

Biodiversity of the Bay



The Program

Key Knowledge/Skills: Unit 3 Environmental Science: Diversity in the biosphere.

Outline: Through active participation students will explore the various threats to genetic, species and ecosystem biodiversity in Port Phillip Bay and the importance in maintaining a healthy environment. The 'Channel Deepening Project' will be examined, along with overfishing, and the introduction of exotic species. Students will also investigate various approaches to preserving the biodiversity of the Bay, such as fishing regulations and the introduction of Marine National Parks. Analysis of the bottlenose dolphin population that resides in the Bay will be used as an example of genetic biodiversity. Biodiversity of the Bay will encourage students to develop a passion for the marine environment such that they will want to actively help protect it in future.

The Tour

The tour generally consists of three snorkels - all of which are lead by Qualified Snorkel Instructors. Students are introduced to the water at Pope's Eye, where they are taught safe snorkeling practices in a sheltered environment. Part of the Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park, Pope's Eye has become a very popular dive site due to its abundance in marine life. Once comfortable with their equipment, students are then introduced to a population of young male Australian Fur Seals, followed by a snorkel with a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins. Due to their wild nature a swim with the dolphins cannot be guaranteed, but in the event that we do not find them we will endeavour to have a snorkel elsewhere. While on the boat, students will be entertained with activities such as a ride on the boom-net, a duck spa, and if time permits - fishing. Generally the program runs for 3.5 hours, but this can easily be shortened according to your needs. All equipment is provided - including wetsuit, fins, mask and snorkel, with snacks and drinks served throughout the journey.

Key Knowledge/Skills

- Types of biodiversity, including genetic, species and ecosystem diversity
- Significance and value of biodiversity to ecosystem function and human survival
- Threats to biodiversity, including habitat destruction, competition from exotic species and over collection
- Methods of protecting and managing populations

Feel it, Hear it, Taste it, Smell it, Sea it!