



Video 5 Teacher Resource – Life cycle of the wedge-tailed eagle

Tuning in: The following short [video](#) (5:07) associated with the *Where? Where? Wedgie! (WWW!!)* project describes the life cycle of the wedge-tailed eagle. In 12 weeks the baby wedge-tailed eagle is as large as the parent. They have a period of dependence on their parents that lasts between 5 – 8 months and can possibly be a little longer. The wedge-tailed eagle can take 3-5 years to find their own territory.



Finding out: Ask students if they remember how the parents prepare for a baby wedge-tailed eagle's arrival:

- In June/July the adults start building a nest. The male begins lots of diving from the air to the ground.
- In late August – mid-September an egg is laid which is about 7.5 cm long. The egg is incubated by the female, although sometimes the male helps. It takes 45 days for the egg to hatch and then a white fluffy chick emerges.
- The female stays home to look after the chick and the male hunts for food to bring home to feed the mother and baby. There is a short [vimeo](#) you can share with the students that shows a mainland wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax audax*) landing in its very large nest. However, it's very important to note that nesting Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles should never be filmed in this way. This type





of attention, even by expert wildlife photographers operating hundreds of metres away, can easily put them off breeding. We shall learn more about this on another day.

- In 12.5 weeks the chick has become the same size as their parents. They will then jump from the nest and glide. They do not stray far from the nest and will remain in the vicinity of the nest for 5 – 8 months, although this can sometimes be longer.

Egg of a wedge-tail eagle

By Didier Descouens - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16284405>

Sorting out/going further: Activity

- Ask students to create a timeline that shows the main milestones for a Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle beginning in June/July and working out the subsequent months based on the time to hatch with the approximate time it takes for the wedge-tailed eagle to leave the nest. In the timeline, include the average temperatures in in Tasmania for these times of the year as well.



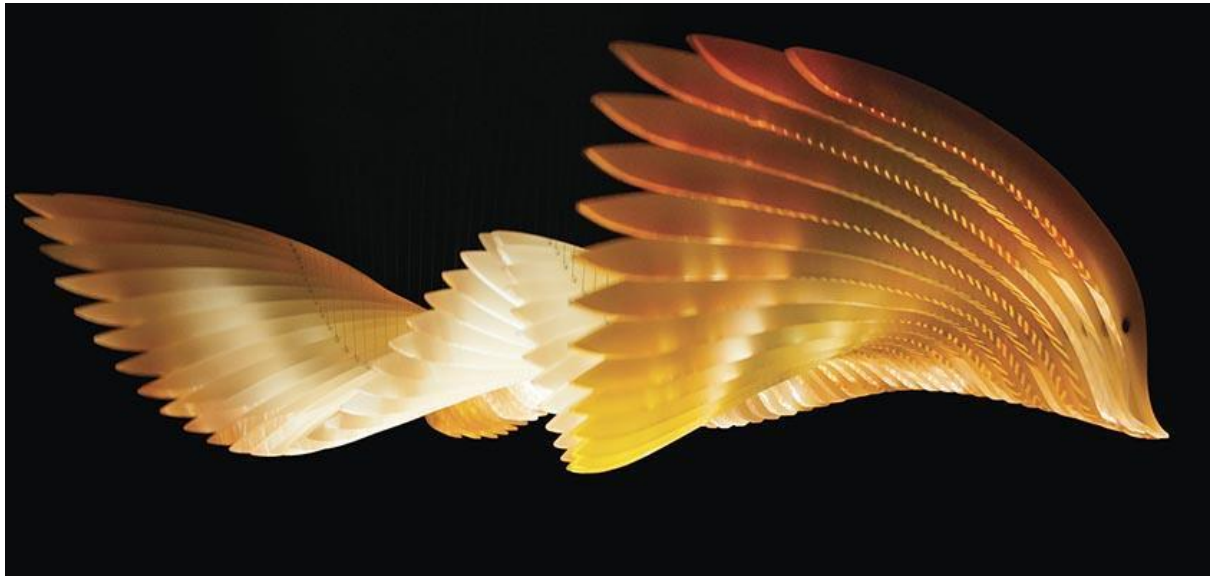
Wedge-tailed eagle nest in leopardwood tree at Mutawintji National Park

By Poyt448 Peter Woodard - Own work, Public Domain,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5854945> (Note that Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles have huge nests too, but they only nest in thick forest)

Reflect and Act:

- Remind students about the story of Bunjil. Ask students to watch the following [video](#) 'Kinetic sculpture brings mythic eagle to life'. Ask them for their responses to the video.
 - How did this kinetic sculpture about Bunjil make them feel?
 - Why do you think the artists have only shown Bunjil's wings in this artwork?



Bunjil's wing - kinetic sculpture in First Peoples exhibition at Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Melbourne Museum.

Image: Dianna Snape Photography.

- Please view the following two tutorials to help support students in drawing a wedge-tailed eagle. The following [tutorial](#) helps students to draw a wedge-tailed eagle in 8 steps. Encourage them to consider how they might also deviate from the steps and build up their drawing using collage materials, such as textured papers to create the features and patterning of the wedge-tailed eagle. Alternatively, students might like to try the second [tutorial](#) which helps them to see how a series of shapes help to build up their drawing of a wedge-tailed eagle. Encourage them to build upon this form in their drawing, for example, by extending the wings, and also include important details for raptors such as the eyes and talons.
- Using the tutorial steps as a guide for getting started, with active encouragement to experiment and deviate from the steps will help safeguard against ending up with a classroom of eagle drawings that all look the same! The tutorial steps might also help you coax less confident drawers to get started, and establish some confidence and bravery to experiment from there.

Interesting fact: An eagle territory is an area in the landscape that an adult breeding pair considers to be its home. Dr James Pay and other researchers are still working out how large a typical territory is, how this size varies in different regions, and which features might affect it (such as whether there are quiet, safe places to nest, and how much food is available). This information will also help with eagle population size estimates.



Australian Curriculum v9.0 links:

Year 3-4:

Science (Strands: Science inquiry, Science understanding)

- (Sub-strand: Biological sciences) Compare characteristics of living and non-living things and examine the differences between the life cycles of plants and animals (AC9S3U01)
- (Sub-strand: Communicating) Write and create texts to communicate findings and ideas for identified purposes and audiences, using scientific vocabulary and digital tools as appropriate (AC9S3I06)

Visual Arts (Strands: Exploring and responding, Developing practices and skills)

- Explore where, why and how visual arts are created and/or presented across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts (AC9AVA4E01)
- Experiment with a range of ways to use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials (AC9AVA4D01)

HASS (Strand: Knowledge and understanding)

- (Sub-strand: Geography) Understand and appreciate the ways First Nations Australians in different parts of Australia are interconnected with Country/Place (AC9HS3K04)
- (Sub-strand: Questioning and researching) Locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps (AC9HS3S02)

English (Strands: Literature, Literacy)

- (Sub-strand: Creating literature) Create and edit imaginative texts, using or adapting language features, characters, settings, plot structures and ideas encountered in literary texts (AC9E3LE05)
- (Sub-strand: Interacting with others) Use interaction skills to contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas (AC9E3LY02)

Victorian Curriculum links:

Level 3 and 4 Content Descriptions:

Visual Arts

- (Strand: Explore and Express Ideas) Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times as inspiration to create visual artworks ([VCAVAE025](#))
- (Strand: Visual Arts Practices) Explore visual conventions and use materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to particular art forms, and to make artworks ([VCAVAV026](#))



References

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- Gemmell, D. (2015). *Wedge tailed eagles around the nest. Filming Wildlife*. Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/345507728>
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