

Seaweed 1998

Celebrate the sea - Clean Oceans

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Understanding the theme

It is widely recognised that land-based marine pollution exceeds pollution from dumping and other maritime activities. Therefore the 'clean oceans' theme encourages exploration of the links between the land and sea.

Clean oceans are everybody's business and marine education around this theme creates awareness about how our everyday actions and land management practices are effecting the health of the coasts and oceans. By considering the 'clean ocean' issues we acknowledge the impact of our actions and the pressures we are putting on marine habitats and their inhabitants. Through this awareness we can gain a better understanding of the importance of conservation and sustainable use of the coast and oceans.

While exploring this theme we are encouraged to consider what is making our oceans dirty, why we must be concerned for their wellbeing and how we can help to keep our seas clean, healthy, alive and living. Issues that arise include:

- Healthy ocean habitats
- Litter and marine debris
- Pollution and oil spills
- Government policies and programmes
- Natural cleaning systems
- Dumping & ballast water
- Catchment management

Exploring the theme - event ideas

Filthy activities - A Canoe Discovery Trip by the National Parks and Wildlife Service Discovery Rangers.

What

An easy guided paddle with the Discovery Rangers.

Where

On the Brunswick River at Brunswick Heads.

How

Undertake some simple health checks while on a guided canoe paddle, using 'A Wetlands/Waterways Health Check' from Waterwatch Australia.

Why

This fun activity created interest about the health of the estuary and river. It aimed to illustrate the link between land and ocean and to encourage participants to consider what steps they can start to take, to improve the health of our waterways, coastal and marine environments.

The Health Check is a four page brochure, that when completed, provides an indicator of the health of the waterway. This is a rough guide only but it is a good starting point for further work.



Canoes and kayaks are a fun and easy way to see the local marine environment

Extending the theme - classroom activities



Illustration Courtesy Barbara Jensen

Activity 1: Connecting with your Catchment

Adapted from the Primary Activity Booklet in the 'Seaweek' 98 Education Kit by Jim Grant and Ann Fleming

Aim

- to demonstrate that we all live in a catchment and this is connected to the sea.

What to do

- Identify where the school is, using a map of your catchment.
- Work out which creek your school water run-off would flow to. Where does the creek start, where does it enter the ocean?
- Discuss the condition of the creek i.e. It's smell, colour, bank condition etc. Do you swim in it? Drink it? What lives in it?
- Collect 8 samples from the creek and send the samples to eight other schools that are also in your catchment. Ask them to send back a sample of the water from their creek.
- Exchange photos, information and other relevant material about the catchment and enter this on your map.
- Use all the information and water samples as a starting point for exploring and building up a picture about your catchment. Consider how the water is used by the plants, animals and people, all the way from the highest point to the sea.

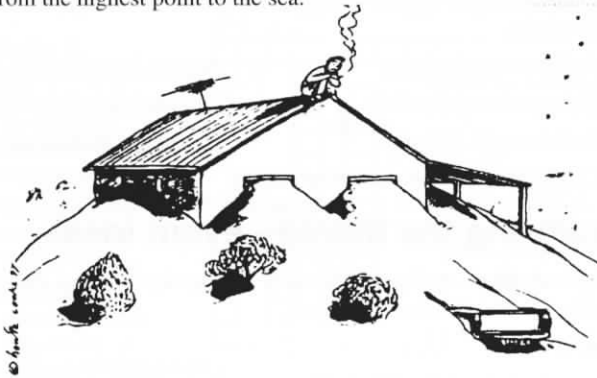


Illustration Courtesy Howie Cooke

Even though Wayne had used the beach as an ashtray for years, he still seemed surprised when the beach filled up his house with sand.

Activity 2: Butt Bottles

From Seaweek 98 Education Kit developed by Howie Cooke, Ocean 5

Aim

- to increase awareness of cigarette butts as a marine pollution issue.
- to take action to reduce butt littering.

What to do

- Do a litter survey and discover cigarettes are a major part of the rubbish collected. Find out how long they take to break down.
- Collect empty film canisters.
- Design, print and paste a label on to the canisters and turn them into portable ashtrays
- Plan an awareness/action day and give the butt bottles away, as you encourage their use and promote understanding of the butt rubbish issue e.g. at a school market or sports day.



Illustration Courtesy Howie Cooke

Activity 3: Effect of Oil on Feathers

From Seaweek 98 Education Kit - Bob Moffatt (Wet Paper)

Aim

- to investigate the effect of oil and detergent on feathers and to bird life.

What to do

- Fill a glass with clean water. Dip a feather in and look into the glass. When you pull the feather out, it will be mostly dry. The trapped air layer makes the feather waterproof.
- Make an oil spill by pouring some cooking oil onto the water surface. This floating oil may form a thin layer as it spreads out. Ask students how oil spills happen and which coastal and marine animals are affected?
- Push the feather into the oily water. How does the feather look now?
- Pull the feather out of the glass. You will find it is covered in oil. The oil has stuck to the natural oils in the feathers and clogged it. You will notice the feather structure has been damaged. Ask students how this would affect penguins, coastal seabirds etc.
- Fill another glass with clean water. Add some detergent and push a new feather into this.
- Pull the feather out. Notice it is soaked in water. What removed the natural oils from the feather? It is no longer waterproof and does not maintain its fine structure. Discuss why birds are washed but then kept in captivity for a while before release.

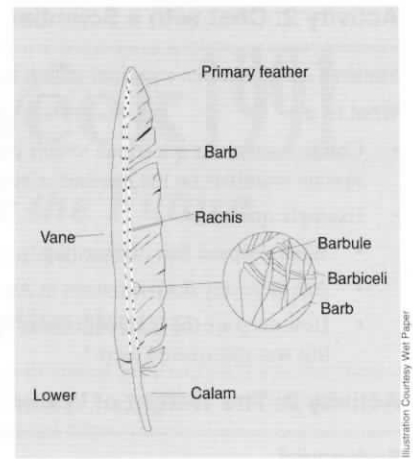


Illustration Courtesy Wet Paper

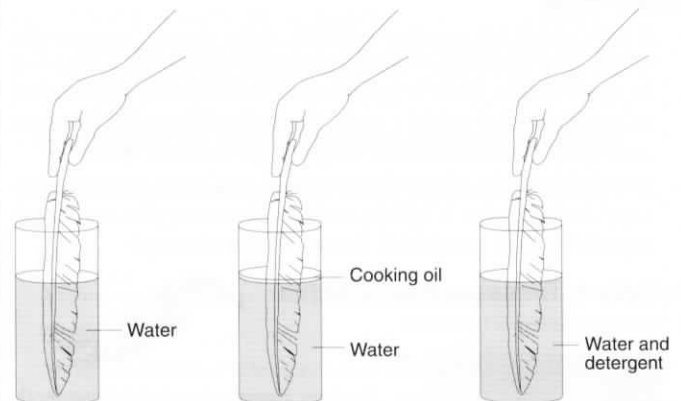


Illustration Courtesy Wet Paper

Personal Actions

Our everyday actions have an impact on the health of our waterways, catchments and oceans:

- Sweep rather than hose down outdoor areas.
- Avoid use of chemical cleaning agents.
- Avoid using drains as a means of disposing unwanted materials.
- Use a fly swat and other natural and organic means of dealing with household pests.
- Use a sink strainer in all plug holes.
- Wash things using buckets not a running tap.
- Wash your car on the lawn with a bucket not hose.