'?
- » How are the birders demonstrating their willingness to work hard in uncomfortable conditions to continue their practice?

- » What makes the mutton bird a traditional food for Aboriginal people?
- » What are the risks and rewards of providing mutton birds for a commercial market?

### Exploring and Discovering

#### *Community Links*

Invite a member of the Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge program to share their experiences of muttonbirding and address the class on the following questions:

- » Why is muttonbirding a cultural activity for Aboriginal people?
- » Why would there be restrictions on the general population going muttonbirding?
- » What is involved in managing a mutton bird shed for commercial birding?
- » How is birding practiced to ensure the continuation of the mutton bird population?
- » How do the birders protect the birds and the rookeries for future generations?
- » What are the rights and responsibilities of the birders?

Invite an Aboriginal person to cook mutton birds to share with the class.

Discuss the qualities of mutton bird as a food source and address the following questions:

- » Is mutton bird a delicacy?
- » Should it be made more available to world markets?
- » How many ways are there to cook mutton birds?
- » What are the advantages of eating food that is caught in the wild?
- » How are we contributing to the Aboriginal cultural economy of birding by consuming birds?

Discuss the concept of exclusive cultural practices.

- » Why is muttonbirding an activity that is managed exclusively by Aboriginal people in Tasmania?
- » Are there other practices round the world that are exclusive to Indigenous people?
- » Are Tasmanian Aboriginal people protected by legislation in relation to gathering their traditional food?

#### *Land Links*

#### *Learning Maps*

Share with learners the Maps booklet in the *From Gumnuts to Buttons* kit. Show learners the map of Land returned to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community and discuss the significance of these sites to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Compare the land returns with the location of the mutton bird rookeries.

### Synthesising and Applying

#### *Deconstruct-Reconstruct*

Have learners compare the Tasmanian/Australian experience with other First Nations peoples in terms of:

- » fishing rights
- » native Title
- » land Rights
- » land handbacks and/or compensation

Have learners compare the practices of muttonbirding with that of other First Nations peoples in terms of:

- » seasonal gathering of food
- » commercial cultural businesses

### Success Criteria

#### *Learners:*

- » Explain the principles behind the exclusive rights of Aboriginal people to practice their culture.
- » Describe the correlation between land returns and commercial muttonbirding.
- » Describe the process and practice of muttonbirding.
- » Describe the relationship Aboriginal people have to land and its living resources.

## Resources

- » [The Orb](#)
- » [Australian Curriculum](#)
- » [Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge \(ASK Program\) Guidelines](#)
- » [Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge \(ASK Program\) Application Form](#)
- » The Aboriginal Education Library: email [Aboriginal.education.library@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:Aboriginal.education.library@education.tas.gov.au) or telephone 03 6165 5480 for more resources, including the ones listed below.
- » The Eight-Way Framework of Aboriginal Pedagogy
- » *From Gumnuts to Buttons [kit] : a walk through Tasmanian history from an Aboriginal perspective 2nd edition*, Aboriginal Education Services, Tasmania
- » *Return to the Islands [kit] : the story of Aborigines and the tradition of muttonbirding*, Department of Education, Tasmania
- » ABC News Article: [‘Strangers in our own place’: Aboriginal community fights for cultural fishing rights](#)
- » YouTube clip: [The Mutton Birds of Bass Strait \(1956\)](#)

## Glossary

### First Nations

‘First Nations’ or ‘First Peoples’ can refer to the peoples or nations of people who were there from the beginning, prior to the settlement of other peoples or nations. G

### Land Rights

The struggle by Aboriginal people to gain acknowledgment of prior ownership of this land both legally and morally and allowing all the accompanying rights and obligations which stem from this association. AM

### Mutton bird

A shearwater or petrel of the southern oceans. D

### Muttonbirding

The seasonal harvesting of the chicks of petrels, especially shearwater species, for food, oil and feathers by recreational or commercial hunters. WP

### Rookery

A rookery is a colony of breeding animals, generally birds. ... The word applies to the nesting place of birds, such as crows and rooks, the source of the term. The breeding grounds of colony-forming seabirds and marine mammals (true seals or sea lions) and even some turtles are also referred to as rookeries. WP

### Compensation

Money that is paid to someone in exchange for something that has been lost or damaged or for some problem. C

### Land handbacks

The return of land to its original owners, often Aboriginal people. G

AM	Australian Museum
C	Cambridge Dictionary
D	<a href="#">Dictionary.com</a>
G	General understanding
WP	<a href="#">Wikipedia</a>



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