



Habitats - Where Animals Live

Teacher Guide Only



Using WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo to Explore Habitats Across K-6



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide supports teachers to explore the concept of habitats using real examples from WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo.

It provides:

- key concepts across stages
- real animal examples
- guiding questions to support inquiry
- opportunities to connect learning to the curriculum

Teachers can adapt the content to suit Early Stage 1 through Stage 3.

**CLASSROOM
LEARNING**
Pages 3–8

**EXCURSION
-BASED**
Pages 10–15



WHAT DO ANIMALS NEED?



What Do Animals Need to Survive?

All living things require basic needs to survive. These include food, water, shelter and suitable environmental conditions.

A habitat provides these needs. When one of these elements is limited or removed, it can affect an animal's ability to survive.

Animals rely on their environment to access these resources every day.



Zoo Examples

Koala → food and shelter provided by eucalyptus trees

Crocodile → requires access to water and warm temperatures

Bilby → depends on burrows for protection from heat and predators



Vocabulary Progression

ES1: food, water, shelter

Stage 1: needs, survive

Stage 2: environment, conditions

Stage 3: limiting factors



Teacher Questions

ES1: What does this animal need to live?

Stage 1: Where does the animal find its needs?

Stage 2: What happens if one need is removed?

Stage 3: Which need has the biggest impact on survival?

Teaching Focus

Connect all animal survival to access to resources within a habitat.

Common Misconceptions

- Animals can live anywhere
- All animals eat the same food



WHAT IS A HABITAT?

What Is A Habitat?

A habitat is the natural environment in which a plant or animal lives. Habitats include both living and non-living elements.

Living components include plants and other animals. Non-living components include water, air, soil and temperature.

Together, these elements create the conditions needed for survival.

Zoo Examples

- Daintree Rainforest → dense vegetation and high humidity
- Gumtree environments → dry bushland with eucalyptus trees
- Crocodile habitat → water-based environment with heat access



Vocabulary Progression

ES1: home, live

Stage 1: habitat, shelter

Stage 2: living, non-living

Stage 3: biotic, abiotic, ecosystem

Teacher Questions

ES1: Where does this animal live?

Stage 1: What makes this a good home?

Stage 2: What living and non-living things are in this habitat?

Stage 3: How do these factors work together?

Teaching Focus

A habitat is more than just a place – it includes resources and conditions.

Common Misconceptions

Habitat is only a location (not a system)



DIFFERENT TYPES OF HABITATS

Different Types of Habitats

Habitats vary depending on climate, plants, water availability and temperature.

Different animals are suited to different types of habitats. These can include forests, bushland, wetlands, and grasslands.

Each type of habitat provides different challenges and resources.

Zoo Examples

- Tree habitats → Tree kangaroo
- Burrow habitats → Wombat, bilby
- Water habitats → Crocodile, platypus

Vocabulary Progression

ES1: land, water, trees

Stage 1: forest, desert, ocean

Stage 2: climate, environment

Stage 3: ecosystem, biome

Teacher Questions

ES1: Where does this animal live?

Stage 1: What is different about these habitats?

Stage 2: Why can't animals live in every habitat?

Stage 3: How do environmental conditions affect biodiversity?



Teaching Focus

Different environments support different life.



ANIMALS & THEIR HABITATS

Animals Live Where Their Needs Are Met

Animals live in habitats that provide everything they need to survive.

Some animals can live in a variety of environments, while others depend on very specific conditions.

Changes to a habitat can impact where animals live and their ability to survive.

Zoo Examples

Cassowary → depends on rainforest environments.

Teacher Questions

ESI: Why does this animal live here?

Stage 1: What does the animal find in this habitat?

Stage 2: Why are some animals only found in certain places?

Stage 3: How does habitat change impact where animals live?

Teaching Focus

Habitat determines distribution.



HOW ANIMALS SURVIVE (ADAPTATIONS)

How Animals Survive

Animals have features that help them survive in their habitat. These are called adaptations. Adaptations can include body structures, behaviours and ways of finding food or avoiding danger.

These features develop over time and help animals succeed in their environment.

Zoo Examples

- Echidna → spines for protection
- Kangaroo → strong legs for movement
- Snake → heat-sensing to locate prey

Vocabulary Progression

ESI: body, move

Stage 1: adaptation

Stage 2: structural, behavioural

Stage 3: survival, reproduction

Teacher Questions

ESI: What helps this animal live?

Stage 1: How does this help the animal?

Stage 2: What type of adaptation is this?

Stage 3: How do adaptations improve survival over time?

Teaching Focus

Adaptations link directly to habitat conditions.



CARING FOR HABITATS

Caring for habitats

Humans can impact habitats in both positive and negative ways.

Activities such as land clearing, pollution and introduced species can damage environments.

Conservation efforts work to protect habitats and support animal populations.

Zoos play an important role in conservation, education and species protection.

Zoo Examples

- Tasmanian devil conservation programs
- Koala habitat protection

Teacher Questions

ESI: How can we help animals?

Stage 1: What can people do to care for habitats?

Stage 2: What threats do animals face?

Stage 3: How can conservation improve outcomes?

Teaching Focus

Build awareness of responsibility for the environment.



The zoo provides a real-world environment where students can observe animals and their habitats in action.

This allows students to:

- observe animal behaviour
- identify features of habitats
- make connections to classroom learning
- ask questions based on real experiences

Encourage students to:

- look closely at animals and their surroundings
- describe what they see
- think about how the animal survives in that environment

Teaching Focus

Support students to connect what they see with key habitat concepts.

ZONE: TRICKY TONGUES & TREETOPS

What Students Will See

Animals using specialised feeding methods or living in trees.

- Goodfellow's Tree Kangaroo
- Echidna

Habitat Focus

Tree-based and ground habitats with specialised feeding.

Key Teaching Points

- Animals use different body parts to find food
- Habitat influences feeding behaviour
- Some animals rely on very specific food sources

Link to Concepts

Adaptations → feeding

Habitat → food availability

Teacher Prompts

ESI: What is the animal eating?

Stage 1: How does it get its food?

Stage 2: Why is this food important?

Stage 3: How does diet affect where animals live?

Focus Animal: Echidna

What to Notice

Animals climbing, hiding or feeding in different ways

Key Facts for Teachers

Echidnas use long tongues to eat ants and termites

Tree kangaroos live and move in trees

These animals are adapted for very specific environments

Link to Learning

Shows how diet and habitat are closely connected



ZONE: DAINTREE RAINFOREST

What Students Will See

Rainforest animals, such as cassowaries in a dense habitat.

Habitat Focus

Rainforest habitat with high moisture, dense plants and food sources.

Key Teaching Points

Rainforests provide lots of food and shelter.

Animals rely on dense vegetation.

Some animals help maintain the ecosystem (e.g. seed dispersal).

Link to Concepts

Habitat types → rainforest

Ecosystems → interdependence

Teacher Prompts

ESI: What can you see in this habitat?

Stage 1: Why do animals live here?

Stage 2: What makes this habitat different?

Stage 3: How do animals support this environment?

Focus Animal: Cassowary

What to Notice

The cassowary moving through dense vegetation

Key Facts for Teachers

Cassowaries eat fruit

They help spread seeds through the forest

They need large areas of rainforest to survive

Link to Learning

Shows how animals support their environment



ZONE: KANGAROO WALKABOUT

What Students Will See

Kangaroos moving, resting and interacting in an open habitat.

Habitat Focus

Open land habitat with space for movement and grazing.

Key Teaching Points

Kangaroos need space to move and find food

They live in groups (mobs)

Their movement helps them survive in open environments

Link to Concepts

Habitat types → open land

Adaptations → strong legs

Teacher Prompts

ESI: How does the kangaroo move?

Stage 1: What does the kangaroo eat?

Stage 2: Why does this animal need space?

Stage 3: How does movement support survival?

Focus Animal: Kangaroo

What to Notice

Animals moving by hopping and feeding on plants.

Key Facts for Teachers

Kangaroos eat grasses and plants

They move using powerful back legs

They live in groups called mobs

Link to Learning

Movement and body structure are linked to habitat.



ZONE: NIGHTFALL

What Students Will See

Nocturnal animals active in low-light conditions.

- Sugar Gliders
- Bilbies

Habitat Focus

Habitats that support animals active at night.

Key Teaching Points

Some animals are active at night (nocturnal)

Darkness protects from predators

These animals have special adaptations

Link to Concepts

Adaptations → behaviour

Habitat conditions → light/dark

Teacher Prompts

ESI: Is this animal awake or asleep?

Stage 1: Why is it awake at night?

Stage 2: How does darkness help this animal?

Stage 3: What adaptations support nocturnal life?

Focus Animal: Sugar Glider

What to Notice

Animals moving, climbing or foraging in
low light

Key Facts for Teachers

Nocturnal animals are active at night

They rest during the day

They often have strong senses such as
hearing or smell

Link to Learning

Shows how behaviour helps animals
survive



ZONE: KOALA ROOFTOP

What Students Will See

Koalas resting and climbing in eucalyptus trees.

Habitat Focus

A tree-based habitat where food and shelter are found in the same place.

Key Teaching Points

Koalas rely on eucalyptus trees for both food and shelter

They eat a specialised diet

They spend most of their time resting to conserve energy

Link to Concepts

Animal needs → food, shelter

Adaptations → claws, low energy use

Teacher Prompts

ESI: What is the koala doing?

Stage 1: What does the koala need to live?

Stage 2: Why does it only eat certain leaves?

Stage 3: How does specialisation affect survival?

Focus Animal: Koala

What to Notice

Koalas spend most of their time resting in trees.

Key Facts for Teachers

Koalas eat specific eucalyptus leaves
They sleep for long periods to conserve energy

They rely on trees for both food and safety

Link to Learning

This shows how animals rely on very specific habitat resources.



ZONE: CROCODILE BILLABONG

What Students Will See

A freshwater crocodile in a water-based habitat.

Habitat Focus

Aquatic habitat with access to both water and land.

Key Teaching Points

Crocodiles rely on water to hunt and stay cool

They are well adapted to both land and water

They wait for prey rather than chase it

Link to Concepts

Habitat → water environments

Adaptations → camouflage, positioning

Teacher Prompts

ESI: Where is the crocodile?

Stage 1: Why does it live in water?

Stage 2: How does water help this animal hunt?

Stage 3: How does this habitat support survival?

Focus Animal: Freshwater Crocodile

What to Notice

The crocodile staying very still in the water or near the edge.

Key Facts for Teachers

Crocodiles rely on water to hunt prey

Their eyes and nostrils sit above the waterline

They wait for food rather than chase it

Link to Learning

Shows how behaviour and body structure suit the habitat.

