

## Exploration: Natives of Terra Australis



*Voyages de découvertes aux  
Terres Australes*

In this activity sheet you'll learn about two of the earliest and finest scientific studies of the Australian interior. You'll also explore John Gould's *The Mammals of Australia* and François Peron's *Voyages de Découvertes aux Terres Australes* (*Voyage of Discoveries in Terra Australis*), which are featured on the Mirror of World website.

### In the spotlight

*Voyages de découvertes aux Terres Australes*

François Peron

1807-11

*The Mammals of Australia*

John Gould

1845-63



*The Mammals of Australia*

### Words to know

Voyage, naturalist, flora, fauna

### Pages to visit

[http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/exploration/terra\\_australis/index.php](http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/exploration/terra_australis/index.php)

[http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/exploration/terra\\_australis/mammals\\_australia.php](http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/exploration/terra_australis/mammals_australia.php)

[http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/exploration/terra\\_australis/voyages\\_decouvertes.php](http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/exploration/terra_australis/voyages_decouvertes.php)

## Early sketches of Australia – Peron & Gould

### François Peron

François Peron was a **naturalist**. A naturalist's job is to study **flora** and **fauna** (plants and animals). Peron took part in a **voyage** to Australia and the Pacific Ocean in 1800–04. He collected 18,414 different specimens, including thousands of starfish. He also collected over 1000 sketches of Australian animals. He even returned to France with seven kangaroos and an emu on board his ship.

His book (*Voyages de découvertes aux Terres Australes*) also has many illustrations of indigenous Australians by the ship's artists. Peron was very eager to meet the Aboriginal communities and when he arrived in Tasmania the crew were invited to eat with one of the tribes. Peron and other crew members sang songs to the tribe, who found their songs very funny and couldn't help laughing.

Peron would often dance about and play the fool to distract the indigenous Australians, while the artists quickly sketched them. The indigenous Australians were helpful and cooperative most of the time, but once, when the Frenchmen refused to give them their sketches, the French were attacked with stones.

**Question time**

1. What does a naturalist do?

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2. Many indigenous Australians do not like to see pictures of relatives that have died. This is an important part of their beliefs. Sometimes there are warnings on television if they are going to show a photo or video of an indigenous person who has died. Why do you think the Aborigines attacked the French, after the French wouldn't give them their portraits?

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3. Imagine you are an indigenous Australian. Peron and his men have come to draw you, your family and friends. How do you feel?

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4. Imagine that you are Peron and you are meeting an Aboriginal tribe for the first time. What do you want to ask the Aboriginal tribes that you meet?

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5. What could they teach you about Australia?

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6. What song would you have chosen to sing to them? Why?

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7. Why do you think the Aboriginal people found Peron's song so funny?

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**Activity 1 – Get interactive!**

Look at John Gould's book (*The Mammals of Australia*) on the website Mirror of the World by clicking the Zoom & Pan interactive link:

[http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/exploration/terra\\_australis/mammals\\_australia.php](http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/exploration/terra_australis/mammals_australia.php)

1. Look the pictures from Gould's book. Would you say the details are very accurate? How many animals do you recognise? Notice how the names are written in Latin. This is because scientists used Latin for scientific classification.

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2. Why do you think Gould was so interested in mammals in Australia? What's special about most *Australian* mammals?

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3. What is a marsupial? How is it different to other mammals?

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4. Why do you think animals in Australia are so different to the rest of the world?

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5. It would be very difficult to sketch an animal, because they are always moving. Look carefully at Gould's mammals again.

- Choose two mammals and make your own sketches of them.
- Don't forget to write the name of each animal underneath your sketch.





### Did you Know?

François Peron only had one eye. He lost it when he was a teenage soldier during a war in France.