

Teacher Resource

Megafauna Extinction

Focus Questions

- Before watching the BTN story, record what you know about megafauna.
- What is megafauna?
- About how many years ago did megafauna exist in Australia?
 - 4,000
 - 40,000
 - 400,000
- Complete the following sentence. A Diprotodon was a giant _____.
- What did palaeontologist Dr Scott Hocknull and his team discover?
- Where did they make the discovery?
- What did they use to create images of what the megafauna might have looked like?
- Give some examples of the megafauna species they discovered.
- What might have caused megafauna to become extinct?
- What did you learn watching the BTN story?

Key Learning

Students will learn more about Australian megafauna and investigate why they became extinct.

Curriculum

Science – Year 6

The growth and survival of living things are affected by physical conditions of their environment.

Science – Year 7

Scientific knowledge has changed peoples' understanding of the world and is refined as new evidence becomes available.

Interactions between organisms, including the effects of human activities can be represented by food chains and food webs.

Activity

What do you know about megafauna?

As a class discuss the BTN *Megafauna Extinction* story and ask students to record what they learnt watching the story. Record any questions they have. Here are some questions they can use to help guide their discussion.

- What does the term megafauna mean?
- When did megafauna exist?
- How do we know they existed?
- Why did megafauna grow so big?
- What might have caused Australia's megafauna to die out?



Activity

Glossary

Students will brainstorm a list of key words and terms that relate to the BTN *Megafauna Extinction* story. Here are some words to get your students started.

Megafauna	Adaptations	Fossil
Extinction	Species	Palaeontologist

Activity

Meet the Megafauna

Students will learn more about the species of megafauna discovered by palaeontologists. Students will choose a species of megafauna to research and create a profile of them. Use the following headings to help guide research:

- Common and scientific names
- What type of animal is it? (mammal, reptile, bird)
- Description – size, appearance, special features.
- When did it die out? What caused the extinction?
- Where did it live? Describe the habitat.
- What was its diet?
- What existing species is it similar to?



Diprotodon



Macropus



Pallimnarchus



Palorchestes



Phascolonus



Quinkana



Thylacaleo



Megalania

Images courtesy of Queensland Museum

Activity

Megafauna Inquiry Questions

Students will explore megafauna in more detail. After watching and discussing the BTN *Megafauna Extinction* story, what questions do students have and what are the gaps in their knowledge? Students can complete the following KWLH organiser to explore their knowledge and consider what they would like to know and learn.

<i>What do I <u>k</u>now?</i>	<i>What do I <u>w</u>ant to know?</i>	<i>What have I <u>l</u>earnt?</i>	<i><u>H</u>ow will I find out?</i>

Here are some possible questions for students to research:

- Why is it important to research megafauna?
- What theories do we have for the extinction of Australia's megafauna? Investigate possible causes.
- Did people live during the age of Australian megafauna? What evidence do we have of this?
- What is the connection between Australian Indigenous peoples and megafauna?

Activity

Megafauna at a Billabong

Students will analyse the image and then respond to the following:

- Write a short paragraph describing what you see in the image.
- What does the image tell you about megafauna?
- Create a caption for the image.
- What question/s would you like to ask about the image?
- Choose a species of megafauna in the image and write a fictional story about it or write about a day in the life of...
- Create your own artwork featuring megafauna.



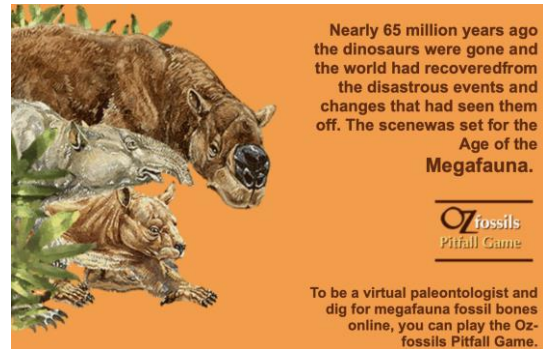
Image courtesy of Queensland Museum

Further investigation

Students will design their own species of megafauna. Students will draw a picture of their animal and include information about where it lives, what the animal eats and any adaptations.

Activity

More about Megafauna



Learn about possible causes of megafauna extinction. Watch the [megafauna murder mystery video](#)

Be a virtual paleontologist and dig for megafauna fossil bones. Play the [pitfall game](#)

Activity

Megafauna Quiz

Quiz Questions	Your Answer
<p>1. The term megafauna means...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Scary animal b. Large animal c. Extinct animal 	
<p>2. About how many years ago did megafauna exist in Australia?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 4,000 b. 40,000 c. 400,000 	
<p>3. Megafauna include...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mammals b. Mammals and birds c. Mammals, birds and reptiles 	
<p>4. What was the biggest megafauna animal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Diprotodon b. Thylacoleo c. Wonambi 	
<p>5. Which megafauna is named after an Aboriginal word for the Rainbow Serpent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wonambi b. Macropus c. Quinkana 	

Answers: 1b, 2b, 3c, 4a, 5a

Useful Websites

Megafauna – Queensland Museum

<https://www.qm.qld.gov.au/Find+out+about/Dinosaurs+and+Ancient+Life+of+Queensland/Megafauna#.Xs3R5GgzYU0>

Megafauna – Australian Museum

<https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/australia-over-time/megafauna/>

Megafauna Exhibition - BTN

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/megafauna-exhibition/10488818>

Megafauna Fossil Footprints - BTN

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/megafauna-fossil-footprints/10522690>

Death of the Megafauna – ABC Science

<https://www.abc.net.au/science/features/megafauna/>

Megafauna murder mystery – ABC Education

<https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/2119405/megafauna-murder-mystery>