



Blackbutt Reserve Animal fact sheets

Australian Brush Turkey

Alectura lathami



The Australian Brush Turkey can grow up to 70cm, with a mainly black body plumage, bare red head, yellow wattle and laterally flattened tail. For protection from predators the Brush Turkey forms roosting groups in trees both at night and during the day.



Australian Brush Turkeys can be found in New South Wales and Queensland. They live in humid forests along the eastern seaboard and inland to the wetter ranges, though it is most often seen in rainforest and neighbouring eucalypt forest areas.

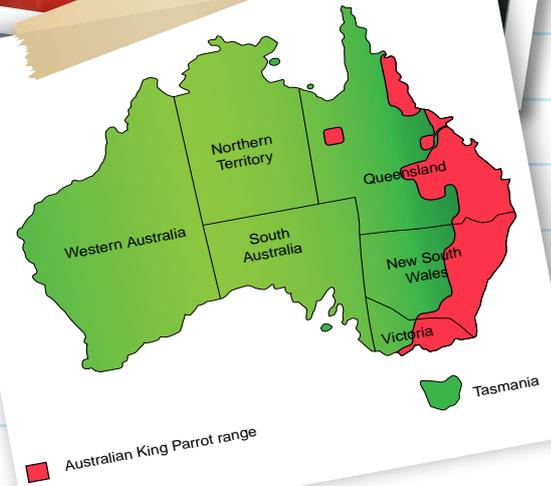
Brush Turkeys feed on insects, seeds and fallen fruits which are exposed by raking the leaf litter or breaking open large logs with their large feet.

The Australian Brush Turkey incubates its eggs in a large mound. The male usually builds a single mound of organic matter gathered from the forest floor, approximately 4 metres wide and 1-2 metres high. A female will then lay between 18 and 24 white eggs in the mound, with intervals of two to three days between the laying of each egg. More than one female can lay eggs in each mound with each egg weighing up to 180 grams. The eggs are incubated by the heat given off by the rotting vegetation. The male maintains a constant temperature of 33-38°C by digging holes in the mound and inserting his bill to check the heat, then adding and removing vegetation as required. The eggs hatch after approximately seven weeks at which the chicks burrow out of the mound, which can take up to 40 hours, and are then left to fend for themselves. These hatchlings are fully feathered, are able to walk and can fly just a few hours after hatching.

Australian King Parrot

Alisterus scapularis

The Australian King Parrot is a distinctively red and green coloured bird. The male king parrot has dark green back and wings, a bright red head and underparts and a deep-blue tail. The female king parrot is less brightly coloured, it has a dull green head and dull red underparts.



The Australian King Parrots are mainly sedentary and although they congregate at dusk they tend to scatter in pairs to forage. Their distinctive call consists of a loud 'carrack-carrack' when in flight and males utter a piping whistle.

Australian King Parrots feed on a wide variety of seeds, blossoms, berries, nuts, insects and buds from native trees and shrubs. They tend to avoid foraging for food on the ground preferring the safety of tree canopies and branches.

Australian King Parrots inhabit coastal forests, mountain rainforests and tall wooded forests. Their numbers are increasing in urban areas, especially in winter, due to artificial feeding stations and residential fruiting trees.

Australian King Parrots breed from September through to January. King Parrots nest in tree hollows, usually tall eucalypts. Although nesting site entrances are usually 10-20 metres above the ground, the actual nest of decayed wood can be up to 7 metres down. King Parrots pair for life and share the feeding responsibilities of their young. An average clutch consists of 4-6 eggs and are incubated solely by the female.

Barking Owl

Ninox connivens



The Barking Owl is a medium-sized hawk-owl. Hawk-owls lack the definite heart-shaped face of the tyto-owls (which include the Barn Owl, *Tyto alba*).

Barking Owls are nocturnal birds (night birds), although they may sometimes be seen hunting during the day. They are widely distributed throughout Australia, but are absent from central areas.

Barking Owls are found in open woodlands and the edges of forests, often adjacent to farmland. They are usually found in habitats that are dominated by eucalyptus species, particularly red gum, and, in the tropics, paperbark species. They prefer woodlands and forests with a high density of large trees and particularly sites with hollows that are used by the owls as well as their prey. Roost sites are often located near waterways or wetlands.

The Barking Owl feeds on a variety of small to medium-sized mammals, birds, reptiles and insects. Diet is largely insects during the non-breeding season, with larger prey more commonly taken when breeding. Prey is located either from the air or from an exposed perch. Most hunting is performed in the first few hours of the night and the last hours before dawn. Occasionally, birds may even be seen hunting in daylight. The Barking Owl prefers to hunt in clearings, including waterways and other open areas.

Barking Owls raise a single brood in a season. The nest site is an open hollow in a tree trunk, loosely lined with sticks and other wood debris. The female incubates the eggs, while the male supplies the food. Young Barking Owls remain dependent on their parents for several months, and will remain in the family group until a few months before the next breeding season.

Barking Owls have declined rapidly throughout much of their range. In Victoria it is estimated that there are only 50 pairs left.

Habitat loss and degradation is a major threat to the survival of the Barking Owl.

Black Swan

Cygnus atratus

The Black Swan females are smaller than the males. In adults, the body is mostly black, with the exception of broad white wing tips, which are visible in flight. The bill is a deep orange-red, paler at the tip, with a distinct narrow white band towards the end. Younger birds are much greyer in colour and have black wing tips. It is the only entirely black-coloured swan in the world.



Black Swans were once thought to be sedentary, but the species is now known to be highly nomadic. There is no set migratory pattern, but rather opportunistic responses to either rainfall or drought.

Black Swans, like many other water fowl, lose all their flight feathers at once when they moult after breeding, and they are unable to fly for about a month. During this time they will usually settle on large, open waters for safety.

The Black Swan is a vegetarian. Its diet consists of algae and weeds, which the bird obtains by plunging its long neck into water up to 1 m deep. Occasionally, birds will graze on land, but they are clumsy walkers.

In the north, the Black Swan breeds from February to May, with June to September preferred by birds in the south. Black Swans form isolated pairs or small colonies in shallow wetlands. They pair for life, with both adults raising one brood per season. Up to ten eggs are laid in an untidy nest made of reeds and grasses. The nest is placed either on a small island or floated in deeper water. The chicks are covered in grey down and are able to swim and feed themselves as soon as they hatch.

The Black Swan is featured on the flag and is both the state and bird emblem of Western Australia. It also appears in the coat of arms and other iconography of the state's institutions. A male Black Swan is called a "Cob" and a female is called a "Pen".

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus
himantopus

The Black-winged Stilt is a large black and white wader with long orange-red legs and a straight black bill. It has black on the back of the neck, a white collar and a red iris. Both sexes are similar, and the plumage does not change during the year.



Black-winged Stilts feed mainly on aquatic insects, but will also take molluscs and crustaceans. They rarely swim for food (unlike the Banded Stilt), preferring instead to wade in shallow water, and seize prey on or near the surface. Occasionally, birds plunge their heads below the surface to catch sub-aquatic prey.

The Black-winged Stilt is a social species, and is usually found in small groups. Black-winged Stilts prefer freshwater and saltwater marshes, mudflats, and the shallow edges of lakes and rivers.

The Black-winged Stilt has a wide range, including Australia, Central and South America, Africa, southern and south-eastern Asia and parts of North America and Eurasia. More locally it also occurs through Indonesia, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Philippines and New Zealand. Although widespread on the Australian mainland, it is an uncommon visitor to Tasmania.

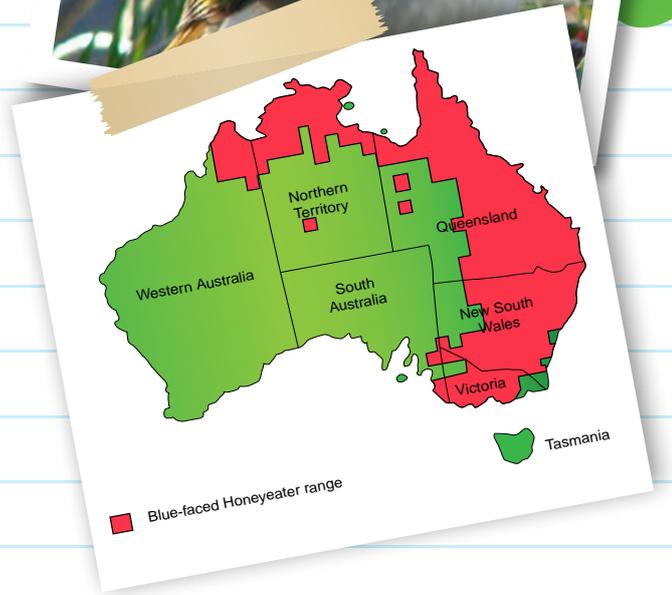
As with other activities, Black-winged Stilts nest in small colonies; within these, the mated pairs strongly defend their individual territories. The nest may be anything from a simple shallow scrape on the ground to a mound of vegetation placed in or near the water. Both sexes incubate the eggs and look after the young.

Blue-faced Honeyeater

Entomyzon cyanotis



The Blue-faced Honeyeater is a large black, white and golden olive-green honeyeater with striking blue skin around the yellow to white eye. The blue facial skin is two-toned, with the lower half a brilliant cobalt blue. This honeyeater is noisy and gregarious, and is usually seen in pairs or small flocks.



The Blue-faced Honeyeater is found in tropical, sub-tropical and wetter temperate or semi-arid zones. It is mostly found in open forests and woodlands close to water, as well as monsoon forests, mangroves and coastal heathlands. It is often seen in banana plantations, orchards, farm lands and in urban parks, gardens and golf courses.

The Blue-faced Honeyeater feeds mostly on insects and other invertebrates, but also eats nectar and fruit from native and exotic plants. It forages in pairs or noisy flocks of up to seven birds (occasionally many more) on the bark and limbs of trees, as well as on flowers and foliage.

The Blue-faced Honeyeater forms breeding pairs, and may sometimes be a cooperative breeder, where immature birds help the main breeding pair to feed nestlings. Most nests are made on the abandoned nests. Sometimes the nests are not modified, but often they are added to and relined. If a new nest is built, it is a neat round cup of rough bark, linked with finer bark and grass. Both the male and female tend the young birds, sometimes with the assistance of helpers. The fledglings remain with the parents for some time after fledging.

Budgerigar

Melopsittacus
undulatus



Since its introduction into captivity, the Budgerigar (or 'budgie') has been bred into a variety of colour forms, including pure white, blue, yellow, mauve, olive and grey.



In the wild, Budgerigars are small green and yellow parrots, with black barring above, and a small patch of blue on the cheek. The male has a dark blue cere (skin at the base of the upper mandible surrounding the nostrils). In the female this is brownish when breeding and light blue otherwise. Young Budgerigars are similar to the adult birds, but are duller and have a dark brown eye (which is white or yellow in adults).

The Budgerigar occurs naturally throughout much of mainland Australia, but is absent from the far south-west, the north of the Northern Territory, Tasmania and the majority of the east coast.

Budgerigars are nomadic and large flocks of birds can be seen in most open habitat types, but seldom far from water.

Very large flocks, numbering occasionally in the tens of thousands, are seen after a season of abundant rainfall and food. Flocks are usually much smaller, however, and range from as few as three birds up to 100 or more. Birds in a flock fly in a characteristic undulating manner.

Budgerigars feed almost exclusively on the seeds of native herbs and grasses, such as porcupine grass and saltbush. Seeds are mostly eaten from the ground and the bulk of drinking and feeding activity is in the morning.

Budgerigars tend to breed in response to rainfall, and may produce several broods if conditions permit. The nest is a bare cavity in a suitable tree branch or in the trunk. The female sits on the round white eggs. As with other parrots, young budgerigars are born naked and helpless

Buff-banded Rail

Gallirallus philippensis



The Buff-banded Rail is a medium-sized stout rail with short legs. It has a distinctive grey eyebrow and an orange-brown band on its streaked breast. Downy chicks are fluffy black. This rail walks slowly, with tail raised and flicking constantly.



The Buff-banded Rail is widespread in mainland Australia, particularly along the eastern coast and islands, and on Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands. It is also found in south-east Asia, New Guinea and New Zealand.

The Buff-banded Rail is seen singly or in pairs in dense reeds and vegetation bordering many types of wetlands or crops. It makes widespread use of artificial wetlands like sewage ponds and drainage channels.

Breeding is poorly known, but the Buff-breasted Rail nests in long grass, tussocks, rushes or crops. It makes an unlined cup-shaped nest of grasses or reeds. Both parents incubate and the young will leave the nest within 24 hours. Both parents remain with the young, which usually feed themselves, though the female may feed them as well. Two broods may be raised in some seasons.

The Buff-banded Rail feeds on crustaceans, molluscs, insects, seeds, fruit, frogs, carrion and refuse. It mostly feeds early in the morning and the evening.

Bush Stone-Curlew

Burhinus grallarius undulatus



The Bush Stone-Curlew or Bush Thick-knee is a large (52-58cm), slim mainly nocturnal, ground dwelling bird.

It is most grey above, streaked with black and rufous. It is whitish below with clear vertical black streaks. The bill is small and black and the eye is large and yellow with a prominent white eyebrow. Both sexes are similar. The voice is a characteristic drawn-out mournful “wer-loooo”, often heard at dusk and during the night.

Like most Stone-curlews, its is mainly nocturnal and specialises in hunting small grassland animals: frogs, spiders, insects, molluscs, crustaceans, snakes, lizards and small mammals are all taken, mostly gleaned or probed from soft soil or rotting wood.

The Bush Stone-Curlew is found in open woodlands, lightly timbered country, mallee and mulga areas - anywhere with ground cover of small sparse shrubs, grass or litter of twigs. They tend to avoid dense forest and closed canopy habitats.

Bush Stone-Curlews have a remarkable courtship dance. Individuals stand with their wings out stretched, their tail upright and their neck stretched slightly forward. The birds will stamp their feet up and down like a soldier marking time. This courtship ritual is repeated for an hour or more at a time and is accompanied by loud and constant calling.

The breeding season extends from July to January. One to three eggs are laid in a shallow scrape in the ground and both adults share the incubation and care for the young. The young chicks are dependent on their parents for 40-50 days.

Chiming Wedgebill

Psophodes occidentalis



The Chiming Wedgebill is more often heard than seen, with its haunting call ringing out loud and clear in the early morning or late afternoon.

They are extremely wary- if singing from a shrub-top perch will, at first distant sighting, become silent and drop to cover, or glide away out of sight.

They are sandy-grey with a tall, dark crest curved towards their stubby black finch-like beak. They glide from perches with their long tail fanned out, revealing numerous white-tipped feathers.

These birds prefer low shrubs and heath in dry country. They can be found in central Western Australia, southern Northern Territory, South Australia and western Queensland.

These birds feed on insects which they pick off the ground and from small trees.

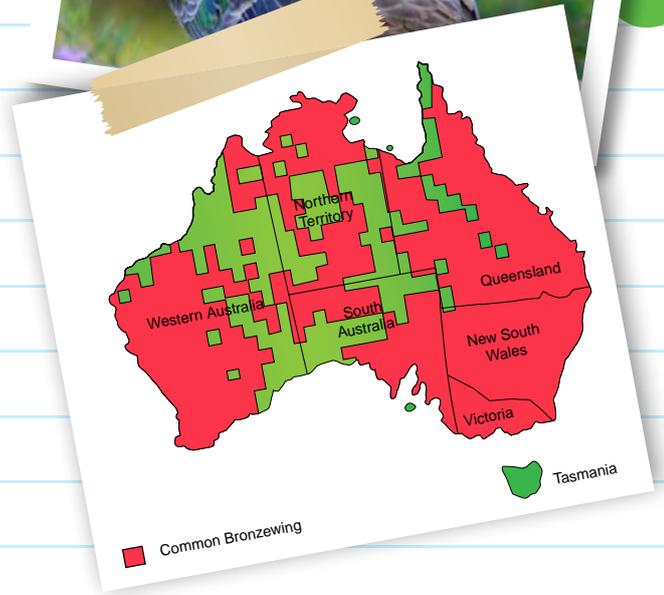
Chiming Wedgebills usually breed from August to November. The female lays 2-3 bluish-coloured eggs in a small, strong nest made of interlocking twigs lined with soft dry grass. Unlikely to be seen near its nest, sneaking away low through shrubbery if disturbed.

Common Bronzewing

Phaps chalcoptera



As their name suggests the Common Bronzewing is one of Australia's most abundant pigeons. It can be found throughout all of Australia except for the most arid regions.



Common Bronzewings have a pinkish-brown breast, pale brown back with patches of blue, green and red on their wings. The males tend to have a darker pink breast with a distinctive yellow-white forehead. Their size can vary between 30cm-36cm with an average weight of 317grams. Although normally silent, during breeding season they tend to emit a low-pitched "oom", repeated at 3 second intervals.

Common Bronzewings feed on grass seeds, understory shrubs and herbs which are procured solely on the ground.

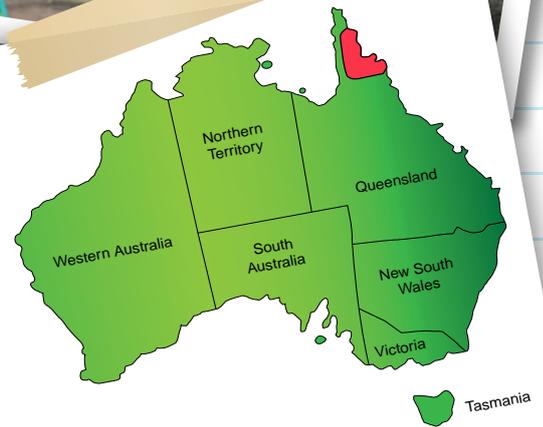
Common Bronzewings can breed all year long in ideal conditions however their main breeding season is from July to January. Nesting behaviour is very erratic and ranges from scanty built platforms to impressive saucer of twigs. Their nests can be found either high in trees or very low to the ground. They have been known to use old magpie nests. Their average clutch consists of up to 2 eggs which both parents incubate and care for.

The Common Bronzewings preferred habitat is woodland and forest areas which may include areas of mallee, coastal tea-tree, banksias, heaths and acacias.

Eclectus Parrot

Eclectus roratus

The eclectus parrot, or *Eclectus roratus roratus*, is a species of parrot known for its vibrant colors and intelligence. The male and female eclectus parrots differ so much in color that they were thought to be two separate species of parrot until the beginning of the 20th century.



Eclectus parrots make popular house pets due to their mild temperaments and ability to mimic human words.

Male eclectus parrots are green in color, though the particular shade of green varies according to their subspecies. Female eclectus parrots vary in color from red to purple. Adult female eclectus parrots have black beaks, while adult males have yellow or orange beaks. Adult eclectus parrots can weigh up to 12 oz. and measure up to 14 inches in length.

There are over eight different species of eclectus parrot, all of which are native to Australia, the Solomon Island, Indonesia or New Guinea. The eclectus parrot usually resides in the rainforest.

In their native habitat, eclectus parrots feed on a variety of tropical fruits, pollen, seeds, nectar and flowers. In captivity, eclectus parrots are fed vegetables such as carrots, kale and peppers as well as fruits such as mangoes, cantaloupes and pomegranates. They can also eat greens like dandelions and collard greens.

The female eclectus parrot usually builds her nest in the treetops of the rainforest canopy. After the female has laid her eggs, the male eclectus parrot will bring the female food.

Both the male and female eclectus parrot take turns bringing the baby parrots food and protecting the nest from predators. In their native habitat, eclectus parrots often live in large groups. These groups help raise baby parrots, even if they are not their own babies.

Because of their intelligence, eclectus parrots are popular pets. Eclectus parrots are one of the species of parrot that can be taught to speak. Eclectus parrots can live up to 50 years in captivity.

Emu

Dromaius
novaehollandiae



The Emu is Australia's bird of international recognition and is pictured on the Australian coat of arms. This is because of the understanding that an Emu cannot go backwards and symbolises the country's motivation and continuing effort to strive forwards.



The Emu is a huge flightless bird that roams the Australian country. Emus are brown-grey with coarse shaggy feathers, a blue-grey bare patch of skin is on the upper neck, surrounded by black smaller feathers. They weigh around 30-45 kgs and have an approximate height of 1.3m at the shoulder. Their legs are covered in hard scales that become extended and sharp on the back of the leg, while the feet have large toe nails. Although the Emu can't fly it can sprint at speeds of up to 75km/h and cruising speed is around 45km/h, not only that, the Emu can swim. Female Emus will give a deep booming sound whereas male Emus use a guttural ratcheting to a hissing sound.

The Emu's diet consists of leaves, fruits, shoots and flowers of native plants. They will also eat insects and grubs. Emus eat small pebbles and stones that are used to grind food. Their serrated beaks help grasp grain, and rip leaves and shoots apart.

Emus can be found over most of mainland of Australia especially in pastoral areas. They rarely frequent unsettled arid areas, rainforests and heavily populated areas. They are nomadic usually staying in one place except when lack of food and water drives them to more fertile areas.

Breeding usually takes place during autumn and winter with couples staying together for several months. The dominant female will lay 5-15 blue-green eggs (130mm x 90mm) which the male incubates for 53-61 days. During this time the male Emu will not drink or eat living solely on its fat stores. Young emus will remain close to their father for six to seven months in which time the father can be very aggressive.

Forest Kingfisher

Todiramphus macleaqui



The Forest Kingfisher is essentially a tropical and subtropical kingfisher, found from the Top End of Northern Territory to the Gulf Coast.

Forest Kingfishers are commonly found in open sclerophyll forest with a patchy or sparse understorey. They favour watercourse vegetation and the margins of swamps and billabongs. They may also be found in mangroves, cane fields, farmlands and beaches, however they require forest and woodland for breeding.

The Forest Kingfisher's diet consists of invertebrates, including beetles, bugs, spiders and grasshoppers. It also will eat insect larvae, small lizards, frogs and worms. It typically hunts from low bare branches or telegraph wires.

Most prey are caught with sally-pouncing, often landing with a thud caused by the breast and leg hitting the ground while seizing prey with the bill. They also engage in sally-hunting, striking the prey from low branches or the air and may also hunt in shallow water.

There is a quick return flight to a perch, then the prey is killed by banging it against the branch, often dislodging indigestible portions such as insects' wings. Hunting takes place during the day, but with little activity during the hottest part of the day.

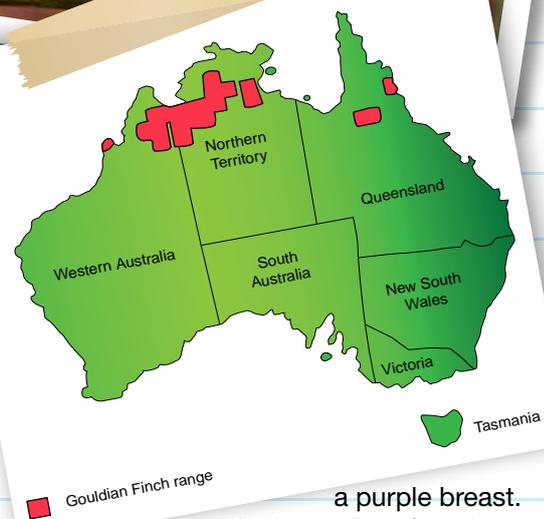
Early on in the breeding season, the male Forest Kingfisher explores nest sites or even begins preliminary digging at several sites. The pairs, which may share long-term monogamous bonds, both build the nest.

Sometimes the nests are in tree cavities, earthbanks or roots of fallen trees; more often they are in arboreal termitaria (termite nests in trees), and they are usually 4 - 12 m above the ground. Each member of a pair flies straight at the nest site from several metres away, with their bills pointed forward like a bullet, chipping away some of the 'cement' with each impact. Eventually a nest chamber about 23 cm in diameter is formed at the end of a short, slightly sloping tunnel. Both sexes, as well as helpers from the previous season, help in the incubation of the eggs as well as feeding the young. It is even possible that in warmer areas the heat of the sun and the termite nest during the day are sufficient for incubation. Both sexes defend the nest vigorously.

Gouldian Finch

Erythrura gouldiae

Gouldian Finches are Australia's most spectacularly coloured grassfinches, and are perhaps the most spectacularly coloured of all Australian birds.



They are small birds, with a bright green back, yellow belly and black face. The facial colour is usually black, and is found in about 75% of the population, and rare, yellow-faced forms make up about 25% of the population. The males are brighter in plumage than the females. Young Gouldian Finches are dull ashy grey on the head and hind neck, becoming olive on the back and tail.

Some birds have a purple breast. Red-faced birds occur from time to time.

The Gouldian Finch is patchily distributed in tropical northern sub-coastal areas from Derby, Western Australia, to the Gulf of Carpentaria and thinly to central Cape York Peninsula, but is locally common in the north and north-western parts of its range.

As with most other grassfinch species, the Gouldian Finch is seldom found far from water, and needs to drink several times during the day. Throughout its range the species inhabits the edges of mangroves and thickets, and savannas dotted with trees.

Outside the breeding season the Gouldian Finch is partly migratory. Birds move in quite large flocks to more coastal areas and return back inland to breed when the rainy season arrives. For most of the year Gouldian Finches feed mostly on ripe or half-ripe grass seeds. During the breeding season, however, the diet consists almost entirely of insects. Birds feed in small to large groups, and food may be taken on the ground or in flight.

The Gouldian Finch breeds in small social colonies, with breeding normally taking place from January to August. It is the only grassfinch that nests exclusively in tree hollows or holes in termite mounds. Several pairs may share a single hollow. Two or three broods may be reared in a season, with both parents sharing incubating and brooding duties.

Unfortunately, its bright colouration has led to the Gouldian Finch being a target for the illegal bird trade. This illegal trapping, along with other factors such as alteration of habitat, predation, the effects of fire and the susceptibility of the species to the parasitic air-sac mite, *Sternastoma tracheacolum* has reduced its numbers alarmingly.

Indian Peafowl

Pavo cristatus



As their name suggests, the Indian Peafowl is the national bird of India. Their ability to adapt to various climates and habitats ensures they are found world wide.

Peafowl are medium sized birds most closely related to the pheasant. The males are known as peacocks, while the females are peahens, and the offspring are peachicks.

There are three main types of peafowl, the African Congo peafowl, the Indian peafowl and the Green peafowl all of which are thought to have originated in Asia. All three species of peafowl are known for their elaborate peacocks and dull, brown peahens.

Male peacocks are known for their enormous tail feathers that fan out behind them and can reach up to two meters in length. This colourful display is thought to be used for both mating and defence purposes. Peacocks attract peahens to mate with by showing off their elaborate feathers. When threatened, peacocks will fan their tail out in order to look bigger and therefore intimidate approaching predators.

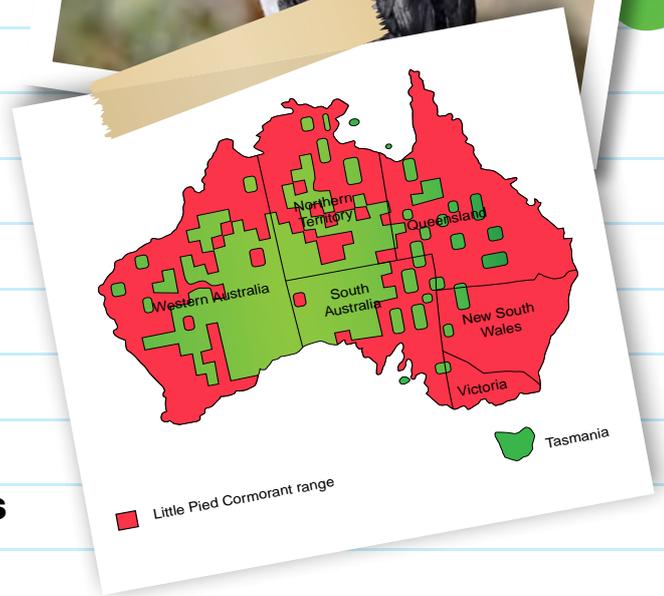
The Indian peafowl is an omnivorous bird and feeds on insects, plants, seeds, and flower heads. Peafowl have a number of natural predators in the wild that include wild dogs, cats and medium sized mammals.

Peacocks are generally about twice the size of peahens, and even larger when the male peacock is displaying his plumage.

During the mating season, peacocks may mate with up to six different peahens. Peahens lay between 4 and 8 brown coloured eggs, they incubate the eggs by sitting on them, and the peachicks hatch after an incubation period of about a month. Peahens look after and rear the peachicks on her own without any help from the peacock.

Little Pied Cormorant

Phalacrocorax
melanoleucos



The Little Pied Cormorant is one of the most common of Australia's waterbirds, occurring on water bodies of almost any size.

It is entirely black above and white below. The face is dusky and, in adult birds, the white of the underside extends to above the eye. Immature birds resemble the adults except there is no white above the eye.

The Little Pied Cormorant is found throughout Australia.

The nest is a flat platform of sticks, lined with green leaves and is usually placed in a tree. Both adults share in egg incubation and care of the young .

The Little Pied Cormorant is at home in either fresh or salt water. It is often seen in large flocks on open waterways and on the coast, especially where large numbers of fish are present. On inland streams and dams, however, it is often solitary. The Little Pied Cormorant mixes readily with the similar sized Little Black Cormorant, *P. sulcirostris*.

Little Pied Cormorants feed on a wide variety of aquatic animals, from insects to fish. On inland streams and dams they turn to their most favoured food: yabbies (freshwater crayfish). These are caught by deep underwater dives with both feet kicking outward in unison. Other crustaceans are also taken, with shrimps being a large part of their diet in winter months.

Little Pied Cormorants breed either in colonies or, less commonly, in single pairs.

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo

Cacatua leadbeateri



The Major Mitchell's Cockatoo is pale pink with dark pink on the underside of its wings and tail. Its lower belly and upper sides of its wings and tail are white.

This cockatoo has a large, distinctive crest banded with dark pink, yellow and white. Male Major Mitchell's Cockatoos have dark brown eyes, while females have pink or red eyes.

Major Mitchell's are one of the smaller cockatoo species and can often be found in large flocks. They often gather at dawn and dusk to drink at waterholes throughout their arid range.

These Cockatoos are omnivores. They feed on insects and over 30 species of plants including wattles, hakeas, grevilleas and pines.

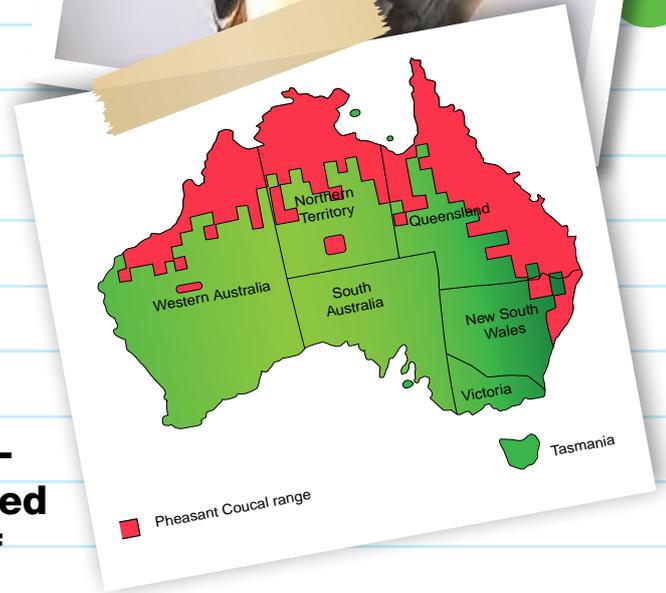
Major Mitchell's live in sparsely timbered grass lands, scrub lands, stands of cypress pines growing along sand ridges, casuarinas covering rocky outcrops, mallee and trees surrounding cereal fields or bordering watercourses.

Major Mitchell's spend most of the day feeding on the ground or among the branches of trees and shrubs. They eat seeds, nuts, fruits and roots, particularly the seeds of cypress pine *Callitris* and acacias.

Couples nest in hollow limbs of trees. They line the bottom with wood dust and bark strips which are removed from the entrance to their nest hole. Both parents incubate - the male during the day and female at night. They breed from May through to December, with mating occurring earlier in the north than in the south.

Pheasant Coucal

Centropus
phasianinus



The Pied Honeyeater is a medium-sized honeyeater with a long curved bill and a small pale-blue patch of bare skin below the eye.

Males are black and white, having a black head, neck and upper parts, a white lower rump and upper tail, black wings with a white stripe, and white underparts with a black tipped tail. Females are brown above, with a grey-white chin and throat grading into a whitish breast streaked and spotted dark-brown, with the rest of the underparts white. The wings have a white stripe along the edges of the secondary feathers, and there is a black and white shoulder patch formed by black feathers edged with white. The bare eye patch is less conspicuous in females and young birds than in males.

Pied Honeyeaters are nomadic, moving in response to rainfall and flowering of food-plants.

The Pied Honeyeater feeds mainly on nectar, but also eats insects and occasionally fruit and seeds. It uses its long bill to probe flowers and foliage of trees and shrubs, especially Emu-bush, Eremophila, eucalypts and grevilleas.

The Pied Honeyeater is found in the arid and semi-arid zones, in shrublands dominated by Emu-bush, Eremophila, and grevilleas, as well as woodlands, sandhills, inland ranges and granite outcrops.

Pied Honeyeater pairs may nest near other pairs, with males defending a breeding territory using calls and aerial displays. Both sexes build the shallow cup-shaped nest from twigs, grass (e.g. Spinifex), and other plant materials bound with spider-web and lined with soft grass, roots, flowers, wool, feathers and plant down. The nest is placed low in a shrub or small tree, suspended by the rim from a forked branch. Both sexes incubate the eggs and care for the young, continuing to feed them after they have fledged.

Powerful Owl

Ninox strenua



Found only in Australia, Powerful Owls are large hawk owls with soft, cryptic plumage in browns and greys. Powerful owls are aptly named, being the largest owl in Australia and capable of lifting their prey straight up off the ground in their talons.



Powerful owls live in mature open forests along the east and south coast of Australia from central Queensland to South Australia.

Powerful owls hunt prey species such as brush-tailed possums, gliders, smaller ring-tailed possums, koalas and flying foxes. In turn, young powerful owls are preyed upon by goannas. As adults are high up on the food chain they are not subject to much predation.

Their main threats come from humans. These magnificent birds were once far

more common and widespread. Powerful Owls are currently listed as a vulnerable species in both Victoria and New South Wales. Cutting down old growth forests and reducing the availability of prey species, has caused the decrease in numbers. They also require large roosting trees and large old hollows for nesting.

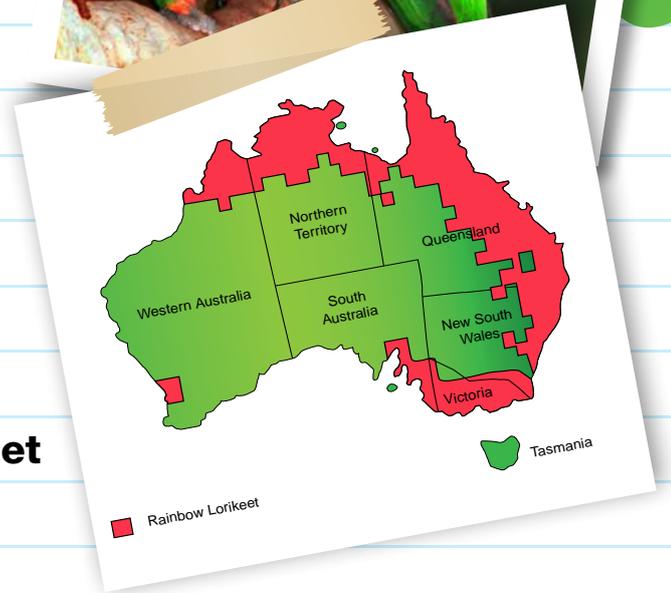
These owls need large territories in order to hunt prey and in turn feed their young. During daylight hours they sit quietly and their cryptic plumage ensures that they go unnoticed.

Like other owls, they feed at dusk, dawn and at night, relying on their excellent hearing and impressive eyes.

Powerful owls begin nesting in May and their young are ready to fledge in September as spring begins. The tree hollow is filled with leaf litter and other organic matter and two or three eggs are laid. The females are usually slightly smaller than the males.

Rainbow Lorikeet

Trichoglossus haematodus



The green-collared rainbow lorikeet is one of two types of rainbow lorikeets, the other being a red-collared lorikeet.

The green-collared rainbow lorikeet grows in size between 25 and 30 centimetres, they also display a variety of beautiful colours. Their heads are completely blue with a green back and tail. The collar is a lighter shade of green, close to a fluorescent green, bright yellow flanks that then shade into an orange and red. Their belly is also blue and a bright yellow covers their under tail and with an orange to red beak. Juveniles are recognisable by a dark red to black beak.

Rainbow lorikeets enjoy a variety of different and diverse foods, and part of a rainbow lorikeets' diet is nectars and pollens. Like all lorikeets, rainbows' have a tongue with fleshy bristles at the end (papillae), which can be raised or lowered.

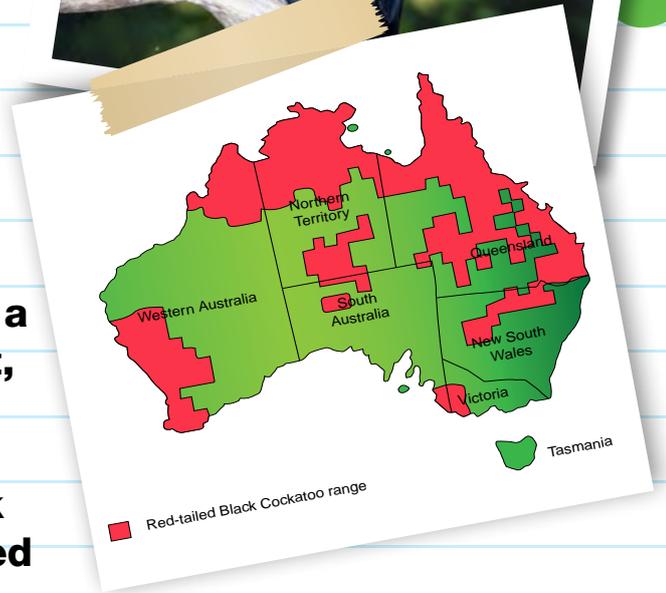
With the bristles raised the tongue acts as a bush that soaks up nectar and catches gains of pollen. Along with this they also like fruits and seeds. Lorikeets also enjoy various types of seed like sunflower. Blackbutt's rainbow lorikeets get fed a variety of foods each day, which includes fruit salad, a small parrot mix and even a substitute nectar mix. Rainbow lorikeets are found from the Cape of Queensland down the East Coast to South Australia, only marginally inland.

They live in rainforests, eucalypt forests, woodlands and sometimes even suburban back yards. At night they roost on branches of trees, often eucalypts, and it is important to get the best branches on the tree, the top of the tree in a crowded forest is the safest and warmest. When nesting they nest in hollows around five meters above ground level and that are thirty-five centimetres deep. They usually lay about 2-3 eggs that take 25 days to hatch.

Red-tailed Black Cockatoo

*Calyptorhynchus
banksii*

The Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo is a big black parrot with a short crest, a stubby beak and a long tail. The tail has big red patches in it. The tail of the female Red-tailed Black Cockatoo has black bars on the red patches and the head has yellow spots.



There are five sub-species of Red-tailed Black Cockatoo that inhabit North Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania.

Red-tailed Black Cockatoos prefer Eucalyptus woodlands bordering watercourses but are also found in dense eucalypt forests, woodlands dominated by Acacia, monsoon rainforests, recently burnt shrubland and timbered grassland.

They can be seen in large, noisy, flocks of birds or in small family groups. They are also found in rainforest areas and sparsely timbered grasslands.

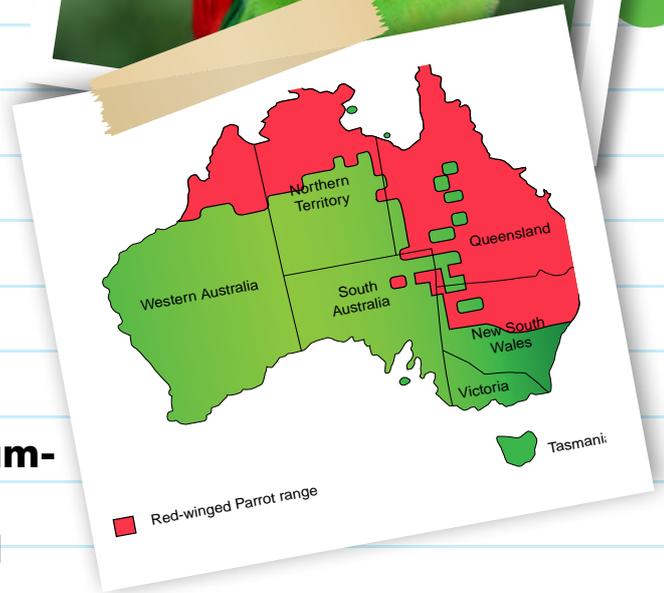
Their diet consists of tree seeds, mainly from the stringy bark Eucalyptus, fruit, flowers and insects. They are often seen feeding off seeds found on the ground and in some places they have learnt to find peanuts under the ground.

These cockatoos nest in old, large Eucalyptus trees. The nest is usually found high up in a hollow of a tree, but they have been known to nest as low as 2 metres from the ground. They chew the inside, lining the nest with a layer of wood chips. A normal clutch is two eggs but usually only one chick, the first to hatch, will survive. While the female incubates the egg, she is fed by the male. Egg laying takes place from March to July.

The Red Tailed Black Cockatoo is also known as Banks's Black Cockatoo, and was named after Sir James Banks who sailed on Cook's Voyage 1768-1771.

Red-winged Parrot

Aprosmictus erythropterus



The Red-winged Parrot is a medium-sized, stout parrot and is the only mainly green parrot with large red shoulder patches.

The male is bright lime green with a black back and deep blue rump. The tail is green with a yellow tip. The bill and eye are red and the legs are grey. The female is similar, but with a smaller wing patch and dark green back and a paler rump. Red-winged Parrots are usually seen in pairs or flocks. Their flight is distinctive, with deep, full strokes and a light and airy quality, pausing on each stroke. This species is also known as Crimson-winged or Red-winged Lory, Red Wing or King Parrot.

Red-winged Parrots are widespread in northern and eastern Australia and are also found in southern New Guinea and Irian Jaya.

Red-winged Parrots are found in open, dry woodlands, timber-lined watercourses and arid scrub and sometimes in mangroves. They spend most of the day in trees.

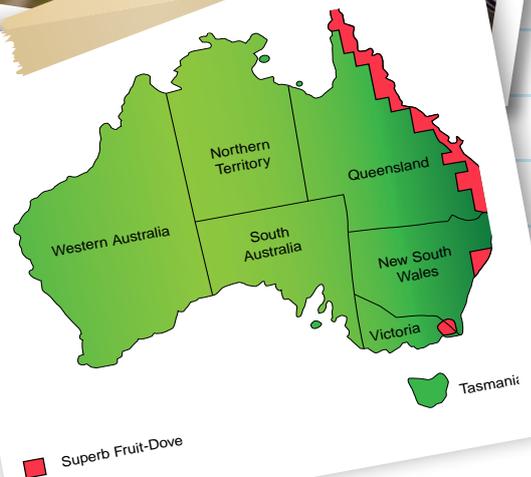
The movements of Red-winged Parrots are not well known. They are considered partly nomadic in response to local conditions, searching for food and water.

Red-winged Parrots feed on seeds, nectar, pollen and blossoms, insects and larvae. They forage in the canopy on outer branches of flowering trees and shrubs. They occasionally come to the ground to drink or to eat fallen seeds.

Red-winged Parrots breed once each year. Eggs are laid in the hollow trunk of a tall tree, often near the ground. The nesting tree is usually close to water. The nest site may be a long way down from the entrance, which is high in the tree. Only the female incubates, leaving the nest to feed or to be fed by the male.

Superb Fruit-Dove

Ptilinopus superbus



The Superb Fruit-Dove is a small colourful pigeon of the tree canopy. It is a compact bird, with short rounded wings and a short tail.

The male has a purple crown, an orange hindneck, a blue-black breastband that separates a grey upper breast from white underparts. These are partly barred green, and the rest of the body is green. The green tail has grey tips. The female is green, with a grey breast and white underparts. There is a smallish purple patch on the crown. Young birds resemble females but lack the purple crown patch. This species is also called the Purple-crowned Fruit Dove or Pigeon, or the Superb Fruit-Pigeon.

The Superb Fruit-Dove is similar in size and, from the ground, often difficult to distinguish from the Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, when high in the forest canopy. However, at closer quarters the male Superb Fruit-Dove is much more striking and, like the male, the female has white underparts partly barred at the sides with green, in contrast to the apricot-yellow underparts of both sexes of the Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove.

The Superb Fruit-Dove is found along the coast and nearby ranges of Queensland and New South Wales south to Moruya.

The Superb Fruit-Dove is found in rainforests, rainforest margins, mangroves, wooded stream-margins, and even isolated figs, lilly pillies and pittosporums.

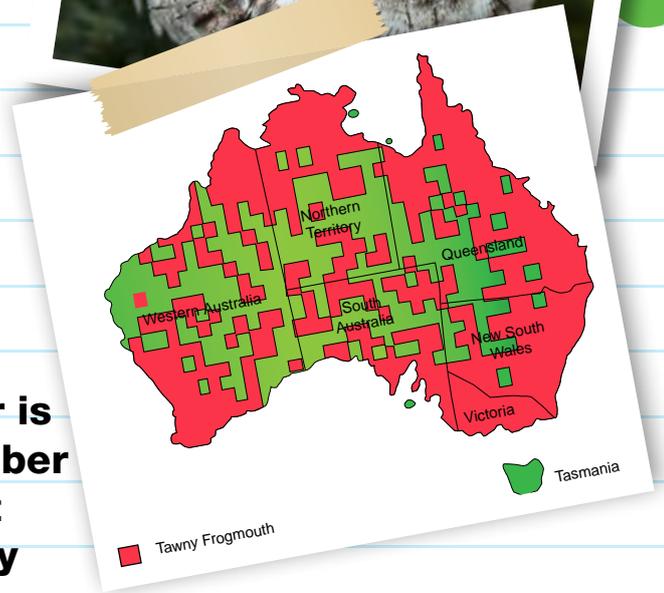
The Superb Fruit-Dove may migrate to New Guinea in winter, but little is known of its movements, or the reasons for its sometimes southerly flights as far as Tasmania.

Superb Fruit-Doves are arboreal (living entirely in trees) and feed almost exclusively on fruit, mainly in large trees. They have a large gape, which allows them to swallow bulky items.

Superb Fruit-Doves build a flimsy platform nest of twigs in bushy trees from 5 m - 30 m above the ground. The female incubates the eggs at night while the male incubates by day.

Tawny Frogmouth

Podargus strigoides



The Tawny Frogmouth is often mistaken for an Owl, this however is not the case. The Tawny is a member of the Night Jar family. It does not have talons like other birds of prey but feet similar to parrots.

The tawny frogmouth is a nocturnal bird that roosts by day and hunts by night. It is a broad plump bodied bird. The colour of its plumage varies greatly from a silvery grey to a russet red. The plumage is mottled and streaked with black and rufous. The tawny frogmouth has a flat crown and short ungraduated tail. Its broad triangular beak is topped with bristly feathers helping to break up its outline. Their large yellow-orange eyes designed for night vision are usually closed as slits during the day.

The tawny frogmouth's name derives from its natural defensive behaviour of opening

its beak in a wide frog like manner revealing a yellow throat and thin tongue. Tawny frogmouths are well known for their ability to camouflage, roosting by day in a stiff pose on exposed branches looking like a broken branch.

Lifelong bonds are formed with pairs sharing all nesting duties such as nest construction, incubation and feeding of young.

Tawny Frogmouths breed during spring and summer. They lay 2-4 eggs which are incubated for 1 month. Tiny nests are made by breaking twigs into small pieces and weaving them together forming a platform, usually in the fork of a tree.

The tawny frogmouth feeds on snails, arthropods and small vertebrates. From a vantage point perch it dives down on its prey.

The tawny frogmouth is common throughout the whole of Australia. They prefer wooded areas wherever they can find trees and open spaces to hunt from. For this reason they are more scarce in dense forests such as rainforests.

Wandering Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna arcuata

The Wandering Whistling-Duck is found in northern and eastern Australia, from the Kimberley region, across the north of Australia, to south-eastern New South Wales. It is vagrant to the south-east and the south-west of the country. This species is also distributed through Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and the Pacific Islands.

The Wandering Whistling-Duck prefers deep vegetated lagoons and swamps, flooded grasslands, sewerage farms, grain stubbles, pastures, irrigated lands and ricefields. It prefers deeper waters where aquatic plants and insects are plentiful.

The most obvious movement is the dispersal of flocks when there is rain from dry season refuges beside permanent water to ephemeral inland breeding swamps and coastal sites.

The Wandering Whistling-Duck feeds almost entirely on aquatic vegetation and seeds, but also on young grass, the bulbs of rushes and other herbage, insects and other small aquatic animals. Wandering Whistling-Ducks forage in tight flocks, with the birds in front diving, and those behind flying over them.

The Wandering Whistling-Duck breeds in the northern Wet Season. The nest is a scrape in the ground out of reach of rising floodwaters, and is hidden in tall grass or shrubbery and lined with grass. Wandering Whistling Ducks are monogamous, and pair-bonds are most likely life-long. Not much is known about the incubation of the eggs and brooding of the young.



Wonga Pigeon

Leucosarcia melanoleuca



The Wonga Pigeon, or Wonga Wonga, is a large, plump, ground-dwelling pigeon with a small head, short, broad wings and a long tail.

It is mainly grey above, with a pale face, a distinctive white V on the breast and white lower parts which are boldly marked with black-brown crescents and wedges. The eyes are dark red-brown with a pink eye-ring and black lores (area between the bill and the eye) and the bill, feet and legs are deep pink to red.

The Wonga Pigeon is found in dense coastal forests, rainforests and scrubs. It is often seen in clearings near forests such as picnic areas, walking tracks, carparks and roadsides, as well as gardens that have bird feeders.

The Wonga Pigeon feeds on seeds of native and introduced plants as well as fallen fruit and the occasional insect. It forages exclusively on the ground, often walking long distances along well-defined routes. It mainly feeds in the early morning and late afternoon and sometimes forms large flocks where there is plenty of food.

The Wonga Pigeon is monogamous, with breeding pairs defending the area around the nest. Threat displays include bowing and clicking while walking towards an intruder. Nests are built in large trees, usually high off the ground, and are a saucer-shaped platform of twigs and sticks, lined with small twigs, vine tendrils and other soft plant materials. Will sometimes use the abandoned nests of Topknot Pigeons or Tawny Frogmouths. Both sexes incubate the eggs and feed the young. They use a special 'cryptic posture' when sitting on the nest, keeping their patterned tail raised high and facing any observers, while peering over the tail to keep an eye on potential threats. This posture is also used when birds are flushed from cover and have flown to a perch. Adults feed the young by regurgitation and young birds will remain with the adults for some time after fledging but are fed less and less often.

Ducks

Blackbutt Reserve



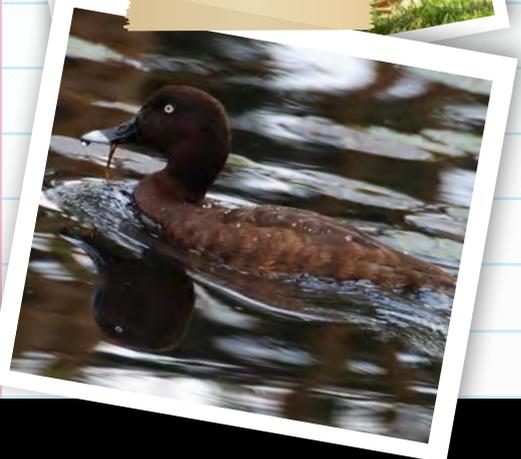
Pacific Black Duck is mostly mid-brown in colour, with each feather edged buff. The Pacific Black Duck is one of the most versatile of the Australian ducks. It frequents all types of water, from isolated forest pools to tidal mudflats. Pacific Black Ducks are usually seen in pairs or small flocks and readily mix with other ducks. The Pacific Black Duck is mainly vegetarian, feeding on seeds of aquatic plants.



Australian Wood Duck is a medium-sized 'goose-like' duck with a dark brown head and a pale grey body with two black stripes along the back. Found in grasslands, open woodlands, wetlands and flooded pastures. They eat grasses, clover, herbs and insects. They form monogamous breeding pairs and nest in tree holes, above or near water, both parents feed young and remain with them until fledging.



Chestnut Teal is a small dabbling duck with a high forehead and rounded head. Males have a distinctive glossy green head. Found on wetlands and estuaries in coastal regions, they are one of the few ducks able to tolerate high salinity waters. They eat seeds, insects, vegetation, molluscs and crustaceans. They form monogamous pairs. Both parents choose and defend nest site, males remain with female while she incubates the eggs.



Hardhead is a small medium-sized chocolate brown duck with a white undertail and pale blue bill tip. Endemic to Australia they are found in freshwater swamps, wetlands and sheltered estuaries. They are rarely seen on land and typically roost on low branches near water. These ducks dive for aquatic plants and animals. Females build a platform nest from reeds, sticks and vegetation and incubate eggs alone.

Blackbutt Tree

Eucalyptus pilularis

Many visitors to Blackbutt Reserve often wonder how Blackbutt Reserve got its name. Blackbutt Reserve is named after the Blackbutt tree (*Eucalyptus pilularis*).



This tree's name is derived from the rough bark at the tree base which is usually charred black from past bush fires. The Blackbutt is 'half bark', meaning it has rough fibrous bark on the lower trunk with the upper trunk and branches being smooth and whitish to yellow in colour. It can grow to 70 metres in height, with a trunk diameter of 4.1 metres.

The leaves are a uniform glossy to dark green and the white flowers occur from September to March.

The Blackbutt is relatively scarce as it was a favorite hardwood timber for farmers, bridge building and flooring due to its durability and fire resistant properties. Blackbutt timber is used in the flooring of Parliament House, Canberra.



A large proportion of the remaining Blackbutt trees are contained in forests and reserves along the east coast of Australia. It is the predominant tree species seen on the drive on the Pacific Highway between Taree and Coffs Harbour.



Appropriately the Blackbutt leaves are a favourite Koala food.

History in Brief

Blackbutt Reserve



Blackbutt Reserve grew from an ill-fated Kotara subdivision which floundered during the depression.

When the price of the subdivision had fallen from five pound a foot to ten pound an acre in 1932, two gentlemen of the Newcastle Abattoirs and the RSL were the only takers. The two lots purchased by the RSL were for farmlets which proved uneconomical. It was decided to sell them.

Through the efforts of New Lambton Council, it was decided to buy the RSL land for a public reserve. The purchase price of nine hundred pounds was organised by contributions from eight municipal Councils within the City area: New Lambton, Adamstown, Hamilton, Wickham, Merewether, Waratah, Wallsend and Newcastle City.

So the child was born. By 1938 an area of what had been private land, acquired by the Department of Lands and gazetted as a public recreational reserve was added. The land was placed in the trusteeship of Newcastle City Council on its inception in 1938. The first portion of 143 acres being officially dedicated on 13 September 1940.

In 1956 Newcastle City Council acquired from the Scottish Australian Mining Company 306 acres of land running north of the existing Reserve to Ridgeway Road and Carrington Parade.

During the preparation of the Northumberland County plan it was provided that 70 acres owned by the Council should be added to Blackbutt. The intention of Council was to subdivide the remainder but after prolonged public pressure in 1959 it was agreed to dedicate the majority of the land and add it to Blackbutt Reserve.

Small areas had been taken from the original 449 acres by the subdivision of Floralia Close and

Mahogany Drive and the extension of Carnley Avenue through the Reserve and later the widening of Lookout Road.

Around late 1963 the Council embarked on its Blackbutt program. The Reserve was then far from a natural piece of bush. It had for years suffered the ravages of lantana and other imported weeds and the fires that such growth encourages. Council workmen cleared the lantana and started to restore the almost non-existent bush and ground cover that once was natural of the area. By 1966 the restoration work was surprising experts who believed such a task was near impossible.

Coal mining had been for many years a dominant feature of the area now covered by Blackbutt Reserve. In 1966 the last colliery in the area was to close owing to the uneconomical "pick and shovel" method used in mining the coal.

Borehill Colliery had been operating since 1945 but in 1966 was saved from closure by the installation of mechanisation. 600 tonnes per day were produced up to its eventual closure in 1979. The area was restored and with the guidance of the Newcastle City Council, grassed banks were sloped to a bridged waterway flowing into two large ponds. Trees, barbecues and picnic tables now cover the area that was once an active, dirty coal mine. Captive animal displays were introduced to the Reserve in the mid 1960s. The maintenance and development of Blackbutt as a natural park within an urban environment is continued by Newcastle City Council.

Ticks

Blackbutt Reserve

Bites of ticks are seldom felt at first. They can easily go unnoticed for days until they start injecting their salivary toxins. Ticks do not deliberately attach in bodily recesses, they tend to be found in clefts behind ears, neck and scalp, where they can't be easily brushed off.

The tick bite is surrounded by an area of erythema (redness) but later becomes a distinct and firm swelling which gradually bulge's around the anterior end of the tick's body, causing it to appear as though it is embedded.

Allergic Reactions

Allergic reactions may be local or systemic responsible for allergic reactions. Larvae and nymphs, as well as adults can cause very severe allergic reactions. Dramatic local redness, fluid swelling and itch may develop within 2 to 3 hours of attachment of even 1 larva.

After the removal of the tick itchiness may recur at the site of attachment at intervals over some weeks. A small lump usually appears within a day or so after ticks removal and can be sore for weeks.

Some people can have allergic reactions by a tick just walking over their hand. It is not known what causes this. Systemic reactions to tick bites may include headache, dizziness and Anaphylaxis (allergic shock)

Prevention of Tick bites

Ticks occur in sheltered bushy areas and gardens. Ticks may drop on to you as you brush against shrubbery or drop from overhanging branches.

Wear appropriate clothing for bush walks or gardening. Wear wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, long trousers tucked into socks. Ticks can



be easily seen on light coloured clothing. Spray clothes and hat with insect repellent, preferably the night before wearing. Spray well on collar and cuffs and fly. Allow clothes to dry. Spray exposed skin with a repellent before going outdoors.

Check clothing and pets before entering the house. Check family for ticks, especially head, behind ears, groin, armpits, neck and backs of knees.

Keeping a dogs coat clipped short makes finding ticks easier. Do not clip too short as sunburn may occur. Daily examination of pets is an effective way of finding ticks.

Removal of Ticks

Remove tick as soon as possible.

Use fine-point tweezers or a tick remover.

Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.

Gently pull the tick straight out with steady pressure.

Wash your hands, disinfect the bite and tweezers.

A cold compress can be used to control pain.

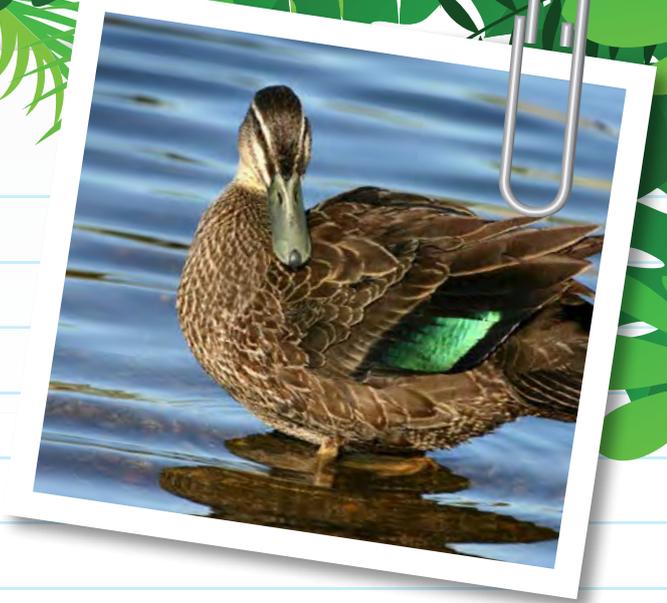
If you have any problems seek medical attention.

Children: tell them to seek adult help for proper tick removal.

Multiple Ticks Bites: usually tiny grass ticks are best removed if you soak in a bath for 30 minutes with 1 cup of bicarbonate of soda.

Animal Species List

Blackbutt Reserve



Birds

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Australian King Parrot	<i>Aisterus scapularis</i>	Long-tailed Finch	<i>Poephila acuticauda</i>
Apostle Bird	<i>Strythidea cinerea</i>	Major Mitchells Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua leadbeateri</i>
Australian Brush Turkey	<i>Alectura lathami</i>	Masked Lapwing	<i>Vanellus miles novaehollandiae</i>
Banded Lapwing	<i>Vanellus tricolor</i>	Musk Lorikeet	<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>
Barking Owl	<i>Ninox connivens</i>	Pea Fowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
Bar-shouldered Dove	<i>Geopelia humeraus</i>	Peaceful Dove	<i>Geopelia striata placida</i>
Black Swan	<i>Cyganus atratus</i>	Pheasant Coucal	<i>Centropus phasianinus</i>
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Pied Heron	<i>Ardea picata</i>
Blue-faced Honeyeater	<i>Entomyzon cyanotis</i>	Pied Honeyeater	<i>Certhionyx variegatus</i>
Budgerigar	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	Rainbow Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>
Buff-banded Rail	<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	Red-winged Parrot	<i>Aprosmictus erythropterus</i>
Bush-stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus grallarius</i>	Rufous Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis coromanda</i>	Satin Bowerbird	<i>Ptilonorhynchus violaceus</i>
Chiming Wedgebill	<i>Psophodes occidentalis</i>	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus</i>
Common Bronzewing	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Superb Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus superbus</i>
Crested Pigeon	<i>Oxyphaps lophotes</i>	Tawny Frogmouth	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>
Eclectus Parrot	<i>Eclectus roratus</i>	Turquoise Parrot	<i>Neophema pulchella</i>
Emerald Ground Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	Wandering Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna arcuata</i>
Emu	<i>Dromaeus novaehollandiae</i>	White-browed Woodswallow	<i>Artamus superciliosus</i>
Forest Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus macleaui</i>	Wonga Pigeon	<i>Leucosarcia melanoleuca</i>
Golden-shouldered Parrot	<i>Psephotus chrysopfergius</i>	White-headed Pigeon	<i>Columba leucomela</i>
Gouldian Finch	<i>Erythrura gouldiae</i>		
Little Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>		

Animal Species List

Blackbutt Reserve



Mammals

Common Name	Scientific Name
Brush-tail Rock-wallaby	<i>Petrogale penicillata</i>
Common Wombat	<i>Vombatus ursinus</i>
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus giganteus</i>
Koala	<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>
Parma Wallaby	<i>Macropus parma</i>
Red Kangaroo	<i>Macropus rufus</i>
Red-necked Wallaby	<i>Macropus rufogriseus</i>
Ringtail Possum	<i>Pseudocheirus peregrinnus</i>
Swamp Wallaby	<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>
Wallaroo/Euro	<i>Macropus robustus</i>

Amphibians

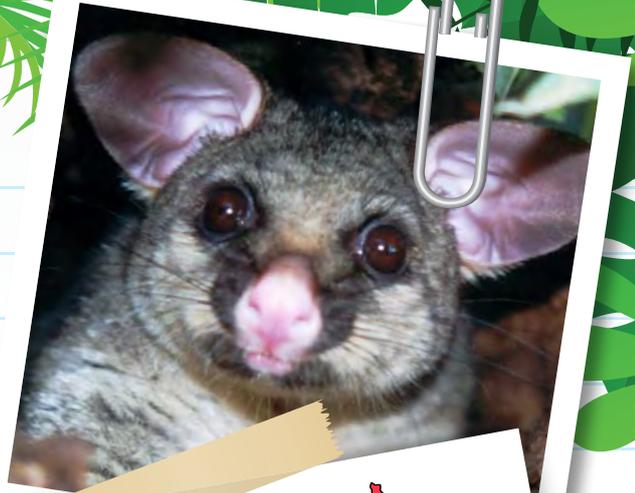
Common Name	Scientific Name
White-lipped Tree Frog	<i>Litoria infrafrenata</i>
Green & Golden Bell Frog	<i>Litoria aurea</i>

Reptiles

Common Name	Scientific Name
Diamond Python	<i>Morelia spilota spilota</i>
Eastern Blue-tongued Lizard	<i>Tiliqua scinoides scinoides</i>
Eastern Long-necked Turtle	<i>Chelodina longicollis</i>
Inland Bearded Dragon	<i>Pogona vitticeps</i>
Lace Monitor	<i>Varanus varius</i>
Spotted Python	<i>Antaresia maculosa</i>

Brush-tail Possum

Trichosurus vulpecula



The common name of these possums highlights the features that distinguishes them most clearly from all other possums - the thick bushy tail. They vary in colour and size throughout their extensive range.

The typical brushtail is silver-grey on the back and white to pale grey underneath. The tapered tail is half grey and half black and thickly furred, except for the underside of the last third, which is naked. The ears are long and oval shape. The adult weight is around 1.6-2.4kg with males being large than females.

The brushtail's diet is mainly plant based i.e. leaves, fresh gum tips and flowers, however they also occasionally eat insects, eggs and meat. An open compost bin in a backyard becomes an enticing smorgasbord for a hungry possum.

The brushtail is the most widely distributed and abundant of the large possum species. Away from its urban haunts it is most likely to be found in open forests, woodlands and watercourses lined with river red gums. Both sexes may breed at one year of age but they have a higher success rate in breeding during the second breeding season after birth. Although brushtail possums generally have only a single joey, the forward facing pouch contains two teats. The young are born after a gestation period of 17 to 18 days.

For the first 80 days of pouch life, the unfurred joey is permanently attached to the teat; by 120 days the joey begins to leave the pouch. The young animal spends several months coming and going from the pouch until it is fully weaned and independent.

Brushtail possums have been known to live for 10-12 years in the wild.

Brush-tail Rock-wallaby

Petrogale penicillata

These unique and beautiful 'acrobats' of the marsupial world leap and bound their way around rocky outcrops and cliff ledges in rugged and steep country near the east coast of Australia. Of the 15 species of rock wallaby in Australia, most are now considered threatened, and have disappeared from much of their original range.



The Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby is a small reddish brown rock-wallaby weighing 5 to 8 kg with a distinctive long bushy tail and white cheek blazes. Rock-wallabies are extremely agile, moving swiftly and confidently through rugged terrain. They appear to be almost flying. They move with a hopping action using both feet together with their tail used for support and balance and their short, well padded, rough textured feet giving them remarkable grip. Their tiny forearms are used for holding food, tending young and balancing.

The brush-tailed rock wallaby can be found in fragmented populations roughly following the Great Dividing Range from south-east Queensland to Western Victoria's Grampians. Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies live in steep rocky outcrops, cliffs and boulder piles which provide plenty of caves, crevices and overhangs for shelter from heat and predators. They feed on a wide variety of native grasses, herbs and shrubs as well as roots and bark in the evening and early morning and return to their rocky shelters by day.

Rock-wallabies live in colonies made up of several small family groups living together. Colonies may be so close together as to be virtually continuous or may be hundreds of kilometres apart.

Female rock-wallabies give birth to a single pouch young at a time, about the size of a jelly bean. Pouch young are born with no fur and remain in the pouch for 6 months. Like other macropods rock-wallabies can have several young 'on the go' at once at different stages of development e.g. one embryo, one in the pouch and one at foot. Life expectancy in the wild is 5-10 years on average.

Source: www.waterfallsprings.com.au

Swamp Wallaby

Wallabia bicolor

The species name *bicolor* comes from the distinct colouring variation, with the typical grey coat of the macropods varied with a dark brown to black region on the back, and light yellow to rufous orange on the chest. A light coloured cheek stripe is usually present, and extremities of the body generally show a darker colouring, except for the tip of the tail, which is often white.



The gait of differs from other wallabies, with the Swamp Wallaby carrying its head low and tail out straight. The average length is 76 cm for males, and 70 cm for females (excluding the tail). The tail in both sexes is approximately equal in length to the rest of the body. Average weight for males is 17 kg, females averaging 13 kg.

The Swamp Wallaby is found from the northernmost areas of Cape York in Queensland, down the entire east coast and around to south-western Victoria. It was formerly found through to south-eastern South Australia, but is now rare or absent from that region. It inhabits thick undergrowth in forests and woodlands, or shelter during the day in thick grass or ferns, emerging at night to feed.

The Swamp Wallaby becomes reproductively viable from 15-18 months of age, and can breed throughout the year. Gestation is from 33-38 days, leading to a single young. The young is carried in the pouch from 8-9 months, but will continue to suckle until about 15 months. The Swamp Wallaby exhibits an unusual form of embryonic diapause, differing from other marsupials in having its gestation period longer than its oestrous cycle.

The Swamp Wallaby is typically a solitary animal, but often aggregates into groups when feeding. It will eat a wide range of food plants, depending on availability, including shrubs, pasture, agricultural crops, and native and exotic vegetation. It appears to be able to tolerate a variety of plants poisonous to many other animals, including bracken and hemlock.

Common Wombat

Vombatus ursinus



Common wombats have short ears , muzzle and a broad head. The colour of their coarse fur varies from a uniform grey-brown to black or patchy grey to buff. Adult wombats on average are about one metre long and weigh approximately 30-40 kgs. Although they are of solid build, they are swift and flexible.



Wombats have powerful limbs and claws adapted to digging. Although they may share burrow networks, wombats are solitary animals meeting only to facilitate breeding.

A unique feature of the common wombat is its backward facing pouch which protects the young from flying soil when its mother is digging. The common wombat shares this unique feature with the koala, its closest relative.

The common wombat is active around dawn, dusk and twilight spending most of the day in the darkness of its burrow and coming out to graze at night.

The common wombat's habitat varies from dry forests, woodlands and grasslands. They build extensive burrows consisting of several inter-connecting tunnels extending up to 30 metres. Burrow networks may consist of several entrances and chambers allowing more than one wombat to occupy them at the same time.

The common wombat grazes over large areas feeding on grasses, sedges and tubers. Their unique dental arrangement is specially designed with a sharp cutting edge for chewing tough plant material.

Breeding occurs throughout the year with timing depending on growing seasons of essential food sources. They produce one young every 2 years with a gestation period lasting approximately 30 days. The newborn joey climbs into its mother's pouch and remains there for approximately 6 months. The joey remains with its mother on foot until weaned at approximately 15-18 months.

Eastern Grey Kangaroo

Macropus giganteus



Eastern Grey Kangaroos are similar to the Red Kangaroo but they are slightly smaller although they may be heavier.

The Eastern Grey is a steel grey colour on top with a lighter shade underneath. The Eastern Grey Kangaroo spends most of the day resting under a tree only moving out to feed at dawn or dusk. These, like all kangaroos, have excellent eye sight, a good sense of smell and large flexible ears. This enables them to react quickly when danger approaches. An alarmed kangaroo will thump the ground with its back legs to warn other kangaroos of danger.

As Eastern Grey Kangaroos are grazing animals they have a strong preference for grass and herbs. They feed mainly at night and early morning.

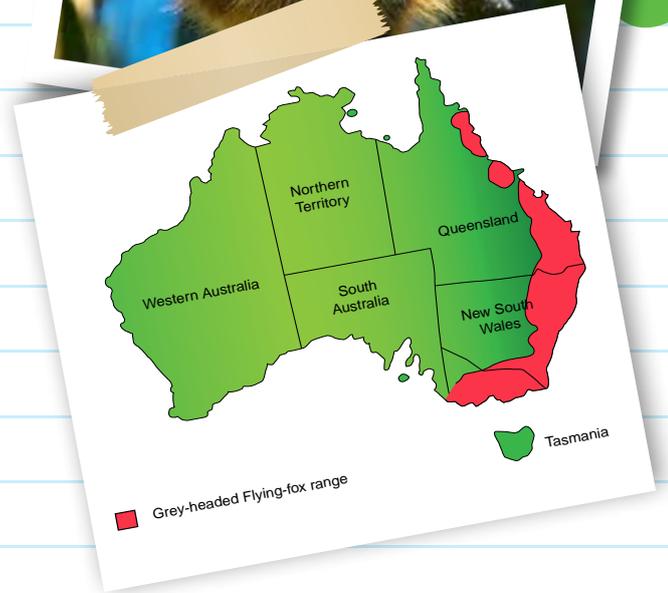
Eastern Grey Kangaroos dwell in habitats ranging from semi-arid mallee scrub through woodland to forest.

Breeding can occur all year round however most births are in the summer months. As with all marsupials the young (joey) are carried in a pouch by the female. The joey is born after 29-38 days gestation and can spend up to 300 days in the pouch. After 15 weeks, faster growth begins when the mother's milk increases its fat and protein content. The joey continues to suckle for another 6 months after leaving the pouch.

Kangaroos can have three joeys at one time. One becoming mature and just out of the pouch, another developing in the pouch and one embryo in pause mode. There are four different teats in the pouch and each provides different milk for the different stages of development. In the breeding season rival male kangaroos rear up on their hind legs and box to compete for a female.

Grey-headed Flying-fox

Pteropus poliocephalus



The Grey-headed Flying-fox is the largest member of its family. Its wingspan can reach one metre and it can weigh up to one kilogram. It is easily identified by its size, wide collar of golden-orange fur and leg fur that extends to the ankles.

Flying-foxes have large eyes which are highly adapted for day and night vision and particularly suited to recognising colours at night. Colour recognition is important when searching for food.

Flying-foxes prefer blossom, nectar, fruit and occasionally leaves of native plants, particularly eucalypts, tea-trees, grevilleas, figs and lilly pillys. Flying-foxes prefer to feed close to where they roost, so most feeding is done within five to 15 kilometres from the campsite. However, they can travel up to 50 kilometres (100km round trip) in search of native nectar, blossom and fruit.

Flying-fox numbers and distribution in Australia have changed markedly since European settlement. Loss of natural habitat and food supply in New South Wales and Queensland due to land clearing and human culling in the past has rapidly reduced numbers of some species in eastern Australia.

The Grey-headed Flying-fox has adapted its behaviour to take advantage of new habitat and reliable food supplies. Permanent camp sites have been established close to or in suburban areas of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne where planting and watering of trees has produced a year-round food supply of native nectar, blossom, fruit and leaves.

Grey-headed Flying-foxes conceive in March and April, but mating activity can occur over many months.

Flying-foxes are placental mammals, giving birth to live young. They give birth to a single young per year from about September to late November. The baby clings to the mother's belly for the first three weeks until it becomes too heavy to carry. At three weeks old the young is left at a "crèche" in the centre of the camp at night while its mother flies out to feed. Mothers return just before dawn and can recognise their young by their smell.

Hairy-nosed Wombats

Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat
Lasirhinus krefftii

The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat is a strong, heavy built marsupial. It has a distinctive muzzle covered with short brown hairs. The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat can reach up to 1 metre in length and can weigh as much as 40kg. Even though the animals look slow and clumsy, they can reach speeds up to 40km/h over short distances.



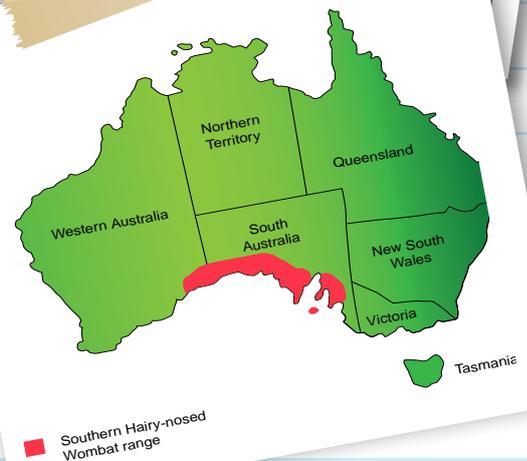
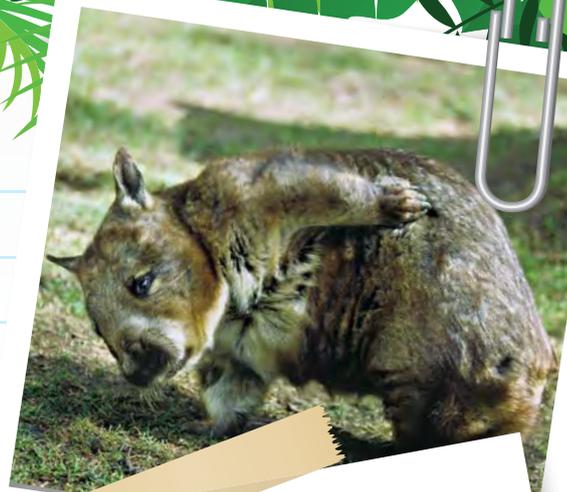
The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat is nocturnal, spending most of the day in its burrow and coming out at night to feed. The breeding season is between November and April with 1 joey being born after a gestation period of 21 days.

The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat is one of the world's rarest mammals (currently listed as critically endangered) however it appears to have been uncommon throughout history. Since European settlement, it has only been found in three areas – the Deniliquin area in NSW, the Moonie River area in Southern Queensland and Epping Forest in Central Queensland. By the late 1960's, the only remaining population was found in a 16km² area within Epping Forest. This continues to be the only known population.

The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat has declined due to a range of factors including drought, over grazing by cattle, direct persecution, habitat loss and competition with rabbits and sheep. The main current threat to its survival is the fact that it exists in only one small population, leaving it vulnerable to local catastrophe such as disease or prolonged drought.

Hairy-nosed Wombats

Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat
Lasiorchinus latifrons



The Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat has a patchy distribution in semi arid shrub land and mallee in southern South Australia, south-eastern Western Australia and north-western Victoria.

In 1996 the Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat was discovered in the south west of New South Wales. The Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat has a silver coat colour, however white animals are known to occur.

While the female Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat is significantly larger than the male, the Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat reveals no significant differences between sexes.

The natural diet of all wombat species is principally perennial native grasses often low in nutritive value. When foraging, the Southern Hairy Nosed Wombat will graze in a circular pattern around the burrow to produce a lawn or grazing halo of green shoots. The wombat has a split upper lip which allows it to use its two incisors to crop pasture close to the ground.

The Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat is listed as an endangered species.

Koala

Phascolarctos



The koala is probably Australia's most internationally recognised animal. The koala varies slightly from the south to the north of Australia.

In the north where it is not often extremely cold the koala has fur around a centimetre long and in the south a koala's fur is much longer, this is an adaptation to survive the plummeting temperatures. During breeding season males often give out a loud growling or grunting noise and females will give out a low scream. The koala was originally thought to be closely related to the possum, but scientists now believe that the wombat is the koala's closest relative.

Koalas can be found in eucalyptus forests along the East Coast of Australia. A wild koala feeds almost exclusively on eucalyptus leaves and survives without drinking except in a severe drought. A koala gains almost all of its moisture from the eucalyptus leaves.

The way the eucalyptus leaves are utilised is by staying in the koala's caecum or appendix.

The appendix of a koala is around 2 metres long, 10 millimetres in diameter and can hold around 2 litres of water. The leaves remain in the appendix for up to 8 days. It is during this time that the leaves in the digestive system begin to ferment. It is through this process that the koala can gain energy from a very low energy source.

Breeding occurs from October through to May. After a 35-day gestation period (pregnancy), the baby koala moves up into the pouch where it secures itself on to 1 of 2 teats and remains there for around 6 months. During this time the baby will make appearances out of the pouch until it moves permanently onto its mother's back. A baby koala is called a joey and will stay on its mother's back for six months. A female koala is sexually mature at 2 years old and will start breeding at this age. A male is also sexually mature at the age of 2 but will not breed until around its 3rd to 4th year as the male has to set up a harem and establish its own territory.

Parma Wallaby

Macropus parma



The smallest of the Macropus family weighing in between 3.2 and 5.8 kilograms. They are dark reddish brown to grizzled grey-brown above. The tail is sparsely furred with about half of animals have a small white tip.

In the early part of last century the Parma Wallaby was considered extinct until its discovery on an island in New Zealand. Many believed that they were the only ones left in the wild until a population was rediscovered near Gosford NSW in the 1970's.

Most births occur in February to June but can be in any month. After a pregnancy of around 35 days, the newborn joey attaches firmly to one of four teats in the mother pouch, which it leaves at about 30 weeks, still suckling until approximately 10 months.

Parma Wallabies are herbivores eating grass, leaves and roots.

The Parma Wallaby has patchy distribution in the wet forest along the Great Dividing Range in NSW from the Watagan Mountains north to Gibraltar Range.

The Parma Wallaby requires dense undergrowth for shelter and open grassy areas for food resources. It is rarely seen and resides in densely forested terrain. As it is an extremely solitary animal most sightings occur along roadsides or in gullies.

Red Kangaroo

Macropus rufus

The Red Kangaroo is the largest living marsupial, with proportionally the longest hind legs. The male red kangaroo can reach up to 2m in height and weigh up to 90 kilograms. Males typically have rust or red-brick short fur above grading to pale buff below and on limbs, ears and tail. Females are about half the weight of males, blue-grey with a brown tinge above and white below.



The red kangaroo is mostly nocturnal and crepuscular, resting during the day in a shady scrape. They gather in small groups known as “mobs” but large groups will gather where rainfall has allowed growth of green herbage.

A joey is born after 30-40 days then makes it way into mother’s pouch. At 4 months the joey will leave the pouch for short periods and at 9 months it will leave the pouch permanently. A female kangaroo may have 3 joeys at one time; one at foot, one in the pouch and one in ‘suspense’ waiting until the joey in the pouch leaves.

Births can occur in any month, mostly determined by availability of green feed, but most young are born in spring and summer.

Kangaroos are herbivores eating grass, leaves and roots.

Widespread and common across semi-arid and arid Australia. They inhabit semi-arid plains, grasslands, shrubs lands, woodlands and some dry open forests. They tend to avoid rocky country and sparse desert country.

Red-necked Wallaby

Macropus rufiriseus

The Red-necked Wallaby can be distinguished from other wallabies by its white cheek markings and red colouring on the neck. The rest of its body fur is grey to reddish in colour with a white or pale grey abdomen. Their muzzle, paws and toes are black in colour. The Red-necked wallaby is protected by law in all states of Australia.



The Red-necked Wallaby ranges throughout the eastern parts of Australia from the Queensland - New South Wales border area, right through to South Australia. It is also found in Tasmania.

Found in subtropical, cool temperate, wet and dry sclerophyll forests, and woodland with adjacent grassy areas, this nocturnal animal spends most of the day resting amongst dense understory within the forest.

Usually this wallaby is a solitary animal, but may be seen grazing from late afternoon to dawn in grassy areas in groups. The Red-necked Wallaby eats mainly grasses and herbs, and likes areas that are partially cleared with surrounding patches of sheltered forest. A female is able to breed at the age of around 14 months while a male comes into sexual maturity at around 19 months of age. The pouch life for a Red-necked Wallaby joey is about 9 months, with the joey continuing to suckle till it is around 12-15 months of age.

A frequent interaction amongst males in bouts of sparring. This behaviour takes the form of play fighting and serves to exercise fighting skills in typically non-damaging interactions. Individuals may also learn to assess the abilities of others and potentially avoid damaging fights over resources, especially mating opportunities.

Common Ring-tail Possum

Pseudocheirus peregrinus

The common ringtail possum's colour varies with location. Commonly they are grey-brown on the back with a rufous tinge to the limbs and flanks, and white underparts and ear patches.



Populations in south eastern Queensland and north eastern NSW have rich red limbs, face and flanks while those found in Tasmania have dark grey-brown backs. Common ringtail possums have white tipped tapering prehensile tails that are often carried coiled. With the aid of their unique tails acting as fifth limbs these creatures are agile climbers that rarely venture to the ground. These nocturnal animals are social occurring often as family groups.

The common ringtail possum feeds mostly on leaves, fruits and flowers. Occasionally they will eat insects too. They are known as coprophores, which means that they eat their own faeces but only the soft faeces, produced during the day. By digesting their food twice they ensure maximum extraction of important proteins and minerals.

The common ringtail possum can be found in a range of habitats. They are common in open and closed forests, coastal tea tree scrub, woodlands, mangroves and suburban gardens of eastern Australia.

Common ringtail possums prefer habitats where the tall scrub layer is dense and diverse as this allows them to find a range of shelters. In the South common ring-tail possums tend to build large spherical shaped nests constructed from leaves, twigs and shredded bark called "dreys". In the North they nest in tree hollows depending on their availability.

Rufous Bettong

Aepyprymnus rufescens

The Rufous Bettong is a small marsupial (rat-kangaroo) with silvery grey and ginger fur, with a lighter coloured almost hairless tail. They have pointed ears, a hairy muzzle, pale red fur round the eyes. These bettongs are nocturnal and spend most of the night browsing on grasses and other plant food.



Rufous Bettongs live in open forest with dense grassy cover. They build a nest of grass under thick tussock.

Feeding on grass, roots, flowers, seeds and fungi, like all rat-kangaroo species they are very specialised plant-eaters. Rat-kangaroos dig up and eat underground storage-organs of plants: tubers, bulbs, corms, and swollen roots, and especially truffles, which are the spore-bearing bodies of underground fungi. Those fungi (called ectomycorrhizal fungi) associate with the rootlets of trees such as eucalypts, helping the tree to take up minerals from the soil. By digging up and eating the truffles, bettongs disperse those spores in their dung, helping the fungi to spread to new hosts. In that way bettongs play an important role in the ecosystems they live in. Restoring bettongs to areas from which they have disappeared may benefit the health of the whole ecosystem

The Rufous Bettong breeds throughout the year the female will give birth to a single young where it attaches itself to one of her four teats. Pouch life lasts for about 4 weeks. The young one stays close to the mother until about nine months of age.

Short-beaked Echidna

Tachyglossus
aculeatus

Australia is home to the short beaked echidna, which is a close relative to the long beaked echidna of the New Guinea highlands. It belongs in the family of monotremes along with the platypus. Monotreme refers to the reproductive and excretion hole being the same.



The echidna is around 45cm long and weighs between 4 and 6 kilograms. It is covered in spikes that are made up of lots of hairs joined together and hardened. It is also a close relative to the platypus and a very adept swimmer.

Although the echidna's main diet consists of ants they will also enjoy other grubs and larvae. An echidna does not actually have any teeth as such but instead it has a pad and horny plate inside its mouth that is used to crush food. Aided by powerful claws that, in loose soil, can bury an echidna in about thirty seconds, and equipped with a constantly sticky 18 centimetre long tongue, the echidna is truly adept at foraging for ants and other hidden grubs.

Being limited by their unique food supply the echidna has adapted to a range of different environments. An echidna can contain up to forty- percent body fat, so that when food is scarce, it can last for a few days without any sustenance. It can also lower its body temperature down to 32.5°C, which enables it to conserve energy, which is vital when food is scarce.

The echidna is usually a solitary animal, except when the breeding season starts in August. When the breeding cycle starts a number of males will follow a female around in a line of head to tail. This forms what has been referred to as a train, one of the largest trains that has been spotted was seven males long.

Instead of live young like most animals, the echidna lays a single egg that is manoeuvred, by the female, from the reproductive tract into the pouch. The baby echidna or puggle, is mothered for around fifty days, after that it is left in a special burrow on its own. This burrow is called a nursery burrow, while in here a mother will come back and feed her baby every day on her milk, which by now is a high fat mixture.

Spotted-tailed Quoll

Dasyurus maculatus



Spotted-tailed quolls (also known as spot-tail quolls or tiger quolls) are the largest marsupial carnivores in Australia. Like all marsupials they rear their young in a pouch.

All quoll species have declined in numbers since European settlement due to habitat loss and the introduction of predators such as foxes.

Spotted-tailed quolls are found in a range of forest environments, from rainforests to open woodlands. They require forest with suitable den sites such as rock crevices, caves, hollow logs, burrows and tree hollows.

The spotted-tailed quoll has a large home range and can cover more than six kilometres overnight. It is largely nocturnal and solitary.

Spotted-tailed quolls are more than 50 per cent larger than other quolls and are distinguishable by white spots that extend along their tail.

Spotted-tailed quolls are opportunistic carnivores that both hunt and scavenge. They kill large prey by biting on or behind the head. Prey taken by the spotted-tailed quoll include rats, gliding possums, small or injured wallabies, reptiles and insects. They like carrion (dead animals), birds and eggs as well. Small mammals, reptiles and invertebrates are also a significant part of the diet, particularly for juvenile quolls

Spotted-tailed quolls are sexually mature at two years of age. Mating takes place in mid-June with young born in early July. By mid-August they are no longer attached to

their mothers, although they feed from her and spend much time in the den. Quolls live for approximately five years.

White-lipped Tree Frog

Litoria infrafrenata



White-lipped Tree Frogs are the largest tree frog in the world and the largest frog in Australia. They can reach lengths between 10 and 14 cms and they can live for over 10 years in the wild.

Ranging in colour from pure green to greenish-brown or pale brown these tree frogs have a distinctive white stripe that runs along their lower lip, extending to their shoulder. They also have a white stripe that runs along the back of their legs that extends to the toe. During the breeding season some have a salmon-pink coloration on their arms and legs. They have very large eyes with horizontal pupils.

White-lipped Tree Frogs toes are completely webbed and their fingers are partially webbed. They have large pads on their fingers and toes that assist them while climbing. They are agile when moving among vegetation but do not move as well on the ground.

The White-lipped Tree Frog is found in north-east Queensland and Papua New Guinea. Generally found in low-lying coastal areas, it also lives in closed forests, heathland swamps, dry sclerophyll forests, teatree swamps, mangroves and in urban gardens and parks. They spend most of their time up in the trees and are active at night.

The White-lipped tree frog's diet is mainly insects and invertebrates.

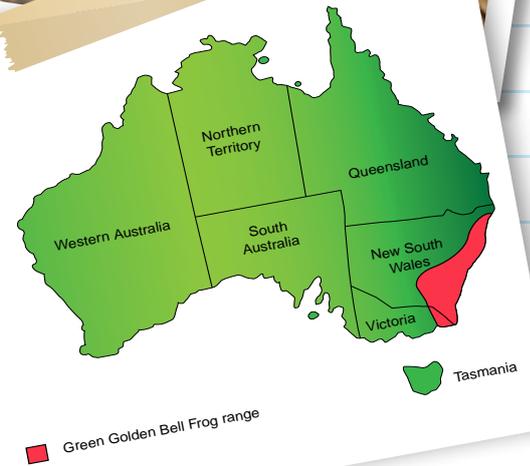
Breeding occurs in spring and summer, usually after rain. Males call to females from perches and vegetation around the ground, near to ponds or still bodies of water. The mating call resembles the barking of a large dog.

Up to a 400 - 4,000 brown eggs are laid in clear jelly clumps on the water surface in permanent and temporary pools. The tadpoles are dark brown in colour and they have a cream stripe that runs along each side of them. The whole process of development from egg to frog takes around eight weeks. This species is sometimes accidentally dispatched to other states in boxes of bananas or other produce.

White-lipped Tree Frogs are also known as the Giant Tree Frog or Indonesian Giant Green Tree Frog.

Green and Golden Bell Frog

Litoria aurea



The green and golden bell frog has smooth skin, usually green, with a variable pattern of golden brown blotches. It has a creamy-gold stripe along the side of the body, from the eye to the hind legs. The inside of the thighs are distinctly coloured in turquoise-blue.

The tadpoles are dark grey-brown with a pinkish tinge to the underside. Females grow to an adult size of approximately 10cm in length, males are smaller rarely exceeding 8cm.

The green and golden bell frog is found in the eastern half of New South Wales and Victoria and the ACT. It is usually found around dams, creeks and lakes, often where sites have been disturbed by human activity such as disused quarries. Their preferred habitats always have ample vegetation both in and around the water.

The diet of this frog consists of spiders, crickets, beetles, damselflies, butterflies and ants. It also preys on smaller frogs including juveniles of its own species.

To attract females, many males congregate at ponds and call while floating in the water. Their breeding season is usually during the spring and summer and their eggs are laid amongst loose floating vegetation. Tadpoles take about 10-12 weeks to metamorphose, though this is somewhat dependent on the temperature of the water.

Although a member of the tree frog family, the green and golden bell frog has only small pads on its toes and fingers.

Their call is a long, deep droning croak accompanied by approximately four shorter grunts.

The green and golden bell frog has declined dramatically over the last few decades. There are several factors contributing to this including habitat modification and destruction and introduced predators, particularly the mosquito fish. Other threats include disease and possibly the effects of increased ultraviolet light from ozone layer depletion. Its natural predators include birds and snakes.

Lace Monitor

Varanus varius



The lace monitor, or tree goanna, is Australia's second-largest lizard and one of the largest lizards on Earth.

Lace monitors are found in a variety of wooded habitats along the east coast of Australia, including rainforest and dry woodland. They are true generalists, adept at running, swimming, burrowing and scaling trees with their powerful limbs and long, strongly curved claws.

In captivity, lace monitors feed on mice, rats and chopped-up rabbit or poultry. In the wild they eat insects, other reptiles, birds and their eggs, small mammals, fish - essentially any small animal that they can overpower. They also feed opportunistically on carrion.

During the nesting season, lace monitors attack birds' nests with a vengeance, feeding on the eggs and chicks of many ground or tree-nesting birds. They are thought to feed on birds to a greater extent than any other monitor lizard.

When threatened they will usually seek shelter in the nearest tree, hiding on the opposite side of the trunk. If cornered however, a lace monitor will bite and lash out with its muscular, compressed tail.

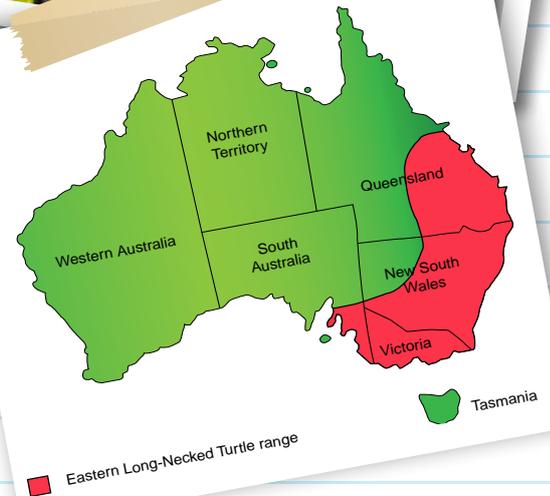
Mating occurs during the summer, when up to six males will court a single female, the largest usually winning the right to reproduce.

Expectant mothers generally lay their eggs in termite mounds, which they break into with their powerful claws. When the termites repair the nest, the eggs are entombed in a controlled environment, safe from predators.

At the start of the rainy season, when the soil softens, the eggs hatch. Females will sometimes even return to help the young dig their way out.

Eastern Long-necked Turtle

Chelodina longicollis



The eastern long-necked turtle lives in swamps and slow moving waters in eastern Australia and can live to be 50 years old.

Its shell is a brown color with black edges measures up to 30 cm, (1 foot), long. The underside of the shell is lighter in color and has black lines. This turtle got its name from its extremely long neck, which can be the full length of the shell.

Unlike other turtles, the eastern snake necked turtle bends it's neck under it's shell to hide and hunt. It will approach its prey with its head sideways and when it is at close range it will snap its neck like a snake to catch its prey.

Since this turtle is carnivorous its diet consists of insects, worms, tadpoles, frogs and small fish that it either swallows whole or shreds into pieces with its front paws.

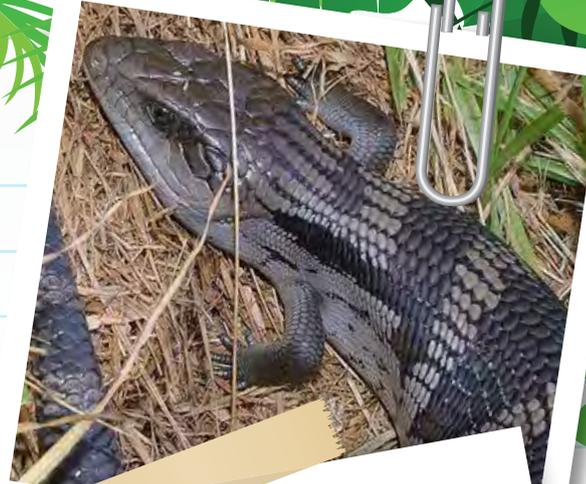
The female turtle lays about ten eggs in the summer in a hole on the bank of the swamp or stream that she covers with the help of her paws and rear of her body. After three to five months the eggs that have survived the the water rats and lizards hatch and the try to make their way to the water, this time without being eaten by birds. The female turtles can lay eggs up to three times a year.

The eastern long-necked turtle is also known as "the stinker". When it is disturbed or in danger it will emit a fowl smell from its glands that can be sprayed up to three feet to repel its predators. Once in a while between December and February the turtle will migrate to find a new home. It will also dig itself in mud to survive droughts.

Eastern Blue-tongued Lizard

Tiliqua scincoids
scincoids

The Eastern Blue-tongued Lizard is one of 4 species and 2 sub species of Blue-tongued Lizards.



The belly of the Eastern Blue-tongued Lizard is usually pale with darker variations. Their eyes are small and reddish-brown to grey. The tongue is dark blue and the lining of the mouth is bright pink. Blue tongues have a long body, large head and short legs and toes. The tail is shorter than the body and generally tapers evenly to a point. Male Blue Tongues may have a proportionately larger head than females.

Eastern Blue-tongued Lizards live in open country with lots of ground cover such as tussocky grasses or leaf litter. They shelter at night among leaf litter, in burrows and under large objects on the ground such as rocks and logs. Early in the morning they emerge to bask in sunny areas before foraging for food during the warmer parts of the day.

Like all reptiles, Blue-tongued Lizards do not produce their own body heat and rely on the warmth of their surroundings to raise their body temperature. They maintain a body temperature of about 30-35 degrees Celsius when active. Eastern Blue-tongue Lizards eat a wide variety of vegetation and invertebrates. Their teeth are large and they have strong jaw muscles so they can crush snail shells and beetles.

Most of the year Eastern Blue-tongued Lizards live alone, but between September and November males pursue females and mating occurs. At this time, males may fight aggressively among themselves and females may carry scrape marks from the males teeth. Females give birth the live young three to five months after mating, between December and April. The young are independent at birth and disperse within a few days. Of all the Blue-tongued Lizards, the Eastern Blue-tongued Lizard has the largest litters and the smallest young. Up to 25 (but usually about 10) young are born measuring between 130 and 140mm in length. Blue Tongues are long-lived and several captive animals have lived for 20 years.

When threatened, Blue-tongued Lizards turn towards the threat, open their mouth wide and stick out their broad blue tongue, which contrasts vividly with the pink mouth. This display, together with the large size of the head, may frighten off predators. If the threat does not go away, the lizard may hiss and flatten out its body to appear bigger. A frightened Blue Tongue may bite if it is picked up.

Diamond Python

Morelia spilota



Closely related to the carpet pythons, diamond pythons have a distinctive pattern of a black background with cream or yellow spots and blotches.

There is some variation between individuals ranging from snakes that are mainly black with a few light spots, to others that have bright yellow scales edged in black plus yellow diamond-shaped patches surrounded by black. These beautiful snakes may reach three metres in length, but two metres is more usual. As with all pythons, this snake is non-venomous.

It is found in large bushland areas but often goes undetected because of its nocturnal, slow moving habits. Diamond pythons often take up residence in the roof spaces of private houses. Many people are not keen on having such lodgers; however, the snakes carry out a very beneficial task by eliminating any unwanted rodent pests. Once the food supply has been exhausted, the snakes will often move on to another home.

The Diamond Python is found in coastal areas of New South Wales. They are found under an enormous variety of conditions, from rainforest on the east and north-west coast to a variety of semi arid coastal and inland habitats. Often arboreal, but may also be found in burrows made by other animals.

Hatchling diamond pythons feed almost solely on small lizards. As they grow, their diet broadens to incorporate small birds and mammals, with adults feeding predominantly on such warm-blooded prey. Possums, fruit bats and rodents are particular favourites. Humans, even small ones, are never at risk but a large python may take domestic pets such as rabbits, guinea pigs or even a small cat or dog.

In spring, female diamond pythons may attract several males all vying for the opportunity to mate. The clutch of 15-20 eggs is laid in early summer in a secluded spot and the female will coil around them until they hatch. Unlike many other reptiles, whose young are more brightly coloured than the adults, diamond python hatchlings are surprisingly bland in colour, only developing the bright yellow and cream markings as they grow.