



ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR STUDY

(This study can be conducted throughout the day)

INTRODUCTION

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is home to an amazing variety of native animals. Each animal is placed into an enclosure that closely resembles its natural habitat. Because of this the captive animals may often be observed displaying natural behaviours.

There are a large variety of animals to choose from at the park. Mammals or birds may be easier to observe as they are warm-blooded, but this is not always the case. It is important to choose an animal that is reasonably active in the wild. Use your common sense!

Animals such as the dingoes have been residents at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary for many years and their various behaviours have been translated into Dingo language. If you choose the Dingo these may be used as a guide when you report on observed behaviours.

AIMS

- (i)** To learn to identify native Australian animals
- (ii)** To identify the preferred habitat of the animals
- (iii)** To study some of the behaviours of these animals at different times of the day
- (iv)** To learn to appreciate the natural environment
- (v)** To develop an interest in scientific method



EQUIPMENT

- Sunscreen and Hat
- Mosquito repellent
- Water Bottle
- Clipboard folder
- Notepad, pen and pencil
- Binoculars if possible
- Video camera (optional)
- A portable tape recorder (optional)
- Patience and curiosity!

PROCEDURE

- Early morning is a good time to begin a study of animals. Walk slowly around the sanctuary, and note the different species you find.
- Choose one animal that particularly interests you. Note its features such as the size, colour, head shape and the length of its limbs, and then use these features to identify it
- Watch the animal for 15-30 minutes, taking note of the time. Note all the different behaviours you observe during this period and copy your notes into table 1. It will be important to identify the same animal later in the day so make note of its markings etc.
- Repeat this activity with the same animal at least two more times during the day, preferably the middle of the day and then later in the afternoon. Place all notes neatly into table 1
- It might be useful to enquire as to the feeding time of the animal and make a point of observing your species at this time
- Depending on the animal that you are studying it might be easier to video tape their behaviour for later analysis, or tape record your observations so as not to miss anything
- After completing the table answer the questions that follow



Table 1

Time of Day			
Name of animal (Scientific and common name)			
Physical features of the animal			
Precise habitat in which it was observed			
	Morning watch	Midday watch	Afternoon watch
Behaviours which the animal displayed (e.g. pacing, climbing, eating, calling)			



Exercise 1

1. Have a close look at the list of behaviours you recorded in Table 1 above. Did you notice a change in the behaviour between the morning observation and the midday observation? Explain why you think these changes occurred.

2. Now compare the behaviours you recorded in the middle of the day with those you observed in the afternoon, or at feeding time. Was there a significant change in activity levels? Explain your results, making reference to the physical factors in the environment.

3. Do you think that the season plays a part in the animal's pattern of behaviour? Give reasons for your answer.



4. Suggest other factors that may influence the pattern of behaviour of the animal that you are studying.

5. Were you able to distinguish between younger and older animals of the particular species that you studied? If so, was it because of physical features or behaviour? Give reasons for your answer and include as much detail as possible.

6. Why do you think it is suggested that you choose a warm-blooded animal?

7. Do you think that your presence has altered the behaviour of this animal? If so, explain in what ways you think the behaviour changed.



8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of choosing birds and mammals to study? Set out your answer in table form.

