

# The Earth's Environment

## Tawny Tragedy

*As urban Sydney sprawls in all directions, natural bushland is being replaced by houses and roads. This Geographical Inquiry will focus on the connections between people and nature by looking at the Tawny Frogmouth which was found dead at Brewongle Environmental Education Centre.*



### ***Inquiry Questions:***

- **How does the environment support the lives of people and other living things, for example the Tawny Frogmouth?**
- **How can people use places and environments more sustainably?**

### **Health and Safety Issues**

As you are working out in the field you need to be aware that:

- Ground material is often covered in moss and can be very slippery.
- Vines and dense undergrowth can trip.
- Fallen trees can be rotten and weak.
- Some animals can deliver painful or venomous bites.
- On slopes, rocks can be easily dislodged.

### **Outcomes**

**GE2-1:** Examines features and characteristics of places and environments

**GE2-2:** Describes the ways people, places and environments interact

**GE2-4:** Acquires and communicates geographical information using geographical tools for inquiry

*This excursion supports the teaching of The Earth's Environment unit.*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Inquiry Aim:

The aim of this Geographical Inquiry is to investigate the Earth's environment, with a focus on the connections between people and nature. You will be researching the suspicious death of a Tawny Frogmouth which was found dead at Brewongle EEC in order to uncover its cause of death.

## Pre Visit Tasks: The Tawny Frogmouth

***Complete this section at school before your Brewongle Excursion***

<https://brewongleeec.com/resources/stage-3-resources/tawny-tragedy/>

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/tawny-frogmouth>

<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/indeX.aspX?base=24031>

1. Use the information and the video in the links above to write a paragraph describing the Tawny Frogmouth.

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2. What do Tawny Frogmouths eat?

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3. What type of habitat do Tawny Frogmouths live in?

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4. What is the main threat to Tawny Frogmouths?

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5. Can you think of another threat?

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# POLICE REPORT

Case Number: 534952	Date: 18 <sup>th</sup> July, 2025
Reporting Officer: Snr Constable Michael Morton	Prepared By: Catherine Wilson
Incident: Suspicious Death of <i>Podargus strigoides</i> at Brewongle Environmental Education Centre	

## Detail of Event:

At approximately 6:30am yesterday morning, police received a call reporting the death of *Podargus strigoides*, a.k.a. The Tawny Frogmouth. The body of the bird was discovered that morning by the staff at Brewongle Environmental Education Centre. A staff member found the body lying prone near the bbq and immediately informed police. Police interviewed several people in relation to the mysterious death of *Podargus strigoides* and have provided the following information.

## Interviews:

*Zoe (The Cleaner):*

*"I saw Tawny drinking from the ponds two days ago and he appeared to be acting a little strangely".*

*Mr Atkins (The Gardener):*

*"I was setting traps for feral animals in the forest last night, when I saw Tawny swoop down at something in the leaf litter; he appeared clumsy and off-balance".*

*Mr Body (The Principal):*

*"I always enjoyed watching Tawny catch the moths as they circled our BBQ lights at night. Once, I even saw him catch a mouse as it tried to sneak into the house".*

*Mrs Kimari (The Teacher):*

*"I know that Tawny was angry about people calling him an owl, he insisted that he was not a member of the owl family".*

*Mrs Brown (The Administrative Manager):*

*"I saw strange footprints in the mud after it rained the other day, maybe this has something to do with it. It certainly wasn't me, I love owls".*

## Areas for Investigation:

Three areas of suspicion have been identified for further investigation: the sources of FOOD, WATER and SHELTER for the Tawny Frogmouth. The Crime Scene Investigation Team will conduct a thorough investigation into each area and report back at the conclusion of the day. Meanwhile, our forensic veterinarian will investigate blood samples of the bird.

Read the Police Report on page 3. Make a hypothesis about Tawny's cause of death. Provide evidence for (justify) your hypothesis.

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## At Brewongle EEC: The Tawny Frogmouth

### Suspect Checklist

At the conclusion of each investigation, indicate whether or not the suspect could have committed the crime.

SUSPECT		HIGHLY SUSPECT	POTENTIAL SUSPECT	INNOCENT
Water	Quality			
	Bugs			
Food	Zone 1 - Forest			
	Zone 2 - House			
Shelter	Natural Habitat			
	Feral Animals			

# Water – Physical & Chemical Tests

## Did you know?

- The more turbid (dirty) the water, the higher the temperature
- The higher the temperature of the water, the lower the oxygen level

	RESULT	RESULT BETWEEN	SCORE	YOUR SCORE
TEMPERATURE		0 - 6°	2	
		7 - 11°	4	
		12 - 18°	10	
		19° +	2	
OXYGEN  Fish need at least 2 milligrams / litre to survive		0 – 2	0	
		3 – 4	4	
		5 – 8	10	
		9 +	4	
SALINITY		0 - 200	10	
		201 – 300	8	
		301 – 500	5	
		501 +	2	
TOTAL SCORE				





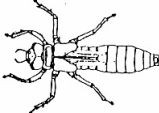





## SCORE RESULTS

0 - 8	Highly Suspect
9 – 15	Potential Suspect
16 – 30	Innocent

# Water – Biological Tests

## Did you know?

- Water bugs are a food source for fish, frogs and birds
- Water bugs are sensitive to their surroundings

		SCORE			SCORE
<b>Back Swimmer</b>	10-15mm 	5	<b>Water Boatman</b>	 8-10mm	5
<b>Damsel-fly Nymph</b>	 15-25mm	6	<b>Water Scorpion</b>	 25-50mm	3
<b>Dragon-fly Nymph</b>	 25-50mm	5	<b>Water Snail</b>	 5-8mm	2
<b>Tadpole</b>	 10-20mm	10	<b>Water Strider</b>	 5-12mm	4
<b>Diving Beetle</b>	 5-45mm	6	<b>Water Treader</b>	 5mm	4
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>					

## SCORE RESULTS

0 -10	Highly Suspect
11 – 25	Potential Suspect
26 – 50	Innocent

# Food – Zone 1 (Forest)

## ***Did you know?***

Soil gives life to plants, without plants there

SOIL	RESULT	RESULT BETWEEN	SCORE	YOUR SCORE
Acid / Alkaline (pH)		0 – 4	0	
		5 - 8	10	
		8 +	0	
Leaf Litter		0cm	0	
		1 – 2cm	5	
		3 – 5cm	10	
Invertebrates		0	0	
		0 - 5	5	
		6 +	10	
TOTAL SCORE				

<b>SCORE RESULTS</b>	
0 -10	Highly Suspect
11 – 15	Potential Suspect
16 - 30	Innocent

*What was caught in the trap?*

## Food – Zone 2 (House)

Indicate with a tick ✓ if you observe one of these items

Potential Food Items Consumed by the Antechinus and Insects	Score	ITEM ✓
Bread	6	
Meat Scraps	8	
Fruit Scraps	2	
Garden Waste	4	
Bird Seed	10	
Plastics	10	
Paints	13	
Oils	10	
Poisons	15	
Chemicals	15	
Grass Clippings	3	
Paper	2	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		

<b>SCORE RESULTS</b>	
50+	Highly Suspect
21 - 50	Potential Suspect
0 - 20	Innocent



## Shelter – Predators

**Feral Animals** - Sketch the footprints you observe then use the ID Charts to identify the animals present.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Name</b>	<b>Name</b>

SCORE RESULTS	
2+ feral animals	Highly Suspect
1 feral animal	Potential Suspect
0 feral animals	Innocent

## Shelter – Habitat

		SCORE	YOUR SCORE
<b>Trees</b>	Old	3	
	Medium	2	
	Young	1	
<b>Shrubs</b>	None	0	
	Some	1	
	Lots	2	
<b>Ground Cover</b>	0 – 30%	1	
	31 – 60%	2	
	61 – 100%	3	
<b>Weeds</b>	None	2	
	Some	1	
	Lots	0	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>			

<b>SCORE RESULTS</b>	
0 - 3	Highly Suspect
4 - 6	Potential Suspect
7 - 10	Innocent

# Post-visit tasks : The Tawny Frogmouth

**Complete this section at school after your Brewongle excursion**

1. Conduct an audit of the chemicals and waste found around your home.

Potential food Items consumed by native wildlife	Score	ITEM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bread	6	
Meat Scraps	8	
Fruit Scraps	2	
Garden Waste	4	
Bird Seed	10	
Plastics	10	
Paints	13	
Oils	10	
Poisons	15	
Chemicals	15	
Grass Clippings	3	
Paper	2	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		

<b>SCORE RESULTS</b>	
50+	Take Action!
21 - 50	Make Some Changes
0 - 20	Well Done

2. Use information from the websites below to create a timeline of the introduction and impacts of foxes in Australia.

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/agriculture/pests-weeds/vertebrate-pests/pest-animals-in-nsw/fox-biology>

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/pest-animals/a-z-of-pest-animals/red-fox>

3. Use information on the link below as well as other sources to research the effects of domestic pets on native wildlife. Conduct a class debate on the topic "People should not be allowed to have domestic pets in Australia".

<http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/protecting-our-wildlife-responsible-pet-ownership>

4. Create a short viral video (less than 1 minute) to educate the community on ways to reduce the impacts their pets have on native wildlife. Share your video with Brewongle EEC and we will help you send it viral!