

Outdoor Activity - Sensory Exploration (Gr 1 – 6)

Overview: At various points along the discovery trail students/participants should be encouraged to look, listen, smell, and touch but not damage. There are a number of suggested locations along the Discovery Trail for this activity. Print out these guidelines to run an interactive activity along the Discovery trail. By engaging as many of the senses as possible the students can realise the many different dimensions of their natural environment. Through this process students will pick up on things they cannot see directly to broaden their perspective of a saltmarsh, and how animals live in this environment.

Task:

Listen:

Ask the students to find some space and sit on the ground with their eyes closed, and just listen without speaking.

- Ask the students to hold up their hands each time they hear something different.
- Discuss what was heard and what they think made the noise.
- Get the students to write down as many different sources of sound as they can.
- Sound is made and used by many different animals in the saltmarsh. Ask the students to pretend they are:

- a bat using echolocation to catch saltmarsh insects at night time
 - an eastern quoll alerting other quolls of their presence
 - a marsh frog or growling grass frog calling to mate
 - a swarm of mosquitoes breeding in a pool of water fresh water nearby
- Can you think of some more examples?

Smell:

Ask the students to find some space and sit on the ground with their eyes closed. During this sitting time ask the students to take some deep breaths and smell the air around them.

- Does it smell different to the air in the classroom or in a town?
- Discuss what may be producing these smells?
- Smell is used by many different animals in the saltmarsh. Ask the students to imagine they are:

- an antechinus or native mouse finding food
- a male moth detecting and then tracking down a female partner
- an ant following the trail back to the nest

Can you think of some more examples?

Touch:

- Have the students carefully touch something around them. Maybe some succulent herbs or a succulent shrub, or some sedge or grass, a shell or piece of bone. Ask for words that describe how it feels such as texture (rough or smooth), hardness, flexibility, and the temperature (cool or warm).
- Touch is used by many different animals in the saltmarsh and tidal flats. Ask the students to pretend they are a:

- water rat feeling through stones looking for clams and snails
 - flounder sifting the sediment for tiny invertebrates
 - pied oystercatcher probing the mud for worms and shellfish
- Can you think of some more examples?