

Animals of Walk-about Creek

Birds

Bar-shouldered Dove

Geopelia humeralis

- These birds are found in better-watered coastal and near-inland regions from the Kimberley region in Western Australia, across the north coast and down the east coast to Manning River in New South Wales
- They live in the scrubby fringes, plains, swamps, creeks and mangrove fringes along estuaries, never moving far from water or dense cover
- These doves feed entirely on the ground where they walk and run swiftly and eat a wide variety of sedge bulbs and seeds of grasses, lucernes, Medicago and herbs
- Their nests can be found throughout the whole year, and are a simple platform made of twigs where 2 eggs are usually laid
- In northern Australia they nest mostly between March and July and in southern Australia they nest between November and January

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

- The spindly legs of the black winged stilt not only give the bird its name, they also control its feeding, allowing the bird to wade in shallow water to find food
- They are found throughout mainland Australia and most of the world, wherever suitable habitats exist (distribution becomes patchy in drier central areas)
- These birds inhabit swamplands, lake margins and estuarine areas
- The black winged stilt usually grows between 360-390 mm in length
- They breed between August and December usually laying 4 eggs
- Black winged stilts usually feed on aquatic plants and animals such as shrimp and molluscs

Blue-faced Honeyeater

Entomyzon cyanotis

- Sexes of this species are similar in colour with a bright olive back and black head and throat. The under body is white with bright blue skin patches around the adults eyes
- They live in eucalypt, paperbark and pandanus woodlands to the edge of rainforests and mangroves around Australia, from the Kimberleys to northern Victoria.
- They feed mostly in the early morning or late afternoon on insects, but also eat fruits, such as bananas and pears, nectar from grevilleas and paperbarks and syrup from burnt sugar cane
- The breeding season for these birds is from June to January, but they mostly breed from August to November
- They make their own nest out of leaves and twigs in upright forks of trees or tree branches, but it is not uncommon for them to roost in other bird nests
- Females usually lay 2 to 3 eggs

Brown Cuckoo Dove

Macropygia amboinensis

- The Brown Cuckoo Dove is found along the eastern coast of Australia from Narooma, New South Wales, to Cooktown and probably Cape York Peninsula in Queensland
- They live in lowlands and the more humid adjacent highlands deep in the rainforest, in the understorey and in the canopy, but its preferred habitat is more open places with low vegetation
- They eat the fruits of ivory basswood, buttonwood, native bleeding heart, mistletoes and shrubs of the nightshade family. They also feed on introduced weeds, such as lantana, wild tobacco, wild raspberry, gooseberry and inkweeds
- Their decline in numbers has been due to widespread clearing of rainforest and illegal hunting
- They make a nest of fine sticks and vines up to 15cm thick in the fork of trees or vine tangles where 1 egg is usually laid

Buff Banded Rail

Gallirallus philippensis

- The sexes of this species are similar in colour. They have olive-brown wings, feathers with sections of black and white on top, underneath the bird is black and wide barred with rusty chest feathers. The head is pale olive-brown on top with a distinct white stripe above the eye and rust brown either side of the eye
- These rails are found in coastal and sub-coastal habitats of dense tussocky vegetation and shrubberies around swamps, lagoons, mangroves, watercourses and Islands
- Singly, or in pairs they peck their food of insects, small molluscs and other invertebrates, seeds and a little vegetation matter found on damp ground
- They breed mainly from September to January in Australia, or at any time of year if conditions are suitable
- Their nest is made of grass or reeds pulled down and woven into a cup shape underneath tussocks where 5 to 8 eggs are usually laid
- Incubation is 18-19 days by both sexes

Channel-billed Cuckoo

Scythrops novaehollandiae

- These birds are found in tall timber areas (particularly where fig trees occur) across northern Australia from the Kimberley's to northern New South Wales
- They are a migratory bird which comes from Papuaia in August to October to begin breeding between October and December
- They eat mainly fruit, especially figs, and insects. They will also eat meat and have been seen feeding on the young and eggs of the Australian Magpie Lark
- This bird is parasitic, laying its eggs (usually 1 to 2) in the nest of other birds such as crows and magpies

Chestnut Teal

Anas castanea

- The male of this species is glossy green/black around the head and neck and has varying shades of brown over its wings, which changes to light brown underneath. The females and juveniles are similar in colour and are dark brown above and pale brown underneath
- These birds are most common in brackish coastal lagoons, saltwater estuaries and in the lower reaches of creeks and mangroves around coastal southern Australia. They are also found in the freshwater swamps and high mountains of the southern tablelands.
- Their diet consists of widgeon grass, sedge seeds, molluscs, crustaceans, insects and worms which they find by upending the ground near the water surface and then filtering the water
- In autumn and winter they gather in flocks on larger lakes and estuaries and disperse in spring to breed, laying between 7 to 10 eggs in October
- The nest is a scrape in the ground in long grass, rushes or rock crevices
- The hatchlings only stay in the nest for a day before leaving

Common Koel

Eudynamys scolopacea

- The Koel migrates to Australia in the summer months, arriving in August and early September. It is distributed from coastal areas of north Australia, down the east coast, becoming rare towards the south
- The common Koel can be found in monsoon forests, rainforests and thickly vegetated river courses
- They feed predominantly on fruiting trees, although nestlings will often accept insects from their foster parents
- The Koel lays one egg in the nests of other species, such as friar birds, orioles and magpie larks. Breeding occurs between September and March, they lay eggs just after the host bird

Crested Pigeon

Geophaps lophotes

- Both the male and female of this species is similar. They are generally grey and brown in colour with banded wings and a distinctive crest on their head
- They are common throughout wooded grasslands of mainland Australia, except the coastal southwest, southeast and far north
- These pigeons have benefited from human settlement in areas where thick scrub has been cleared for grazing and cropping, leaving scattered trees that are ideal for roosting and nesting
- They eat little else except seeds from crops and exotic weeds found throughout Australia
- They are usually seen in groups of 5 or 6, sometimes they might gather in large groups near waterholes
- Breeding occurs mostly in spring and early summer, but can occur any time after rainfall. Females make the nests out of sticks no more than 5m above the ground. Usually 2 eggs are laid in a season and these are incubated for between 18 and 20 days
- Crested pigeons can however rear up to 7 successive broods, breeding continuously for several months

Curlew

Burhinus grallarius

- These birds live in open-grassed woodlands and sparsely treed rangelands over most of Australia
- They are usually resting during the day and emerge at dusk in groups of 10-20 to feed
- Curlews are sedentary birds and rarely wander further than 20 kilometres in any direction
- They pick up insects with their bills from leaf litter and ground cover and in deep water they up-end litter and mud to scavenge
- These birds do not have a nest, in fact they lay camouflaged eggs (that match the ground cover). If danger is present the eggs are carried under the wings
- All the eggs hatch together and the hatchlings can walk within hours
- The breeding season is from July to January, with usually only a single brood being laid

Dollar Bird

Eurystomus orientalis

- These birds live on the edge of tall tropical forests and open woodlands from northern Western Australia to southern Victoria
- Dollar birds eat large insects such as moths, cicadas and beetles which are caught on the wing in the early evening or twilight
- They are called Dollar Birds because they have a large, round, light spot (similar to a silver dollar) visible under each wing when flying
- They migrate to Australia from Papua New Guinea in mid-October to breed and leave again in late February/March
- Their nests are a shallow, unlined cavity in a tall tree where the females lay 3 to 5 eggs which are glossy white

Dusky Woodswallow

Artamus cyanopterus

- These birds are found in two populations. The Eastern population is found from the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland to Tasmania and South Australia. The Western population is confined to the south west of Australia
- They live mainly in open woodland and rural and semi-rural areas, but also in fairly dense eucalypt forest
- Dusky Woodswallows are 17-18cm in length and both sexes are predominantly smoky brown
- They usually live in groups of 10-30 birds, although in winter two to three hundred birds can cram into sheltered forks in trees
- They breed between August and January, laying 3 to 4 eggs
- They mainly catch and eat insects on the wing, but they occasionally feed on the ground when insects are abundant there

Emerald Dove

Chalcophaps indica

- The male of this species has a greyish brown body with bright emerald green shoulders and wings, whereas the females and young are mostly brown with little other colours
- Mostly solitary birds, they are found in eastern coastal rainforests and also visit wet sclerophyll forests and coastal heaths
- There are two races of this bird in Australia, one from southern coast of NSW to Cape York, the other from north Western Australia and Northern Territory.
- Primarily these birds spend most of their time foraging on the forest floor, but they can frequent all types of regrowth areas
- They eat the seeds and fruit of inkweeds, wild tobacco, wild raspberry and lantana as well as figs and various falling seeds
- The male has a display posture that resembles a bow when trying to mate
- The female makes a nest of sticks, twigs and leaves on the ground where 2 pale cream eggs are laid. Both sexes incubate the eggs generally around 14 to 16 days, the female during the night and the male during the day
- Nesting season varies throughout the year but mostly September to December in eastern Australia and January to April in the Northern Territory.

Noisy Pitta

Pitta versicolor

- 26 species of Pittas occur throughout the world, and of the three that live in Australia the Noisy Pitta is one of the biggest
- This bird is fairly common in rainforests on the east coast of Australia, where it is seldom seen, but may show itself for a tantalising moment when its loud, whistling call is imitated
- These birds hop about turning over leaves and twigs in search of insects, wood lice, worms, snails and other small animals. They also eat small berries and fruit
- They make a loose nest of twigs, leaves, bark and mammal dung during the October to January breeding season when 3 to 4 eggs are laid
- The eggs are incubated by both sexes

Olive-backed Oriole

Oriolus sagittatus

- These birds are found in eucalypt woodlands and open forests from northern Western Australia, along the coast to southern South Australia.
- They live and feed in the upper foliage and branches of the trees in these forests, either in pairs or by themselves
- They are mainly fruit eaters, but do eat insects found on the outer foliage and twigs of the forests where they live, such as leaf beetles, ants, mantids and caterpillars
- Breeding season for these birds is September to January, when the female builds a deep, cup-shaped nest made of bark strips, leaves, grass, wool or other soft plant materials and is suspended by its rim from thin forks in the outer foliage of trees and shrubs
- The female lays between one to four eggs, which take about 18 days to hatch
- The male makes brief visits prior to hatching, but helps to feed the young
- Both parents feed the young by regurgitation.

Regent Bowerbird

Sericulus chrysocephalus

- Males of this species are jet black with rich golden-yellow plumage on their forehead, crown and neck where as the females and young are mainly brown with a black crown and mottled underparts
- They feed mainly on native fruits, but will collect fruits and berries from gardens and orchards. They also eat insects and spiders
- These birds live throughout rainforests and eucalypt forests of southern Queensland and northern New South Wales, mainly in the mid and upper levels of the forest. They only descend to the ground for bower making, display and mating
- The male builds and decorates the bower with snail shells, leaves, berries and flowers and uses his bill to paint the walls with vegetable matter mixed with saliva
- He collects and displays objects which are red, brown, yellow and orange in colour
- After making the nest, the male displays his black and gold plumage to attract the females
- The birds mate in the bower then the female leaves to make a saucer shape nest where she will lay 1-3 eggs, usually 2, which hatch in about 3 weeks

Rose-crowned Fruit Dove

Ptilinopus regina

- The rose crowned fruit dove is a small plump, colourful bird that ranges in size from 22cm to 24 cm long
- These birds inhabit dense moist rainforest, mangroves, monsoon forests and wet eucalypt forest along the east coast
- They breed throughout the northern wet season, laying a single egg
- These birds eat the fruits of a wide variety of trees, vines and shrubs
- They feed hanging upside down in order to reach fruits dangling from thin branches.

Satin Bowerbird

Ptilonorhynchus violaceus

- The males of this species are entirely black with a soft, glossy blue-purple sheen, where as the females and young are dull grey-green in colour above with cream to off white underparts
- These birds are found in rainforests and the edges of sclerophyll forest of the east coast and adjacent ranges of southern Queensland right down to southern Victoria
- In autumn and winter they leave these breeding grounds to forage in flocks
- Satin bowerbirds eat a combination of fruits, flowers, nectar and occasionally insects
- The bowers made by these birds are neat avenues of thin sticks woven upright into two walls aligned north-south and usually painted black with a mixture of charcoal dust and saliva
- The area at both ends of the bower is decorated with flowers, feathers, berries and man made objects that are mostly blue
- Their breeding season is spring, with mating taking place in the bower with any number of females
- The females then make a round nest in overhanging branches where she may lay 1 to 3 eggs, usually 2

Southern Figbird

Sphecotheres viridis

- The male of this species has a black head, red eye patch, grey shoulders, olive-green wings, black tail and a dull green and white underbelly, whereas the female and juveniles are olive brown above, face skin grey and the underparts are white, streaked with brown
- They are found in moist coastal areas where fruit bearing trees are abundant in northern and eastern Australia, from near Derby in Western Australia, southward to the Illawarra district New South Wales
- They eat all kinds of fruit and berries including figs, native cherries, ink weed, mulberries, bananas, paw paws and guavas
- Breeding season is between October and February, when a saucer shaped nest is made from vine tendrils and twigs.
- The female usually lays 3 eggs and both parents share incubation and feeding duties

Spangled Drongo

Dicrurus bracteatus

- Both sexes of this bird are similar in colour, however the male is slightly larger. They have an iridescent green-black body, ruby red eyes, white spots on the underwings and a long forked tail
- They occur in rainforests, vine scrubs, fringing open forests and mangroves from the Kimberleys to Arnhem Land, and from Cape York to northeastern Victoria
- They work singly or in pairs to catch large and hard-shelled insects on their wings when in flight, such as beetles, cicadas, grasshoppers, dragonflies and mantids
- The core breeding population of these species is on the Queensland coast
- Most of the birds actually move north to southern New Guinea during the winter and autumn months and return in late spring for the breeding season
- Both sexes incubate, brood and feed the young
- They have an open nest that is shallow or saucer-shaped. This nest is made of vine tendrils, plant stems and various fibres
- Females lay three to five pale pink, purple-grey eggs

Superb Fruit Dove

Ptilinopus superbis

- The superb fruit dove is a small plump colourful bird that ranges in size from 22cm to 24cm in length
- The female superb fruit dove is primarily green with a white under-belly, and the male has a dark purple crown, green cheeks and wings, and a reddish brown neck
- These birds inhabit dense moist rainforest, mangroves and wet eucalypt forest
- They will travel long distances in search of food, and will eat the fruits of a wide variety of trees, vines and shrubs. They feed hanging upside down in order to reach fruits dangling from thin branches

Tawny Frogmouth

Podargus strigoides

- These birds have light grey to dark grey plumage and large orange eyes
- They are common throughout Australia, although sparse in dense rainforest and inland Australia
- Tawny frogmouths are often mistaken for owls, but in actual fact they belong to the nightjar order of birds
- They live in the same area of forests or woodlands throughout the year
- These birds are well known for their camouflage effects, and if this is threatened they puff out their feathers, display their orange eyes and open beak wide to reveal a yellow throat
- Frogmouths eat insects, small frogs and lizards
- They form lifelong bonds with mates, sharing all the workload. They work together to build a nest, incubate and feed the young during the spring to summer breeding season

White-breasted Woodswallow

Artamus leucorhynchus

- The white breasted woodswallow is 17-18cm in length, with blue-grey upper-parts and throat and a white breast and belly
- This bird is seldom found far from water and is generally seen close to the coast, from Shark Bay Western Australia, around the north of Australia to Manning River New South Wales. In eastern Australia it is found further inland along rivers
- They rarely land on the ground and feed by mostly catching invertebrates as they fly
- They are very social birds, often 10 or more can be seen sitting side by side, preening one another
- They breed between August and January, laying 3 or 4 eggs

White-headed Pigeon

Columba livia

- These birds are distributed mainly through the ranges from Cooktown Queensland to Illawarra New South Wales and live mostly on the coastal strip. They can also be found in inland places such as Bunya Mountains and the Atherton Tablelands, in the southern lowland rainforest and in the northern rainforests
- The detailed compositions of their diets are unknown, however they seem to feed mainly on the fruit from native laurels. They are nomadic, wandering from place to place according to ripening fruits
- The white-headed pigeon breeds in most seasons, and seems to favour October through to December laying only 1 egg
- They are approximately 380-420 mm in length.

Wonga Pigeon

Leucosarcia melanoleuca

- Wonga Pigeons are found in lowland and highland rainforests, wet sclerophyll forest, dry eucalypt ridges and heathlands along the eastern coast of Australia
- They are rarely seen flying, spending most of their time on the ground, even travelling by walking
- They are mostly solitary, sedentary birds, that occupy the same area year in year out
- Wonga Pigeons feed on fallen fruits, seeds and berries (which they can reach on low bushes)
- Their numbers have declined overall because of clearing and shooting. They were once a much prized game bird
- They breeds throughout the year, but mostly from October to January.
- The female makes a nests in tall, open headed trees on the edge of bushland or in vines or tree ferns, where she will lay usually 2 smooth, lustrous white eggs

Amphibians

Emerald Spotted Tree Frog

Litoria peronii

- The emerald spotted tree frog is a whitish grey or brown, rough skinned tree frog with darker mottling and small green spots
- This frog is usually found in trees or shrubs or suitable elevated structures
- Breeding occurs in swamps, ponds, dams, rivers and flooded regions
- The spotted tree frogs eggs are laid singly or in small groups on the surface of the water or amongst aquatic vegetation
- Female frogs can be up to 6.5cm, just larger than the males
- This frog has two colour change phases and can rapidly change from one to the other

Green Tree Frog

Litoria caerulea

- First frog species to be reported in Australia in 1790
- Bright to pale green above, often with scattered white spots on the back and sides, and cream or white underneath
- Grow to about 10cm in length
- Eat variety of food, ranging from insects to mice
- Found from coast to drier interior in Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales
- Been known to live up to 23 years in captivity

Naked Tree Frog

Litoria rubella

- This frog is distributed over most of the continent, except the extreme south
- It inhabits rocky ranges, woodlands, open forests, farmland and permanent watercourses of arid Australia, however it prefers to live in semi-permanent waterholes
- The body length is about 3.5cm and they conserve moisture, keep warm and feed by grouping together and rotating their position so they all have a chance to feed
- They forage for insects and other arthropods, mostly at ground level, but are also adept climbers
- The females lay their eggs in a thin film as a loose collection on the water's surface, the tadpoles are uniformly brown in colour so as to camouflage well

White-lipped Tree Frog

Litoria infrafrenata

- This frog is sometimes called the Giant Tree Frog and is normally bright green with a distinctive white-lipped lower lip
- It is Australia's largest frog with the females reaching 13.5cm in length
- It is common throughout mainland New Guinea, but is restricted to an area north of Townsville in Queensland, around the coastal edge of Cape York Peninsula
- In Australia the white-lipped tree frog lives in a variety of habitats ranging from rainforest to seasonally arid monsoon woodland
- After summer storms males gather around swamps and ponds and call to attract females. The mating call sounds like a dog barking

Reptiles

Brown Tree Snake

Boiga irregularis

- The Brown Tree Snake has a pale brown to reddish brown body with a salmon pink to pale red belly
- It grows to a length of about 1.6m
- It is a venomous back-fanged snake (colubrid), but not considered dangerous to humans
- These snakes are found from Cape York Peninsula south to Sydney and inland as far as the Great Dividing Range
- This snake is nocturnal and arboreal, and can be found sheltering in tree hollows or hollow logs, rock crevices, caves and occasionally under stones
- They feed on small mammals, birds and their eggs and lizards

Carpet Python

Morelia spilota variegata

- The carpet python ranges from pale to dark brown, with blackish blotches or variegations, which may form obscure cross bands and markings on the body
- The carpet python is a non-venomous snake and inhabits rainforest, wet or dry eucalypt forest, heathland, pasture, agricultural and rural areas
- They are very common in all Brisbane suburbs, particularly areas retaining good tree cover
- The carpet python is active by day or night and feeds mainly on “warm blooded” prey such as possums, rats, flying foxes and birds
- When the female is protecting her nest she can be aggressive. She can usually lay between 15 to 47 eggs.

Eastern Long-neck Turtle

Chelodina longicollis

- This turtle is found in coastal and inland waterways and wetlands of eastern Australia from South Australia to Queensland
- The carapace of the turtle is fawn and plastron bone in colour, with black edges
- The Eastern long-neck feeds on a variety of aquatic organisms such as molluscs, crustaceans, tadpole and small fish
- Breeding season is usually early summer, where they lay up to 10 or more eggs in a hole excavated in the bank of a stream or swamp
- They can travel up to 2kms overland to reach waterholes containing food and nesting sites
- The adult grows to about 26cm in length

Green Tree Snake

Dendrelaphis punctulatus

- The green tree snake often known as the common tree snake has a slender body, whip like tail and a ridge that extends along the outer edges of belly. The colour of this snake is extremely variable, back and sides olive, green, black or blue
- They inhabit rainforest edges, wet or dry eucalypt forest, heathland, pasture, urban areas and favours lush vegetation
- The green tree snake is active during the day and feeds on skinks and frogs.
- It is a non-venomous snake, laying between 6-12 eggs during breeding season

Red-bellied Black Snake

Pseudechis prophyriacus

- Found in eastern Australia, from far northern Queensland, to New South Wales, Victoria and southeastern South Australia
- This snake is glossy black on top and bright red on the lower sides and usually has a duller red or pink underside
- Males can grow over 2 m, much larger than females
- This is a front fanged snake (elapid), with venom that is less toxic than other elapids but their bite hurts and can cause local tissue damage
- They Feed principally on frogs, but reptiles and small mammals are also eaten
- The snake is diurnal, usually found around streams, swamps and lagoons, though sometimes ranging well away from these areas.
- Females retain eggs (8 to 40) in their body till they are almost ready to hatch. The young are laid in clear membranous fluid and emerge immediately or soon after.

Saw-shelled Turtle

Elseya latisternum

- The distinguishing features of this turtle include saw-like serrations on their shells and the presence of numerous prominent tubercles (similar to warts) on their neck
- They are found in freshwater rivers and creeks from northern New South Wales, up the eastern coast of Queensland to Cape York Peninsula
- They are carnivorous reptiles feeding on molluscs, crustaceans and fish
- Saw-shelled turtles lay up to 15 elongated, brittle shelled eggs in earthen holes
- They are one of the only native animals that have been known to eat cane toads and survive – apparently they can tolerate small doses of the cane toad toxins in their body

Mammals

Brown Antechinus

Antechinus stuartii

- The antechinus is a small marsupial with uniformly brown fur, cat-like teeth and an inner ‘big’ toe on its hind foot that has no nail
- The population is widespread in a variety of forested habitats in south-eastern Australia, occurring in areas where there is thick ground cover and abundant fallen logs, generally pockets of the wettest and densest forests
- They are usually terrestrial animals, but can be found in trees in dry forest with limited ground vegetation
- They eat a wide variety of arthropods, mainly beetles, spiders and cockroaches
- Most hunting takes place at night but individuals may be active during the day, particularly during winter when food is scarce
- Mating occurs in August in southern areas and in September in Queensland
- In the course of two weeks each male mates for about six hours at a time with one or more females and at the end of this period no males survive
- The female gives birth after about 30 days

Brush-tailed Phascogale

Phascogale tapoatafa

- Found in northern parts of the Northern Territory and Queensland, the east coast from south-east Queensland to the border of South Australia and the southern parts of Western Australia
- The Brush-tailed Phascogale inhabits areas from dry eucalypt forests to rainforests, where the annual rainfall is within 500 to 2000mm
- They are arboreal, and very skilful climbers spending most of their time in trees
- They sleep in a nest lined with leaves and shredded bark in a tree hollow during the day, but emerge at dusk to feed largely on arthropods such as spiders, centipedes and small vertebrates
- Mating occurs in winter with the females usually produce 7 to 8 young in late winter
- Life is short for male Phascogales who usually die from stress-related diseases, after a short but highly stressful mating season. Females can live up to 2 to 3 years

Feather-tail Glider

Acrobats pygmaeus

- Their name is drawn from their tails that are fringed with long stiff hairs that look like the barbs of a feather
- Feather-tail Gliders are the smallest gliding mammal in the world with a body length of 6.5 to 8 cm and a tail length of 7 to 8 cm
- They are well equipped for gliding from tree to tree in the forest and can do so for up to 20 m. They use their special tails as a rudder while in flight, and when landing they can use their tail for grip
- They are normally active at night.
- They are distributed inland from the eastern coast from north Queensland to South Australia
- They are widely distributed in the tall, well watered eucalypt forests of the eastern coast and extend inland into the drier regions of more stunted sclerophyll forest and woodland
- They have the teeth of an insect-eater and the brush-tipped tongue of a nectar-eater
- Breeding occurs throughout the year in northern areas, but in late winter, spring and summer in the south

Long-nosed Potoroo

Potorous tridactylus

- Potoroos are dark brown/grey in colour with short, rounded ears and a short, dark tail
- They are found in parts of south-eastern Australia and Tasmania where they live in forests with dense undergrowth and ground cover (where they shelter by day)
- Recently rediscovered in southern western Australia where they were thought to be extinct
- The males are about 38cm long, females are a little smaller
- They are nocturnal animals which feed mostly on fungi, as well as invertebrates and some other plant food
- Can live up to 7 years in wild and 12 in captivity
- Generally potoroos are solitary and sedentary animals, but adults have been shown to aggregate in small groups

Northern Brown Bandicoot

Isoodon macrourus

- The Northern brown bandicoot has very harsh fur, a humped posture and extremely jerky movements
- It is found in suburban gardens in the east coast of Australia north of the Hawkesbury River. It extends, in higher rainfall zones, to the tip of Cape York in Queensland and across the Northern Territory to the north of Western Australia
- Habitats include grassland, woodland, open forest as well as some closed forests
- Bandicoots are solitary animals resting during the day in well-concealed nests, constructed in shallow depressions in the ground
- Their long, sensitive snouts detect food in the form of insects, worms, seeds and berries. They have strong forepaws for scratching and digging around in leaf litter and soil for food
- Bandicoots are prolific breeders with gestation periods that are among the shortest of all mammals (12.5 days). Females can produce litters several times during the breeding season (late winter, spring and summer in New South Wales and throughout the year further north)

Platypus

Ornithorhynchus anatinus

- One of the unique mammals found nowhere else in the world is the Platypus
- Platypus can be found in most coastal river systems of eastern Australia but their habitat is threatened in both rural and urban areas. Surprisingly, Platypus groups still inhabit creeks and dams in suburban Brisbane.
- Platypus spend about eight hours each day diving for crayfish, shrimps, worms and insect larvae. They hunt mainly at dusk and dawn; this behaviour is termed “crepuscular”. The Platypus closes its eyes, ears and nostrils underwater and uses its soft sensitive bill to locate prey
- Breeding occurs around August in Queensland, September in New South Wales and Victoria and October in Tasmania
- Platypus are monotremes that are mammals that lay eggs. After mating in spring, the female lays one or two eggs in a blocked off nesting chamber at the end of a long burrow
- After about ten days the eggs hatch, and the young lap up milk that oozes from special ducts in the mother’s abdomen. She stays with the young, leaving only occasionally to feed for brief periods
- The young remain in the burrow for their first four months. They reach full size (approx. 40 cm & 1.3kg) in about a year
- The male platypus has poison spurs on its hind legs, which it uses for self-defence

Squirrel Glider

Petaurus norfolcensis

- The squirrel glider has similar characteristics and appearance to the sugar glider, but twice as big and very bushy tail
- It inhabits dry sclerophyll forests, woodlands, parks and gardens and distributed inland from the east coast spanning from Queensland to South Australia
- They are nocturnal animals that feed on gum produced by acacias, the sap of certain eucalypts, invertebrates and invertebrates exudates
- They nest in leaf-lined hollows, with breeding commencing around August. They live in family groups of around 5 to 6
- These gliders are common to Brisbane but are rare to endangered through the rest of eastern Australia

Sugar Glider

Petaurus breviceps

- The sugar glider has a rat-sized body, a soft grey body with black stripe on its head and body, often with a white tipped tail
- They are distributed across the northern coastal areas from Western Australia, down the east coast to South Australia.
- They can live in a wide range of habitats including rainforests, wet eucalyptus forests, woodlands and even backyard gardens
- They live in social groups, sharing nests with up to 7 adults and their young
- Sugar Gliders have a thin membrane of loose furred skin between their wrist and ankle. They glide from tree to tree stretching all their limbs to spread their membrane. They can glide up to 50m
- They eat a wide variety of plants and insects, favouring wattle nectar and sap. Depending on the season, they can eat acacia gum, insects, spiders, nectar, honeydew, manna, fungi, fruits and pollen
- Breeding begins in August; each female produces 2 young

Water Rat

Hydromys chrysogaster

- These rats have waterproof fur and webbed feet for swimming. Their colour varies from almost black to slate grey above and orange to white below. Their furry tails have a distinctive white tip
- Males grow to about 30cm long, with tails almost as long again, and weigh 600-750grams. Females are smaller
- They eat a variety of aquatic and terrestrial creatures, from mussels to smaller mammals. In winter they also sometimes eat plants
- They live around water, either fresh or salt, from coastal beaches and mangroves through to the lakes and ephemeral river systems of the dry interior. They make their nest at the end of tunnels in banks
- The water rat forages both night and day, possibly because it has difficulty maintaining its body temperature in cold water
- Female water rats may breed up to five times a year, each litter comprising three to four young.

Fish

Australian Bass

Macquaria novemaculeata

- The Australian Bass is found on the east coast of Australia in the lower reaches of the Mary River and in the streams of Fraser Island
- This fish is carnivorous, feeding mainly on shrimps, insects and fish
- The bass spawn from June to September when the water temperature ranges from 14 to 20 degrees. The larvae hatch 2-3 days after spawning and commence feeding 5-6 days after. Scales form about 85 days after spawning and individuals assume the form of young adults when 21mm long.

Bullrout

Notesthes robusta

- Considered a marine species, this fish is however regularly found in freshwater streams along the east coastline from southern New South Wales to north Queensland
- They usually occur in still or slowly flowing areas among weeds and stones
- They appear to be more active at night when searching for their major food sources of crustaceans and polychaete worms
- It is believed that they reproduce by internal fertilisation and oviparity occurs
- These fish do have venomous spines on their back that are harmful to humans

Crimson Spotted Rainbow Fish

Melanotaenia splendida fluviatilis

- This fish is found in southeast Queensland, northeastern New South Wales and the Murray-Darling area
- It inhabits streams, reservoirs and small ponds as well as sand dune lakes on the coast of Fraser Island
- The fish is essentially a carnivore, eating insects and small crustaceans, however, it also eats substantial quantities of algae
- The females spawn from October-December, producing 100-150 eggs per season
- Spawning usually occurs in the early morning but sometimes also at dusk

Eel-tailed Catfish or Dewfish

Tandanus tandanus

- This fish is found all over the eastern coast and gets its name because of its eel-like tail.
- This catfish does not have scales and is a carnivorous bottom feeder preferring crustaceans.
- The male builds a large nest of stones about 0.5m to 2 m in diameter where the female spawns. After spawning (which may not take place if water levels' drop too low) the male protects the nest for up to two weeks.
- Young never venture more than 5 kilometres away from where they are born and because of this fact their species could be seriously affected by water pollution.

Empire Fish

Hypseleotris compressa

- Empire fish are distributed from the Victorian border north along the east coast, across north Australia and down the west coast to the Murchison River system
- They are most frequently found in flowing waters near aquatic vegetation
- The empire fish is an omnivore, often feeding mid-water on cladocerans and mosquito wrigglers, but also on algae and detritus
- Spawning season occurs in the warmer months, with females laying up to 3000 eggs

Fly-specked Hardyhead

Craterocephalus stercusmuscarum

- Fly-specked Hardyheads are found throughout northern, central and eastern parts of the continent, in lowland rivers, billabongs and where streams flow into still waters
- They are primarily a carnivore and are reported to take large numbers of mosquito larvae, other aquatic insects and crustaceans. They also have been observed to eat algae in tanks
- The breeding season extends from mid-October to mid-February.

Fork Tailed Catfish

Arius graeffei

- This fish ranges from the central coast of Western Australia over the top and down as far as the Hunter river system
- They have a variety of habitats from marine to hundreds of kilometres up stream
- The catfish does not have scales, instead they have smooth skin ranging in colour from black to dusky-blue with white bellies
- They are omnivores that take a variety of food, mainly fish, molluscs or sea urchins
- This fish has a pungent dorsal spine, which is sometimes referred to as a crucifix.
- The female catfish spawns 25-150 large heavily yolked eggs extruded in two clumps resembling grape bunches. The male incubates the eggs in his mouth for 4 to 6 weeks, turning them periodically to help free them as hatching larvae

Long-finned Eel

Anguilla reinhardtii

- Long-finned adult eels have an olive green spotted or marbled body. Females are 2m in length whereas males are only 1m
- This fish has a large range along the east coast of Australia from Cape York to Melbourne and also in northern and eastern Tasmania, spending most of their lives in freshwater, but migrating to the ocean to breed
- They migrate when they have reached sexual maturity to some place between Fiji and Samoa about 2000km from the coast of Australia, where they spawn and die
- Most new borns are eaten by predators but in spring the survivors turn into glass eels near the coast and enter river estuaries
- They feed up here and spend the next ten years of their life in freshwater lakes, rivers etc, then return back to the ocean to breed and the cycle starts again
- The eel is primarily carnivores feeding on animals from water beetles to fish. Feeding is most intense at night during spring and summer.

Lung Fish

Neoceratodus forsteri

- There were 7 species of lung fish in Australia alone during Gondwana, however there are only 6 species left in the world today – 4 in Africa, 1 in South America and 1 in Australia
- The Australian species has brown back and sides and a salmon pink belly
- Lung fish usually only use their gills to breathe but in emergencies they use their lung as well as gills
- They breathe air from an opening in the gut into one or two pouches, these pouches are supplied with a network of blood vessels to form a primitive lung that functions similar to ours
- The Australian lungfish has only one lung whereas other species have 2
- Lungfish are active mainly at night when they feed on tadpoles, frogs, fish, prawns, snails and aquatic plants
- They spawn mainly during spring when each female deposits up to 100 eggs among weeds, which are simultaneously fertilised by the male

Mangrove Jack

Lutjanus argentimaculatus

- In Australia the Mangrove Jack can be found in all northern coastal drainage areas from the Ashburton River system eastward to the Gulf of Carpentaria to northern New South Wales
- They generally remain in coastal swamp areas or lower reaches, however they have been found as far as 100km inland.
- They are carnivorous ‘bottom feeders’, preying on small fishes such as melanotaeniids
- Little is known about their reproduction, it is assumed that they produce large numbers of pelagic eggs and spawn in estuaries

Mary River Cod

Maccullochella peelii mariensis

- This fish is distributed within a variety of habitats within the Mary River system
- The population size is known to be low and they have been declared endangered
- The Mary River Cod’s diet changes with size. Fish smaller than 3.6kg eat crustaceans, larger specimens eat more fish
- Two forms of this cod are recognised as part of the southeastern Queensland population. These types are called either “sharp nose” or “boof headed”
- They are extremely territorial, but seem to migrate in August from main rivers into smaller tributaries where they stay for spring and summer, then migrate back in April

Spangled Perch

Leiopotherapon unicolour

- This is one of the most wide spread freshwater species and can be found throughout the Australian coastal areas
- They are found in abundance in still or slow flowing waters
- They are a schooling fish, especially when young and feed on a wide range of small aquatic insects, crustaceans, molluscs and some plant material
- In rivers they will migrate upstream at night or dusk to spawn, in ponds they move from deep to shallow shore areas
- Spawning usually occurs at night and commences in November when water temperatures are warm