

Solitary Islands Marine Park

PROJECTS

Corindi Boardwalk

Estuaries are very important habitats for many animals. They are particularly important for baby fish that use them as nurseries. In amongst the estuary plants they can hide from larger predators and also eat the smaller animals and plant material. When some of the fish grow up they go out to sea. Some fish move in and out of the estuaries in different seasons of the year. As we walk along the board walk we will make several stops to observe the wildlife in their natural habitat. Complete the activities at each stop.

Stop 1

Use the binoculars to spot the birds on the islands' sandy beach! Circle the birds that you can see on your "ID Me" sheet;

What do you think these birds might eat? _____

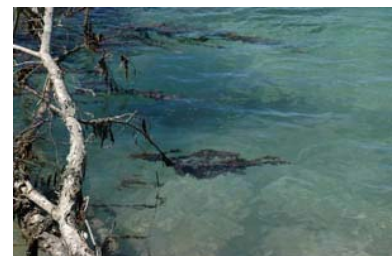
Now have a look at the bank of the river near where you are standing.

Can you see fallen trees and branches in the water? Yes No

Write down what you can see in amongst the branches _____

Tick why you think fallen trees are important to little marine animals;

- they can play hide and seek there
- the animals can hide from predators
- they can sunbake there
- they can rest from the fast currents





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Stop 2

This area is different from the last stop but just as important. This is known as the wetland/saltmarsh habitat. The plants here are very special as they can tolerate a high amount of salt from the salt water.

Circle the different types of plants you can see on your “ID Me” sheet.

Have a close look at the plants and see how many little animals you can see. How many tracks from animals you can see? Draw a foot print of an animal you can see, can you guess what it is from?





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Stop 3

Now we have reached the mangrove section of the Estuary. Mangroves are also very special plants as they can also live in salty environments. Grey Mangrove roots are like snorkels that allow the tree to breathe. They need special roots as the sediment (sand or mud) is very fine and doesn't allow much oxygen to get through. Some mangrove roots extend a long way out from the tree to help stabilise it in the soft sediment.

The Mangrove tree that we will look at is called the Grey Mangrove (*Avicennia marina*). It has the snorkel type roots called pencil roots or pneumatophores! These are very important at high tide as baby fish hide amongst them. Many other little snails and crabs live here too.

1. Put the quadrat square over the pencil roots near the base of the tree and count how many 'pencils' there are. Then use the magnifying glass and count how many little animals there are in the quadrat.

'Pencils': _____

Animals: _____

2. Now put the quadrat square over the pencil roots 2 big steps away from the base of the tree and count how many 'pencils' there are there. Then use the magnifying glass and count how many little animals there are in the quadrat.

'Pencils': _____

Animals: _____

What is the difference between the two areas? _____

