

Sightings Map

CSIRO National Science Experiment: CSIRO Wild Watch

Activity Overview

In this activity, students will be recording sightings of different species on a map of their local area. Students can record sightings of the organisms outlined in the Wild Files, wildlife sightings more broadly, or sightings of a specific species of interest to them that can be found in the local area.

You may choose to use a map of the school, or a local park, of a few local streets, or of the local government area. The size of map may vary, but all students doing the activity should use a map of the same area.

How you approach the gathering of information may also vary. It may take place over a single hour, with all students participating at once, or over a longer period of time such as a week, with students taking their maps home and filling them in as they spot things in their local area.

Mapping living creatures is an important part of research, as it helps us to understand their habitats better, as well as examining the spread of pests. In research, we use tools such as iNaturalist and the Atlas of Living Australia to create maps of sightings. By contributing your own sightings through iNaturalist, you're helping to create these maps to support research!

Instructions

1. Each student or small group receives a copy of the map.
2. Students go outside to collect data and mark sightings of living things on their map, marking the location it was sighted, and the name of the species sighted. If students can take photographs, this may also help them in identifying the species later.
 - a. Students may target specific plants or animals – either from the CSIRO Wild Files or from species that are common in the local area?
 - b. Students may alternately record any animal or plant sightings – General plant records may prove significantly more strenuous data than animals. We recommend targeting specific species of plants if engaging with plants.
3. Compare student maps. Where did students differ in their sightings? Did they see the same species in different places? What did the different places they spotted a species have in common?
4. Create a whole class map, combining all student sightings onto a single class map.
5. Compare the whole class map to the Atlas of Living Australia's map for one of the species identified.
6. Class Discussion – Discussion prompt
 - a. Why is it important that we know where species are found?
 - i. To identify where species so the habitat and endangered status of different species.
 - ii. To identify the spread and threat area of invasive species, so we can better manage them.
 - b. Why is it important to track where species are found over time?
 - i. To identify the change in species so habitat and endangered status over time so we can identify the impact that is being had on different species.
 - ii. To identify how quickly and aggressively invasive species are spreading, so we can better manage them.

Sample:

