

go slow for a mo'

NATURE WELLNESS TRAIL

nature names game

Nature is one of children's most valuable assets. Daily experiences within naturally rich environments can transform the way children learn, grow and live. By choosing learning and play environments that weave in opportunities to experience nature and the great outdoors, children will develop connections with nature that support a wonderful array of health, social, educational, and environmental benefits.

"Time in nature is not leisure time; it's an essential investment in our children's health (and also, by the way, in our own)."

Richard Louv,
Last Child in the Woods

Nature's benefits



Improve learning, creativity, sustained attention & child development



Improve blood pressure, pain control, immune function, diabetes & allergies



Reduce stress, depression and anxiety & increase resilience



Enhance feelings of gratitude and care for ourselves & our community



Improve sleep, happiness, wellbeing & life satisfaction



Respect & appreciate our natural places

Nature names game

This nature name charade game is a fun way to get moving, use your imagination and learn about the natural environment.

* Ages 2-100

* Group size 2-20

This game is like charades. You have to act out your nature name and the rest of the group has to guess what it is. The first person to guess gets the next turn.

Step 1: Discover your nature name

Spin the wheel to discover your nature name.

Think about your animal's most obvious features, senses, and movement or behaviour. Do some research if you need to. Start by looking at the journal page for each nature name provided in this pack.

Step 2: Act out your nature name

The first person stands in front of the group and acts out the nature name without talking. Everyone tries to guess the answer. Really try and imagine you are the animal as it will help the guessers.

If no one is able to guess what you are, you can try and make sounds.

Step 3: Add a style (additional option)

For extra fun you can try add in your nature style as well e.g. "Smelly" "Turtle"

Nature names

- * Blue-Banded Bee
- * Blue-Tongue Lizard
- * Brushtail Possum
- * Bull Ant
- * Common Sydney Octopus
- * Eucalypt tree
- * Giant Burrowing Frog
- * Grey-Headed Flying Fox Bat
- * Powerful Owl
- * Snake-Necked Turtle
- * Willie Wagtail
- * Yellow-Tail Cockatoo

Style descriptors

- * Beautiful
- * Confused
- * Disgusted
- * Energetic
- * Fast
- * Majestic
- * Noisy
- * Sad
- * Sleepy
- * Slow
- * Smelly
- * Surprised



Blue-Banded Bee

Amegilla

What do they look like?

Blue-Banded Bees are amongst our most beautiful Australian native bees. There are eleven species of described Blue-Banded Bees in Australia ranging in size from 8-14 mm. They have thick, reddish-brown fur on their thorax (chest area) and bands of metallic blue fur across their black abdomens. Males have five stripes and females have four. Their faces have yellow, cream or white markings.

How do they move and behave?

Blue-Banded Bees fly to and forage on a variety of exotic and native flowers. Blue-Banded Bees are one of a few native Australian Bee species that perform a particular type of pollination known as 'buzz pollination'. These Bees will grab onto the flower, and shake their entire bodies rapidly, causing both the flower and its anthers to vibrate. This shaking movement causes the pollen to be dislodged from the anther, and then be collected by the Bee.

What sound do they make?

The Blue-Banded Bees create a loud buzz. This is their super-power in action as they buzz-pollinate, using a rapid vibration to shake pollen from flowers.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

They are widely distributed across Australia excluding Tasmania. They are solitary but usually live within close range to other Blue-Banded Bees. Females build their own nest and are attracted to areas where other females are nesting. Nests are built in soft mortar, mud bricks or soft sandstone banks in sheltered positions. Male Blue-Banded Bees roost together in small groups at night, out in the open, hanging onto twigs or stems. They vigorously shake their legs and wiggle their abdomens when a new Bee arrives to settle.



Blue-Tongue Lizard

Tiliqua scincoides

What do they look like?

The Blue-Tongue Lizard is silvery-grey with broad dark brown or blackish bands across the back and tail. Individuals on the coast usually have a black stripe between the eye and the ear which may extend along the side of the neck. The Blue-Tongue can grow to almost 60 cm in total length, of which about 36 cm is head and body.

How do they move and behave?

Early in the morning Blue-Tongues emerge to bask in sunny areas before foraging for food during the warmer parts of the day. Like all lizards, Blue-Tongues do not produce their own body heat, and rely on the warmth of their surroundings to raise their body temperature. During cold weather they remain inactive, buried deep in their shelter sites, but on sunny days they may emerge to bask.

When threatened, Blue-Tongues turn towards the threat, open their mouth wide and stick out their broad blue tongue that contrasts vividly with the pink mouth. This display, together with the large size of the head, may frighten off predators. Bright colours in nature can often mean danger or poison.

What sound do they make?

When threatened Blue-Tongues can give a loud hiss and flatten out their body to look bigger.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

The Blue-Tongue Lizard occurs throughout much of New South Wales. They eat a wide variety of both plants and animals. Blue-Tongues are not very agile with short stumpy legs and the animals they eat are mostly slow-moving. Their teeth are large and they have strong jaw muscles so they can crush snail shells and beetles.



Brushtail Possum

Trichosurus vulpecula

What do they look like?

Black fur is seen around the eyes, nose and sometimes along centre of forehead. Its belly is pale grey to yellowish or white. Brushtail Possums have black oval shaped ears with white tips. Their tail is black and bushy, but sparsely furred or even naked underneath and at the tip. The Brushtail Possum's head and body length is 35-55 cm and its tail is from 25-40 cm long. It weighs between 1.2 - 4.5 kilos.

How do they move and behave?

The Brushtail Possum is largely arboreal, living in trees and is nocturnal. It has a mostly solitary lifestyle, and individuals keep their distance from each other. Brushtail Possums are usually not aggressive towards each other and usually just stare with erect ears. They have two thumbs on their front feet to help them climb. They have a hand-like back foot which also enables them to grasp on to branches with all four limbs for climbing, as well as sharp claws and a strong, flexible tail for curling around branches.

What sound do they make?

They vocalise with clicks, grunts, hisses, alarm chatters, guttural coughs, and screeching.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

Brushtail Possums usually make their dens in natural places such as tree hollows and caves, but also use spaces in the roofs of houses. They have strong teeth and often use their front paws to hold their food while eating. They prefer Eucalyptus leaves, but also eat flowers, shoots, fruits, and seeds. They may also consume animal matter such as insects, birds' eggs and chicks, and other small vertebrates.



Bull Ant

Myrmecia

What do they look like?

Bull Ants are large, alert ants that can grow up to 40 mm. They have characteristic large eyes and long, slender mandibles and a potent venom-loaded sting. They have superior vision, and are able to track and follow intruders from a distance of 1 metre. Many species of Bull Ants have bright red or orange colours on the head or abdomen.

How do they move and behave?

There are about 90 species of Bull Ants in Australia with diverse behaviours and life cycles. Nine Bull Ant species have been recorded in Sydney, but there may be more as yet undiscovered. Some of the smaller species are known as Jumper Ants after their habit of aggressively jumping toward intruders. Bull Ants deliver painful stings by gripping the intruder with their mandibles (jaws), curling their abdomen to reveal the sting and injecting the victim with venom. Often multiple stings are delivered.

What sound do they make?

Ants communicate using chemical signals called pheromones and specialised chirping sounds.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

Bull Ants collect nectar and other plant juices, as well as animal prey, which are carried back to the nest. Bull Ant nests are usually underground and often have hidden or small entrances. The nests can extend several metres below the ground. They attack intruders of any size that come too close to their nest.



Common Sydney Octopus

Octopus tetricus

What do they look like?

The Common Sydney Octopus is normally coloured grey to mottled brown with rufous coloured arms that taper towards the tip. Their eyes are typically white in colour, and the skin has many small regular shaped patches and large warty structures which are used by the octopus to make it look spiky and camouflage itself as seaweed.

The adult's body can be up to 80cm with an arm span to two metres! They have eight limbs, two eyes, and a beak for crushing shells.

How do they move and behave?

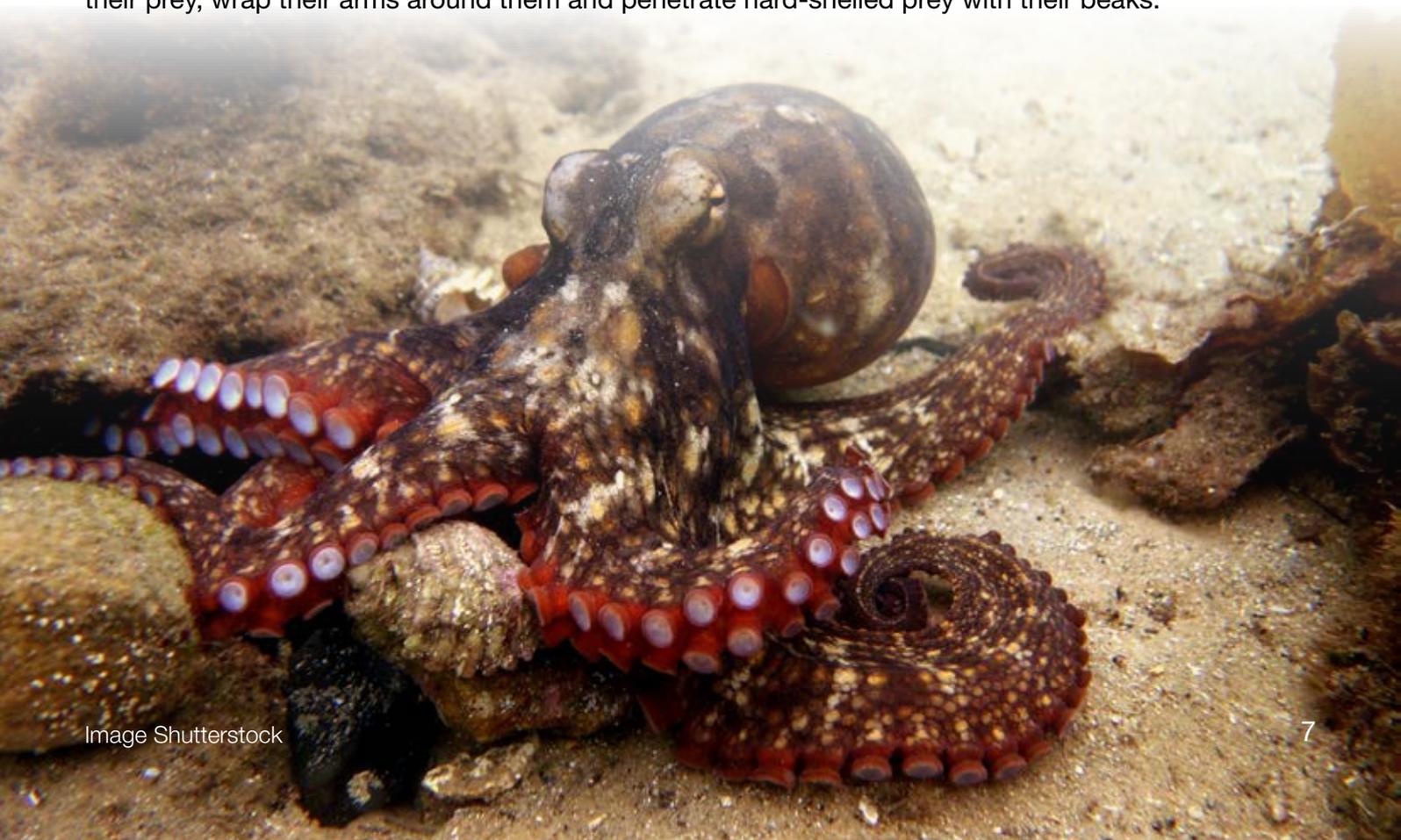
The Sydney Octopus can swim and walk over the sea floor. They swim by using jet propulsion where they suck water into their body, then quickly contract their muscles to force the water out through a narrow funnel, aiming the water to steer in a particular direction. Octopuses normally travel along the sea floor using all or many of their eight arms in a sort of crawl.

What sound do they make?

The Sydney Octopus is a silent hunter. They use their limbs to communicate. Their eight arms may allow for very expressive body language!

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

The Sydney Octopus lives on their own in the intertidal zone along rocky shores and in the ocean. The Octopus is a territorial animal that sits out the day in a lair among rocks and rubble. They generally hunt at night feeding on crabs, clams, snails, small fish, and even other Octopuses. They pounce on their prey, wrap their arms around them and penetrate hard-shelled prey with their beaks.



Eucalypt Tree

Eucalyptus

What do they look like?

Eucalyptus is a genus of over seven hundred species of flowering trees, shrubs or mallees in the myrtle family, Myrtaceae. Trees usually have a single main stem or trunk and are part of the tallest known flowering plant on Earth (*Eucalyptus regnans*, known variously as mountain ash, swamp gum, or stringy gum). They grow from 10m up to over 60m. They have a range of bark types including:

- Stringybark: long fibres pulled off in long pieces, usually thick with a spongy texture
- Ironbark: hard, rough, and deeply furrowed with a dark red or even black colour
- Tessellated: bark is broken up into many distinct corkish flakes
- Box: has short fibres, some also show tessellation
- Ribbon: bark comes off in long, thin pieces, but is still loosely attached in some places

Where do they live?

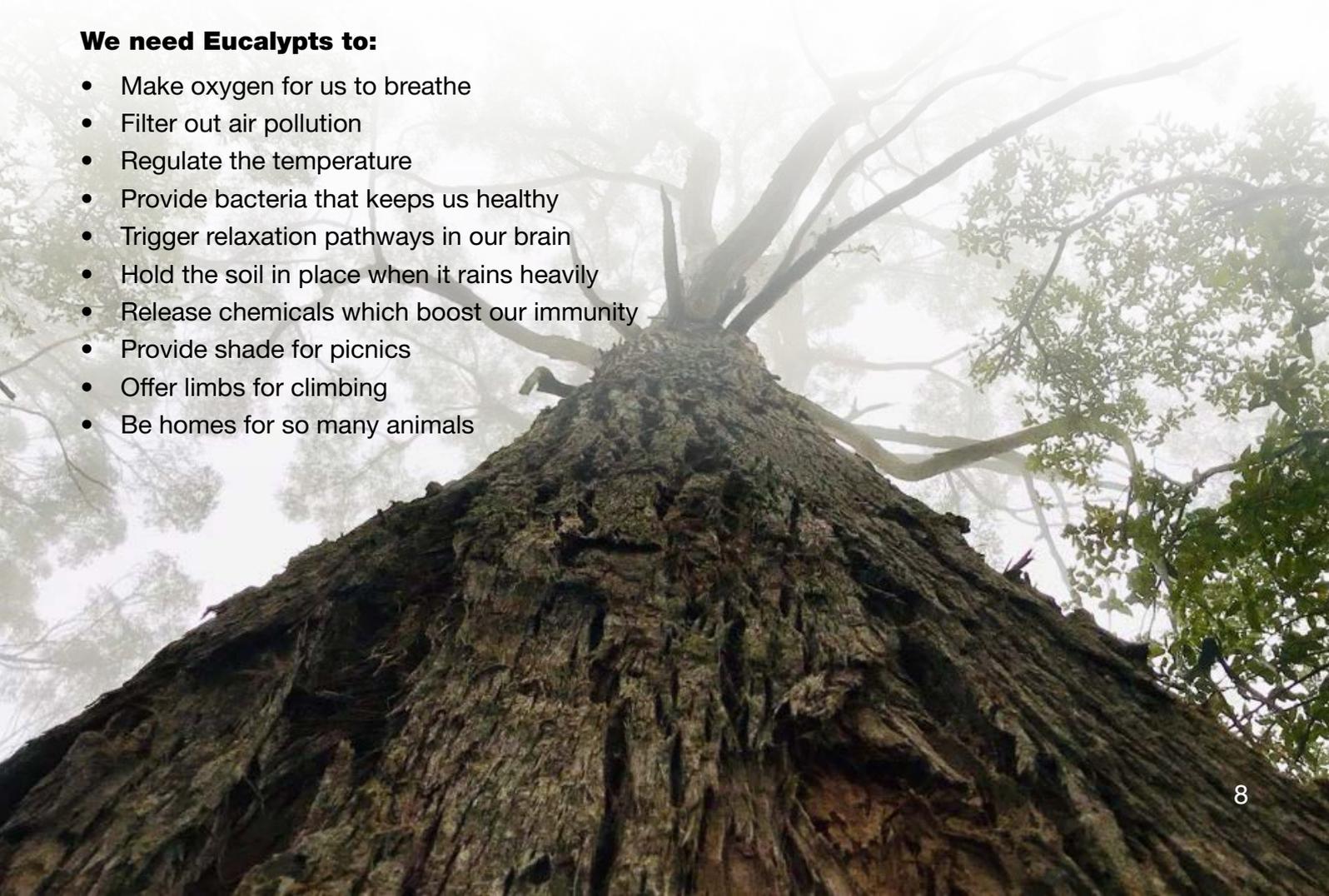
Most species of Eucalyptus are native to Australia, and every state and territory has representative species. About three-quarters of Australian forests are Eucalypt forests. Wildfire is a feature of the Australian landscape and many Eucalypt species are adapted to fire, and resprout after fire or have seeds which survive fire.

What sound do they make?

You can often hear the soft creak of rubbing branches or the swoosh when the wind hits the canopy making the branches move.

We need Eucalypts to:

- Make oxygen for us to breathe
- Filter out air pollution
- Regulate the temperature
- Provide bacteria that keeps us healthy
- Trigger relaxation pathways in our brain
- Hold the soil in place when it rains heavily
- Release chemicals which boost our immunity
- Provide shade for picnics
- Offer limbs for climbing
- Be homes for so many animals



Giant Burrowing Frog

Heleioporus australiacus

What do they look like?

The Giant Burrowing Frog is a large species of Frog reaching up to 10 cm in body length. It has a dark brown, grey or black back, and the sides are spotted with bright yellow. The belly is white or bluish-white, and the throat is grey with pale pink. The pupil is vertical and the iris is silver-grey. Fingers are webbed and toes are slightly webbed, both without discs. Adult males have large black spines on their fingers during the breeding season. This species is listed as “Vulnerable” in NSW.

How do they move and behave?

This is a slow moving Frog and is often mistaken for the introduced Cane Toad because of its large size and bumpy skin; however, Cane Toads do not have vertical irises. Individual Frogs occupy a series of burrow sites, some of which are used repeatedly. Burrowing Frogs back legs are equipped with “shovels” which they use to dig themselves backwards down into the ground. This Frog is a slow growing and long-lived species, living up to 10 years of age, possibly longer.

What sound do they make?

Males call from within or adjacent to breeding sites with a low pitched and plaintiff, owl-like oop oop oop in rapid succession.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

The Giant Burrowing Frog spends more than 95% of its time in non-breeding habitat up to 300 m from breeding sites. Whilst in non-breeding habitat it burrows below the soil surface or in the leaf litter. Individuals move into the breeding site either immediately before or following heavy rain and occupy these sites for up to 10 days. They have a generalist diet and studies to date indicate that they eat mainly invertebrates including ants, beetles, cockroaches, spiders, centipedes and scorpions.



Grey-Headed Flying Fox

Pteropus poliocephalus

What do they look like?

The Grey-Headed Flying Fox is the largest bat in Australia. Their overall colour is a dark-grey body with a light-grey head, separated by a reddish-brown collar. The fur on the body is long and streaked with grey, the broad and well defined collar completely encircles the neck with hair that is golden orange in tone. Adults may have a wingspan reaching one metre in length and be up to one kilogram in weight. The Flying Fox wings have evolved from their hands, with a thin membrane of skin stretched between each finger. This species is listed as “Vulnerable”.

How do they move and behave?

Flying Foxes sleep in trees during the day in large roots or ‘camps’ of up to tens of thousands of individuals. They hang upside down to sleep, but have to turn up the other way to go to the toilet. Around dusk, they leave the roost to feed on pollen, nectar and fruit. Unlike birds which can easily take off from a standing position, bats typically drop from heights before taking flight, so hanging upside down means taking off is just a matter of letting go. They will also flap their wings in hot weather, using blood pumped through the thin wing membrane to cool the body temperature.

What sound do they make?

The voice of the Grey-Headed Flying Fox consists of a complex series of squeals and screechings.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

During the day, individuals sleep and rest in their large camps. On dusk they leave the camps in search of food and can travel up to 50 km a night. Movements of the Flying Foxes are influenced by the availability of food. Their population is very fluid, as they move in response to the irregular blossoming of certain plant species.



Powerful Owl

Ninox strenua

What do they look like?

The largest of Australia's owls, the Powerful Owl usually inhabits moist forests of eastern Australia. This is a large owl with a relatively small head and a rounded tail. It is dark grey to dark grey-brown above, with white barring, and off-white below, with distinctive dark v-shaped chevrons. The eyes are yellow, set in a dark grey/brown facial mask. The legs are feathered and the yellow to orange feet are massive, with sharp talons. Adults reach 60 cm in length, have a wingspan of up to 140 cm and weigh up to 1.45 kilograms. This species is listed as "Vulnerable" in NSW.

How do they move and behave?

The Powerful Owl lives permanently in breeding pairs once in adulthood. They have been observed roosting singly, in pairs, and in family groups of three or four. They nest in large tree hollows (at least 0.5 m deep), in large eucalypts (diameter at breast height of 80-240 cm) that are at least 150 years old. They are nocturnal hunters with a large territory up to 4,000 hectares.

What sound do they make?

Powerful Owls have a slow, double-note whoo-hoo call that is soft, but very strong and resonant, and which can be heard more than one kilometre away.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

The Powerful Owl is a carnivore, eating mainly medium to large tree-dwelling mammals, particularly possum and the gliders. It will also take roosting birds and sometimes small ground-dwelling mammals such as rabbits or small marsupials. It forages mainly in trees, swooping down on prey and taking prey with its feet.



Snake-Necked Turtle - the “stinker”

Chelodina longicollis

What do they look like?

The Snake-Necked Turtle has a long neck, which is usually about half the length of its carapace (shell). It has webbed feet used for swimming and digging. The colour of the carapace varies through shades of brown. Females tend to grow to larger sizes and have deeper bodies. The maximum sizes recorded for females and males varies throughout the range, in river environments of the Murray it is 28.2 cm and 24.9 cm respectively.

How do they move and behave?

Most of the Snake-Necked Turtle’s time is spent in the water, but it can make overland movements in search of new waterholes and nesting areas. When it feels threatened, this turtle will emit an offensive smelling fluid from its musk glands above each leg. The turtle squirts a liquid with a stinking and persistent odour, giving it the common name “stinker”.

What sound do they make?

The only sound they will make is when splashing into or in the water.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

Snake-Necked Turtles hibernate during winter and the summer rains are their cue to haul themselves out of their creeks and ponds to find food. These turtles move about the landscape in groups of up to several dozen. This Turtle is carnivorous eating a variety of animals, including insects, worms, tadpoles, frogs, small fish, crustaceans, and molluscs.



Willie Wagtail

Rhipidura leucophrys

What do they look like?

The Willie Wagtail is the largest (measuring 19–21.5 cm), and most well-known, of the Australian fantails. The plumage is black above with a white belly. The Willie Wagtail can be distinguished from other similar-sized black and white birds by its black throat and white eyebrows and whisker marks.

How do they move and behave?

The name Wagtail stems from the constant sideways wagging of the tail. Willie Wagtails are active feeders. Birds can be seen darting around lawns as they hunt for insects on the ground. As they do so, the tail is wagged from side to side. Insects are also captured in the air, in active chases.

What sound do they make?

The Willie Wagtail is very “chatty” and has a number of distinct vocalisations. Its most-recognised sound is its alarm call which is a rapid chit-chit-chit-chit, although it has more melodious sounds in its repertoire.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

The Willie Wagtail’s nest is a neatly woven cup of grasses, covered with spider’s web on the outside and lined internally with soft grasses, hair or fur. The soft lining of the nest, if not readily available, is often taken directly from an animal. The nest of the Willie Wagtail may be re-used in successive years, or an old nest is often destroyed and the materials used in the construction of a new nest. Nests are normally placed on a horizontal branch of a tree, or other similar structure.

The Willie Wagtail features prominently in Indigenous mythology. In some areas Willie Wagtails were thought to loiter at the edge of camps, listening to conversations then telling the secrets elsewhere.



Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoo

Zanda funerea

What do they look like?

The Yellow-Tailed Black-Cockatoo is a large cockatoo. It is easily identified by its mostly black plumage, with most body feathers edged with yellow, not visible at a distance. It has a yellow cheek patch and yellow panels on the tail. They measure 55–65 cm in length in length and are 750–900 grams in weight.

How do they move and behave?

Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoos can be seen out during the day and are raucous and noisy, and are often heard before being seen. They make long journeys by flying at a considerable height with long slow beats while calling to each other. They are often seen flying high overhead in pairs, or trios comprising a pair and their young, or small groups.

What sound do they make?

The usual call is a high-pitched wailing contact call, kee-ow...kee-ow...kee-ow, made while flying or roosting, and can be heard from afar. Birds may also make a harsh screeching alarm call. They also make a soft, chuckling call when searching for Cossid Moth larvae.

Where do they live and what do they need to survive?

Yellow-Tailed Black-Cockatoos feed in small to large, noisy flocks. The favoured food is seeds of native trees and pinecones, but birds also feed on the seeds of ground plants. They are often seen perching in trees ripping apart cones using their strong beaks to access the seeds. Some insects are also eaten. They nest in large hollows high in old growth native trees (~ greater than 200 years old), generally Eucalyptus.



Nature's benefits



Meaningful moments in nature help make you healthier and happier. It's proven, it's easy and it's free!

Now go on, enjoy!

#goslowforamo