

Activity	Scrub Turkey Sessions
Aim/ Key learnings	<i>Participants will learn about the life cycle of the scrub turkey and learn about game development.</i>
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group activity for children or adults • A professional development activity to encourage innovative thinking
Preparation and Materials Required	<p><i>The game is designed for six scrub turkey players and one facilitator. It can be played in larger groups; increase the resources as appropriate.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six pieces of A3 paper • Six paper plates • One box containing six pieces of brown A3 paper, cut into strips – “Mound” material • One box containing six pieces of red A4 paper, cut into small tokens – “Incubation” material • One box containing six pieces of grey A4 paper, cut into small tokens – “Incubation” material • One box containing 3 red and 3 yellow crayons - "Food" material • Six blank white card masks • Three small boxes • A timer (the stopwatch on your phone will do) <p><i>You can also substitute resources – e.g. we used hula hoops instead of paper plates and added other craft items to the incubation material.</i></p>
Duration	<i>As required</i>

Outline (you can use this for your introduction, suitably adapted to age range)

Brush turkey, bush turkey, scrub turkey, tip turkey - call it what you like, *alectura lathamii* is an iconic Aussie bird. Scrub turkeys are the scourge of the suburbs, building huge distinctive mounds in our back gardens. But why do they do this? And what dramas do scrub turkeys go through to reproduce their species? This simple game for all ages lets you take on the role of a male scrub turkey, building mounds and competing to attract a mate who will lay a single egg for you to incubate. You'll need to collect materials for your mound, make sure it's nice and warm inside, and eat the right foods so you look like a healthy, appealing bird. You're going to create the materials to play the game, and then help us by giving feedback.

Need further information?

(07) 3842 9817 | regionalpartnerships@slq.qld.gov.au



This guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Australia licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

There are four rounds to play:

1. **Marking your territory**
2. **Building your mound**
3. **Incubation stations!**
4. **Feeding time**

The rest of this document is a script for the facilitator, giving them information about the turkeys and instructions to give to the players. Feel free to adjust and adapt the materials, timings, and instructions to suit the space you're playing in and the resources to hand. We've played this game indoors and outdoors, with everything from fancy 3D masks and hula hoops to improvised resources and office supplies.



Introduction

"Welcome. Today you're going to become a Queensland icon, the humble scrub turkey. And you'll be competing against your fellow turkeys to successfully hatch an egg."

Probably everyone in Queensland knows these birds. Big, brave and bold. They are related to chickens and pheasants but they are unlike all other birds in the way they incubate their eggs. Instead of a nice, soft, dry nest, scrub turkey males make huge piles of damp dirt and leaves. These decompose and get hot inside. Females dig into this hot area, lay their egg and then forget about them. From then on and even when the chick hatches, there is no care at all by the parents. The babies have to be tough and smart to survive and can fly on their first day! Yet these bizarre almost prehistoric birds are really common in the suburbs.

"Now it's time to become scrub turkeys and play the game."

Get players to put their masks on.

Round One - Marking your territory

"Scrub turkeys are really territorial, so first you've got to mark your territory, and we're going to do it like this."

Give each player one of the six pieces of white A3 paper and one of the six plates.

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | www.slq.qld.gov.au/preservation



This guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>

"You have to place your paper somewhere in the playing area, and then put your plate inside your white piece of paper. These represent your turkey's nests. I'm going to give you sixty seconds to decide the best place for your paper and plate."

Players have 60 seconds to place the paper and plate.

"Now, scrub turkeys have to build their nests and live their lives in a particular environment, and they have to make use of the resources around them. So I'm now going to let you place those resources in the playing area. You're going to do this in pairs."

Let players get into pairs.

Give each pair a box.

One pair gets the box of brown MOUND material.

One pair gets the box of RED and GREY INCUBATION material.

One pair gets the box of FOOD crayons.

First pair: "Cut up the brown paper into strips and put it in your box."

Second pair: "Cut the red and grey paper into little tokens, about the size of coins, and put them in your box."

Third pair: "Put the crayons in your box."

"When your box is ready, you need to agree with your partner where in the playing area you want to place these resources. And I'm going to give you ninety seconds to discuss and then place your resources."

Players have 90 seconds to discuss and then place their resources. Seal the boxes.

"Now we're ready to play. It's each rooster for himself now - competition not cooperation! Leave the person you were working with. Go and stand inside your territory."

Round 2 - Building your mound

Open the MOUND box of brown paper pieces.

"This is the material you'll use to build your mound."

"Male turkeys make their huge mounds by raking everything they can find on the ground – leaves, twigs, soil, rubbish, garden plants – into a massive, about the same weight as a small car. All this stuff is collected and moved entirely by the bird's feet. And they also are very picky about where they place their mounds, though it can often be in backyards provided there is enough leafy stuff available."

"You're going to have ninety seconds to build your mound. You do this by going to the MOUND box, and using only one hand, picking up material to carry back to your territory. You have to fill in the ring of space between the plate and the edge of the paper so that it's completely covered. But you can only carry as much as you can fit in one hand."

"Any questions?"

If not, the players' time starts - 90 seconds to fill their mounds.

Round 3 - Incubation stations!

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | www.slq.qld.gov.au/preservation



This guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>

Open the INCUBATION box.

"For the egg to incubate, you need to keep the nest warm. That means the mound needs to be complete - the space between the plate and the edge of the paper has to be covered with brown paper. Then you can make sure the plate – the heart of the nest – is warm enough to incubate the eggs."

"In this round, you can go to the INCUBATION box and, again, using only one hand, you need to pick up red INCUBATION tokens to cover the paper plate completely. Don't pick up the GREY tokens though, they are useless. Red only."

"You can also go back and get more MOUND material if you want to."

"Any questions?"

"You have ninety seconds. Your time starts - now."

Round 4 - Feeding time

"We're almost there. We have a wonderful mound and hopefully it's nice and warm too. Both the brown MOUND material should be covering the paper and the red INCUBATION material should be covering your plate."

"But if you want the hen to mate with your turkey and give you an egg for your nest, you're going to need to be the best-looking scrub turkey out there. That means eating the right food."

"Anything in nature that is red, orange or yellow has chemicals called 'carotenoids' – yes, like carrots – and male turkeys have to find these in the foods they eat in order to keep their heads red and their wattles bright yellow. This is crucial because the girl turkeys love the brightest colours."

Open the FOOD box.

"Inside this box are crayons representing the bright colours of a well-fed scrub turkey. If you want the female turkey to mate with your turkey and give you an egg for your nest, you're going to need to colour in your mask - a red head and a bright yellow wattle."

"You can also still collect MOUND material or INCUBATION material."

"You can also **steal** mound material from another player's territory, but only when they are away from their nest."

"This is a non-contact game. If someone is stealing from your territory, you need to go back to your nest, stand inside it, and make the BOOM cry."

Turkeys are mainly rather quiet, but males do have a strange call they use when they want to scare away other males near their mound. The fill their wattle with air and force it out through their nose: Booooooom!

"If someone makes the BOOM cry from inside their mound while you're stealing their material, you have to leave their territory and go back to yours."

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | www.slq.qld.gov.au/preservation



This guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>

"This is the final round. You need to have your territory covered with the right materials and your mask coloured in, red head and yellow wattles."

"You have two minutes, but if you think that you've completed all the conditions and have won the game, you can do the announcement flap. This is a way scrub turkeys have of calling attention to themselves. You simply stand up tall and flap your wings."

Let them practice the announcement flap.

"If three players make the announcement flap, we'll stop the game and see if any of you have won. Any questions?"

Two minutes for the players to complete their task – or game goes on hold if three players make the announcement flap.

Endgame

Assess the six nests.

"The females have this breeding process completely under control. If a male wants to attract a female he must build a big enough mound, make sure it is hot enough, protect it from rivals AND still be seriously sexy looking. Females, on the other hand, run the show – wandering around daily to check on all the local guys and making careful decisions on who to mate with and where to lay their precious eggs."

Award an egg for the best nest – with a neat mound, plenty of red incubation material, and a turkey with a brightly coloured mask!

Sit with the players and discuss the game – recapping what they had to do and how it relates to the scrub turkey's life cycle.

"These amazing birds are still all around us, the males building, managing and protecting their real estate while the females make eggs – lots of eggs – about 20 each – and being very thoughtful about their welfare. The chicks, on the other hand, have to survive the cars, cats and kids of the suburbs."

You can also provide this handout of the game for people to take home.

What next?

- Why not challenge players to improve the game – change the timings or add new actions.
- What if turkeys could put the grey, useless incubation material on other player's plates to spoil their plans?
- What if you played the game on a giant scale, with rugby balls for eggs and pool noodles for mound material?
- Why not study a different animal and make up a similar game for their life cycle?
- Contact the game creators, Matt Finch and Darryl Jones:
 - www.matthewfinch.me/contact-me
 - <https://app.griffith.edu.au/phonebook/phone-details.php?type=B&id=1665821>

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | www.slq.qld.gov.au/preservation



This guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>