

### **Classroom Activity - Saltmarsh introduction (Gr 1 – 10)**

Overview: The DEP website provides a general introduction to Saltmarsh habitats in the Derwent estuary. In small groups ask students to explore the website to answer a range of general exploratory questions. This activity provides an introduction to the role each habitat plays in supporting biodiversity, and maintaining a clean and healthy waterway.

The available information provides an introduction to tidal wetlands and macrophytes beds.

- habitats
- communities
- species, with links to some 'Vocalisations of frogs and waterbirds'
- key threats

Task: Ask students to spend some time on the DEP website exploring the wide range of information on habitats, species, and threats to the environment.

Some initial questions could be asked to ensure students become competent exploring the various types of information available.

For example:

- Q: How many major habitat types are there in the Derwent estuary?
- Q: What are some unusual animals or plants you have never heard of before?
- Q: What are some common bird species that live within the Derwent estuary?
- Q: Estuarine habitats play some major functional roles. What are some of these roles?
- Q: What key threats are common to saltmarshes?
- Q: What threats are common across numerous estuarine habitat types?

Now focus on saltmarshes and tidal flats, to learn more about these unique habitats

Some useful questions to guide students exploration of the DEP website and other sites could include:

- Q: Why are saltmarshes and tidal flats referred to as extreme environments for animals and plants to live?
- Q: What are some adaptations of saltmarsh plants?
- Q: Why are tidal flats so smelly?