

# Significance of wetlands to Aboriginal people

## Overview

### About the lesson

Using Lake Joondalup as an example, examine primary and secondary sources of information to learn about the use and significance wetlands to Aboriginal people.

### Year level

Year 4 - 5

### Learning objectives

#### Students will:

- Use Google Maps to describe the location and features of a place.
- Understand the spiritual importance of Lake Joondalup to Aboriginal people.
- Identify examples of how Aboriginal people used plants growing near Lake Joondalup to meet their needs.
- Analyse primary and secondary sources to find information and make judgments about the past
- Understand oral histories are an important source of information about the past.

### Curriculum Links

HASS	
Geography	<a href="#">ACHASSK089</a>
	<a href="#">ACHASSK113</a>
History	<a href="#">ACHASSK083</a>
	<a href="#">ACHASSK107</a>
	<a href="#">ACHASSK110</a>
Science	
Biological sciences	Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive (Year 4)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures	<a href="#">OI.2</a>
	<a href="#">OI.3</a>
	<a href="#">OI.9</a>

## > Lesson Plan

### Engage and set the scene

1. Using Google Maps, show students the satellite and street views of Lake Joondalup.
  - Where is it? Have you ever been there?
  - How could we find out what this place was like in the past and what sort of events took place here?

#### Equipment and Links

[Google maps](#)

### Explore

1. Show students a quote from George Grey and explain that it comes from a journal written by someone who visited Lake Joondalup in the past. Discuss:
  - Who do you think this person was?
  - What do you think they were doing there?
  - What was the weather like when they were there?
  - Who called the land 'Doonda-lup'?
  - If you were to come up with an adjective to describe a) the lake and b) Grey's experience at the lake, what would it be?
  - Does this journal tell us anything about how Aboriginal people felt about the lake?

#### Equipment and Links

- Quote from George Grey

### Explain

1. Explain that the quote comes from the journal of explorer George Grey. It is an account of a night's stop over on an expedition from Perth to Yanchep and Moore River, in December 1838. The journal tells us how one particular group of non-Aboriginal people used the area around Lake Joondalup.
2. To find out how Aboriginal people used the area in the past, we can:
  - Look for any archeological evidence (which has likely been disturbed and contaminated in the course of development).
  - Look for evidence in artworks or photographs (from about 20th century onwards).
  - Read accounts written by non-Aboriginal people who observed Aboriginal people.
  - Listen to oral histories passed on by Aboriginal people over time, or read texts which were written by those who listened and recorded these stories.

Thanks to a combination of these different ways of finding out information, we know Noongar country around Lake Joondalup was called 'Mooro'. It was a popular camping area for several large family groups led by the elder, Yellagonga.

Like other Noongar people, Yellagonga and his family moved across their land according to the seasons and the availability of food, water and other resources.

The names of lakes in the area sometimes give clues about their use, e.g. nearby 'Beenyup' swamp means 'digging place' or 'place of native yams' and 'Walluburnup' is a Noongar word which may mean 'open space between two trees', 'place of fish and wallaby' or 'fish in lake'.

You can show students a photo of an Aboriginal camp at Lake Monger (which is also part of Mooro country). Although the photo was taken almost a century after Grey's journal, it still shows the traditional shelters.

Aside from providing a wealth of natural resources, lakes and waterways across Noongar land were important meeting and ceremonial places. They are still seen today as being spiritually significant, because they are central to Nyitting (Creation) stories which link people to their country.

Ideally, invite members from the local Aboriginal community to share with students their knowledge about Lake Joondalup, surrounding Country and how the area was used by Aboriginal people. If this is not possible, read the story of the Charnock Woman, contained in the Lake Joondalup section of the Water Corporation Kep Waangkiny resource.

#### Equipment and Links

- [Aboriginal camp Lake Monger, north of Grantham Street, Wembley, 1923. SLWA 054500PD](#)
- Lake Joondalup: Kep Waangkiny resource

### Extend and elaborate

1. Get students to create an illustration to support either Grey's quote or the Charnock woman story included in the Kep Waangkiny resource. They can also write an appropriate caption for their drawing.
2. Divide students into pairs, and get them to research the Aboriginal uses of native plants which grow in Mooro country using the City of Joondalup Plants and people in Mooro country publication.
3. Students can share information orally, create a fact sheet about a particular plant species, or collate their findings to make a class digibook.

## > Lesson Plan

4. Draw students attention to the 'acknowledgment' section and the references at the back which list the resources used to produce the publication. Students can look at the dates of the sources and try to identify those which might have been written by people who directly witnessed how traditional Aboriginal people lived, and the sources which were compiled later. This may have happened by someone who listened to oral histories passed on by Aboriginal people.

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### Equipment and Links

[Plants and people in Mooro country](#)

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### Evaluate and reflect

1. What have you learned about Lake Joondalup, and why it is important to Aboriginal people?
2. Why is it important to listen to stories carried by Aboriginal people?
3. Why do we need to use a variety of sources of information when studying the past?

### Useful resources

- Water Corporation. (n.d.) History of Aboriginal people in the Wanneroo area.  
<https://www.watercorporation.com.au/-/media/files/education/lessons-and-teaching-resources/lesson-plans/activity-sheets-and-fact-sheets/history-of-aboriginal-people-in-the-wanneroo-area-fact-sheet.pdf>
- Western Australia Now and Then (2019). George Grey  
<http://www.wanowandthen.com/George-Grey.html>