

## “Survival in Our Land”

At the recent CONSTAT, we ran a workshop on TSTS, during which we threw around the topic “Survival in Our Land”. What does it mean? What aspects can students relate to? How can teachers include this theme in existing curriculum topics?

The theme of National Science Week is actually “Our Dry Land”, but STAT felt that the general concept of “Survival” was more relevant in Tasmania, which is not always dry!!

So we have a much wider range of possible topics. Some are noted below to get you started.

**“Survival”** : the needs of an organism..... food, protection (eg. camouflage), shelter (eg. nesting sites), water, warmth, finding a mate (eg. endangered species)  
adaptations: structural (eg. different feet and beaks of birds), physiological (eg. water balance, temperature control, ..), and behavioural (eg. social insects, courtship rituals, diurnal behaviour,...) specific adaptations of particular species which aid its survival (eg. desert frog)  
Relates to Units on food chains, predator-prey relationships, comparative physiology, heat (insulation, body coverings...), structure-function, population dynamics (selection pressures and species change through time).

**“Land”** Different environments...rainforests, alpine areas, deserts, marine areas, Antarctica, local areas and specific issues (eg. burrowing crayfish), rural..

**“Our”** Man’s influence: effects on survival of natural species due to Man’s interaction with the natural environment ...  
logging, introduced species, climate change, desertification, urban sprawl, wind farms, mining, pollution, salinity, soil erosion, bushfires, farming..

So some random ideas of the types of entries your students might submit:

eg. **Posters.** Huddling penguins: “Hug a friend....survive the cold!”  
Camouflaged lizard: “You can’t catch me”  
Burrowing desert frog “Keep cool, while the heat’s on”

**Creative writing:** “So you think life’s hard” An interview with an Orange-bellied parrot”  
Poem: “Road kill and me” by Tas E. Devil  
Queenstown: nature fights back

**Photographic essays:** “Camouflage: Looking for what can’t be seen”  
“Surviving the cold: adaptations of alpine plants” (or dry /desert)  
“Invasive weeds” or “Survival in the inter-tidal zone”  
“Regrowth of eucalypts after bushfires”

**Computer presentations:** Power Point or website on any of the topics above...and no doubt many, many more...brainstorm with your students

***Almost any topic you might be studying could be related to this theme: But just remind your students to keep “Survival” the central concept.***