

What do we know about Derbyl Yerrigan Bilya?



An integrated Science, Art and craft inquiry for classrooms



Traditional painting of the Derbyl Yerrigan Bilya
by
Donna Bridge January 2023

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'We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather.... the Whadjuk people of Noongar Boodjar. We recognise their continued connection to the land and waters of this beautiful place, and acknowledge that they never ceded sovereignty. We respect all Whadjuk Elders and Ancestors, and First Nations people.'

Inquiry question:

**What do we know about Derbyl
Yerrigan Bilya?
[The Swan River]**



Curriculum connections in the classroom

Students will be using the Murdoch and Hornsby Integrated planning model of Tuning in , Finding out, Sorting out, Going further and Exhibiting to explore the Derby/ Yerrigan Bilya in Western Australia.

This inquiry will have a Science/ History and Geography and Art focus.

The curriculum explored but will be strongly connected to the Curriculum general capabilities of SCSA with a particular focus upon Cross-Curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait histories and Cultures.

There will be multiple opportunities for questioning and researching, speaking and listening, critical and creative thinking and intercultural understanding through a series of integrated tasks each week. There will be many opportunities for the classroom teacher to connect these tasks to their existing classroom focus.

The Students will create collaborative work each term to be exhibited in their classroom and the school.

We will be using the "Sharing the dreaming "app created by the WA parks and wildlife department with local Noongar elders and the Water corporation Waugul videos walking with Noel Nannup.

<https://www.watercorporation.com.au/Education/Water-in-Aboriginal-culture/Walk-with...>

There is a strong focus on connecting the students to the river either through incursions, excursions or talks with visiting Noongar elders



Art and craft materials that will be useful in this Inquiry.
Calico or large sheets of paper... a roll of brown wrapping paper will work.
black card

Cardboard, lids, bottles, tops, boxes, paper scraps, boxes, plastic bottles

Felt tip pens

Pencils, crayons

Black highlight pens

White glue/ masking tape, cello tape collage/ craft materials

Sequins, pipe cleaners, pegs, buttons, paper towels, cellophane, colored papers, wool etc.,

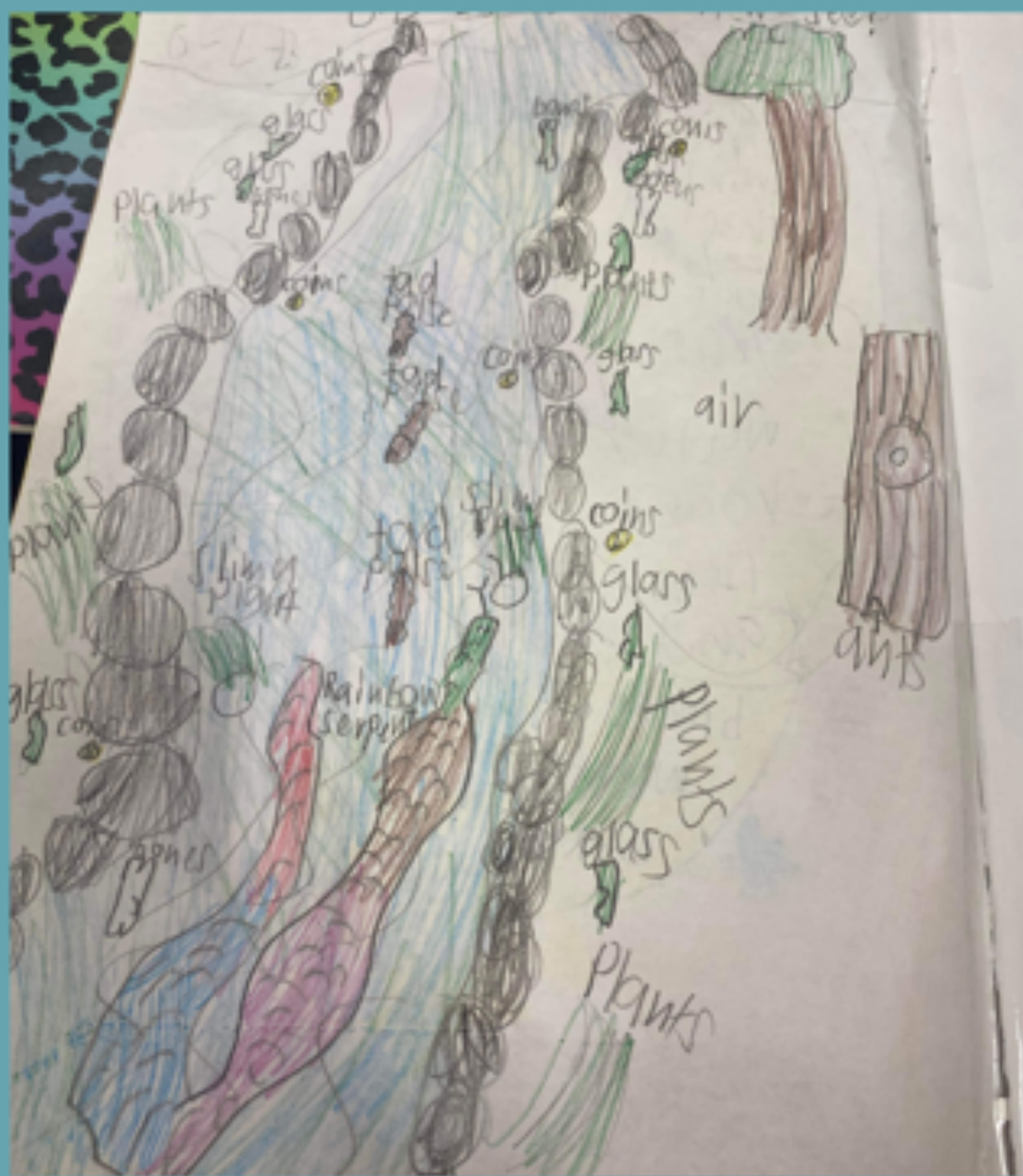
Needle/ cotton and wool

Pop sticks, scraps of material, card

Paints /edicol dyes /brushes

Populating the Derbyl
Yerrigan Bilya...what lives
in, on,under,beside and
above the river?

Mind map all of the
possibilities.





Looking like a scientist

Drawing like an artist: Students draw everything that they can think of that might live, in ,on, beside or above the Derbyl Yerrigan Bilya. Each student chooses a Totem.: A creature that intrigues them and that they are curious about.



Eastern G

Vritti



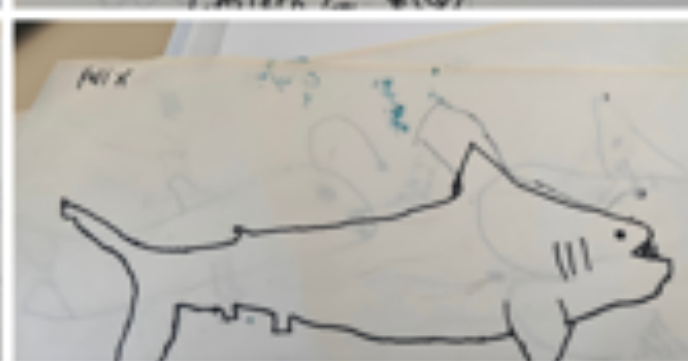
Ihalia



Eastern G



Morgan

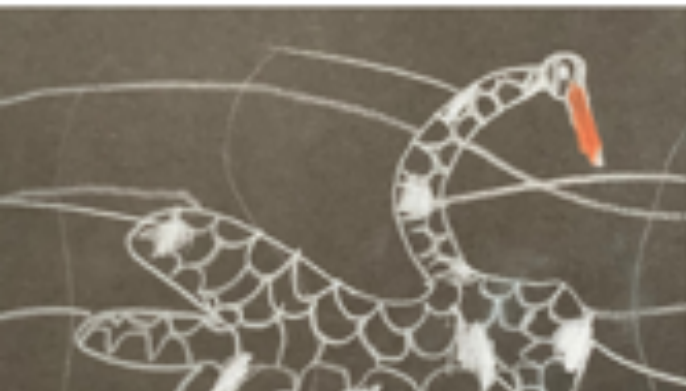


Mix



Vritti





Library Research

Students spend time online or exploring books in Library to get more information about their chosen totem. [Magabala books].

Prompt questions:

What is the Noongar name of their chosen totem ?

- Size
- Shape
- Colour
- Habits
- Life cycle etc.,

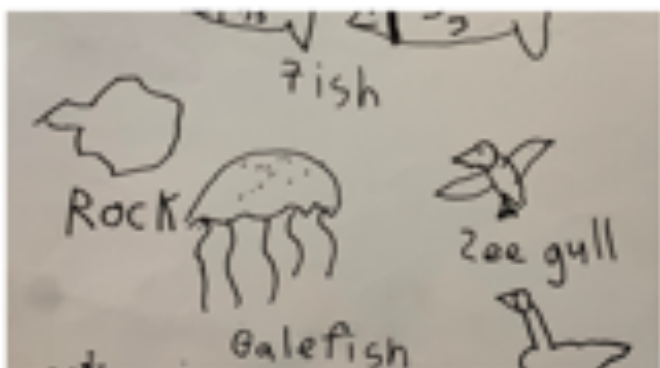
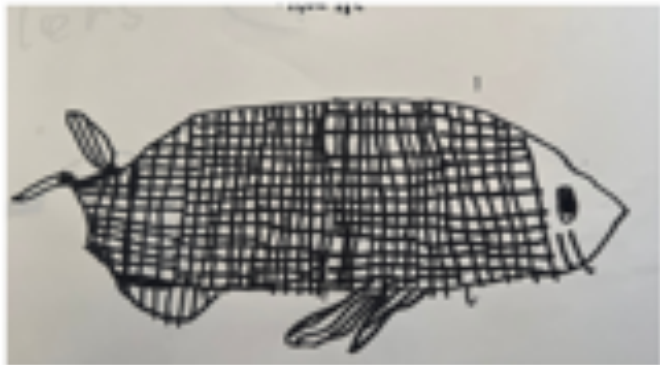
Maali: Black swan

The black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) is a large waterbird, a species of swan which breeds mainly in the southeast and southwest regions of Australia. Within Australia they are nomadic, with erratic migration patterns dependent upon climatic conditions.

Black swans are large birds with mostly black plumage and red bills.

A large waterbird with mostly black plumage and a red bill. Like other swans, the black swan is largely monogamous, pairing for life (about 6% divorce rate).

Black swans were introduced to various countries as an ornamental bird in the 1800s, but have escaped and formed stable populations. When swimming, black swans hold their necks arched or erect and often carry their feathers or wings raised in an aggressive display.



Geography:

Using the google maps image of Derbyl Yerrigan Bilya from the sea to its beginning up in the Avon Valley the students work in groups of 4/5 to map out/ draw the shape and position of the river in a long concertina booklet.... they will then paint the river and banks in the colours/ shape size, position that they choose.

Refer them to Donna Bridge's traditional painting of the Derbarl Yerrigan Bilya..

Encourage them to see the connections between her art work, google maps and their own drawings.



Questions questions questions....

Where do the student's totems live?

In the river near the sea ?

On the rocks and banks up on the escarpment?

Near the bulrushes?

In the middle of the river?

Close to the mouth of the river?

In trees up stream near...

On the edge of the river bed ?

In the paperbark trees and the reeds on the edge of.....???

Lay out the folding book across the floor and ask the students to position their totem on the Bilya where their totem's habitat is.

Get them to justify what their totem needs to thrive in this habitat.

Encourage them to draw the food chain and the habitat for their totem on the booklet. E.g mosquitoes, birds, worms, reeds, algae, rocks, sand etc., in, on under or beside the river.



Creating the background for the fish, animals, insects and birds that live in on under, beside or above the Bilya

Building the Bilya: creating the background of the folding book of the whole river from beginning to end.

Creating the environment/
habitat of the Derbyl
Yerrigan Bilya and building
a collage of the animals
,birds, fish, trees, reeds and
creatures that live alongside
or in the river.

Strengthen the shape of the
river on the painting in the
folding book so that the
students can place their
creations where their chosen
creature's habitat is. There
are many conversations to be
had about this part of the
project and it will take
several weeks to complete.





The Derbyl Yerrigan Bilya.



What goes where???

Where will the student's place their Totem on the Bilya folding book? What does their Totem need to survive in, on, under, beside or above the river? Get the students to spend time negotiating in their small groups.

What goes where? Why?

Make sure that the Totem has all that it needs within the habitat it is positioned in.



What is hiding in the bulrushes at the edge of the Bilya?



Reading the traditional story of the Wargyl on the
'Sharing the dreaming' app
and watching Noel Nannup's talk on the Wargyl.
'Walk with the Wargyl' <https://www.watercorporation.com.au>

What can't we see?? What is the traditional story of the Swan river? The history? What stories do the Noongar people tell us about Derbarl Yerrigan Bilya ? The Noongar people recognise that Derbarl Yerrigan Bilya is the giver of life who maintains all fresh water sources ... the river is a life source that is sacred and unifying. It is part of the traditional people. It is a living force in our lives (Water corporation video with Noel Nannup 'Walk with the Wargyl' <https://www.watercorporation.com.au>) Students draw their totem on a small card.. [Traditional way?] This can be made into a badge. The students then wear their badge as a sign that they are learning more about the totem that they have chosen as a Derbarl Yerrigan Bilya explorer.

