

Classroom Activity - What animal is that?
(Grade 1 – 6)

Overview: A wide diversity of organisms live in saltmarsh and neighbouring tidal flats. Some species only visit these habitat types seasonally, while others live there year-round. This activity enables students to select a single animal or plant species and research them on the internet to learn about their niche, relationship with other animals, and sensitivity to changes in their environment. Students can draw pictures and diagrams representing species life cycle, the location of feeding, and breeding, and daily or seasonal reliance on different habitats.

Task: Divide the class into groups of one to three students depending upon the number of computers available. Assign each group/student an organism from this list of species common to saltmarsh and tidal flats of the Derwent Estuary. In small classes it is best to pick one from each group of plants, algae, invertebrates, birds, fish and mammals, so each type is represented.

Some typical plants and animals include:

Plants	Beaded and Thick-head Glasswort
	Round-leaf Pigface and Native Pigface
	Narrow-leaf Wilsonia
	Shrubby Glasswort
	Chaffy Saw Sedge
	Sea Rush
Algae and bacteria	Microscopic algae (microphytobenthos) and bacteria
Invertebrates	Burrowing invertebrates
	Saltmarsh Looper Moth
	Dragonfly
	Chequered Blue Butterfly
	Fragile Air Breather
Birds	Red-capped Plover
	White-fronted Chat
	Striated Fieldwren
	Swamp Harrier
	Pied Oystercatcher
	Hérons and Egrets
	Whimbrel
	Black-faced Cormorant
Fish	Baitfish and Whitebait
	Sand Flathead
	Skates and Stingrays
	Flounder
	Galaxias
Mammals	Rakali
	Bandicoots

Use the library or internet to find out facts and stories about their species. If you can't find much on the exact species, then look for information on other closely related species.

Find out about the species:

- life cycle
- location of feeding
- location of and breeding
- diet
- daily movements (i.e. use of different habitats)
- seasonal movements (migratory?)

As a starting point use the Derwent Estuary Program website to find species descriptions, and explore some of the links to other websites and factsheets. Have each group/student contribute towards a poster about their animal, which can be explained to the class.