



AUSTRALIAN THREATENED &
ENDANGERED
Animals

GOULD
LEAGUE

Australian Threatened and Endangered Animals

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Scan of Chocolate Bilby, Pink Lady Chocolates, one of the first commercial producers of this Australian icon. (03) 9545 6600

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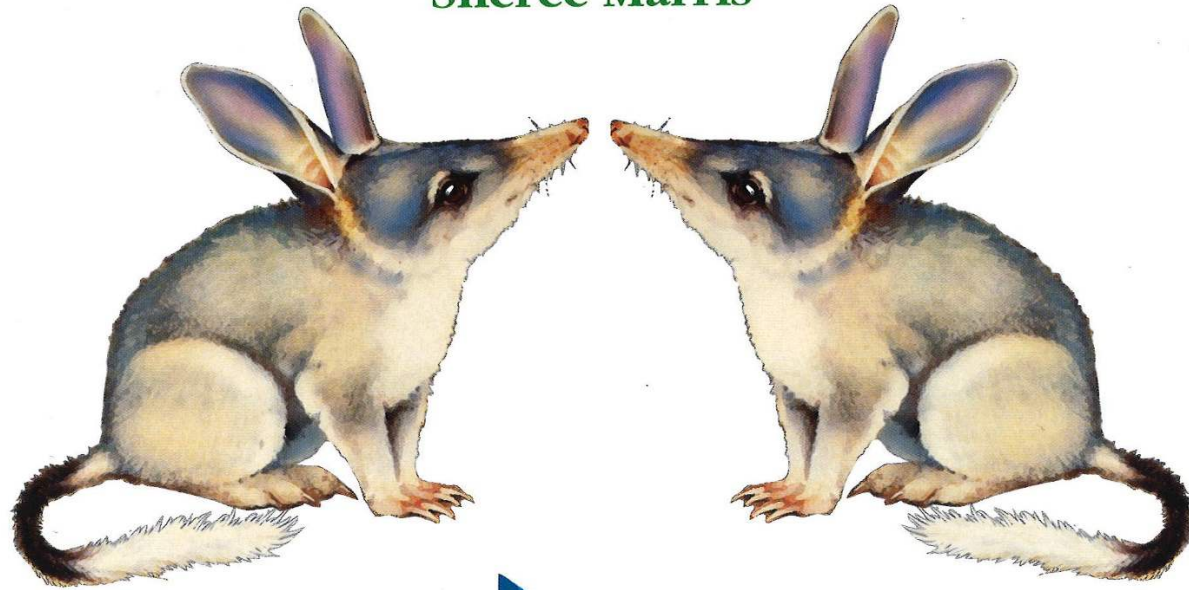
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Department of
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A U S T R A L I A N
THREATENED &
ENDANGERED ANIMALS

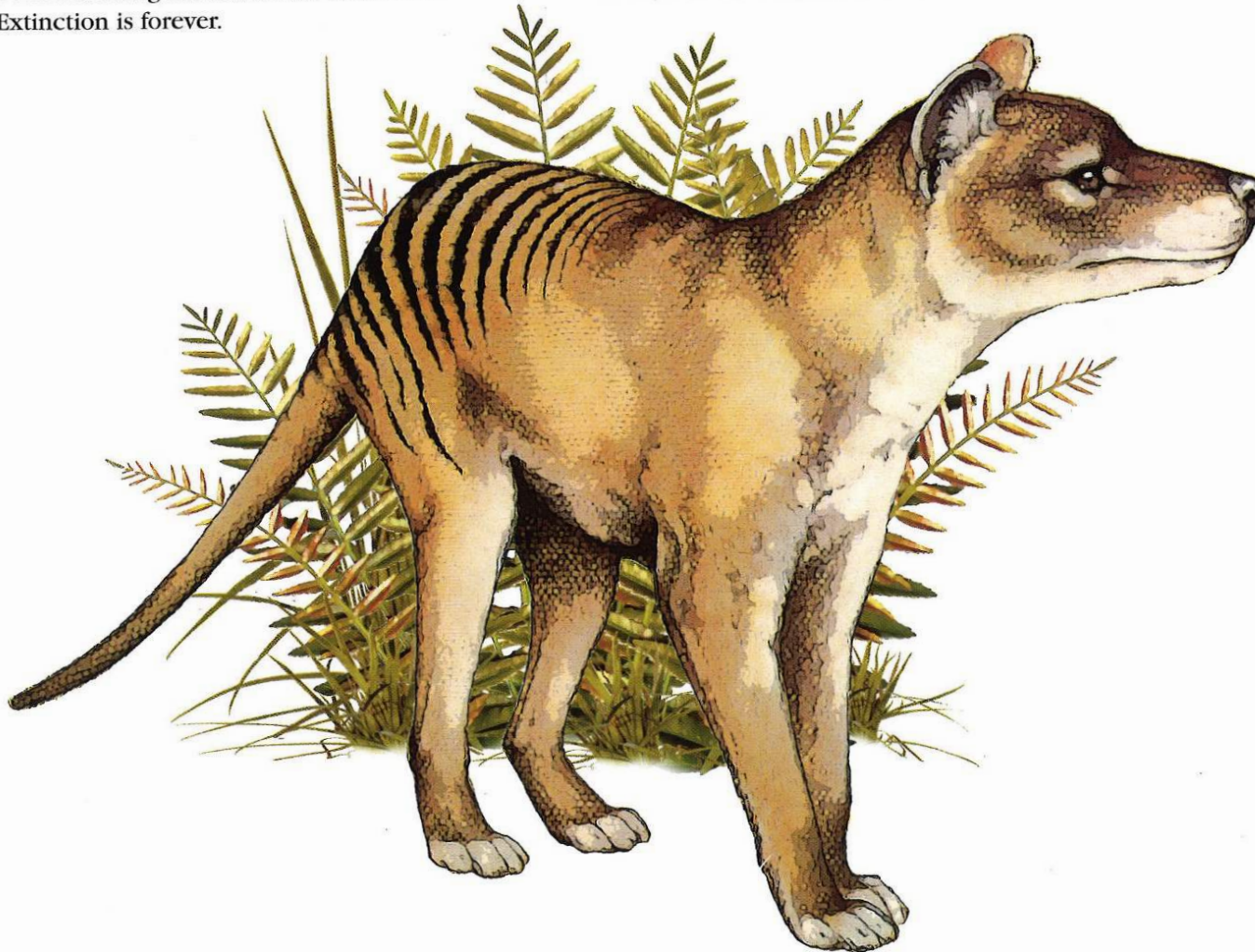
By
Sheree Marris



The tragedy of extinction

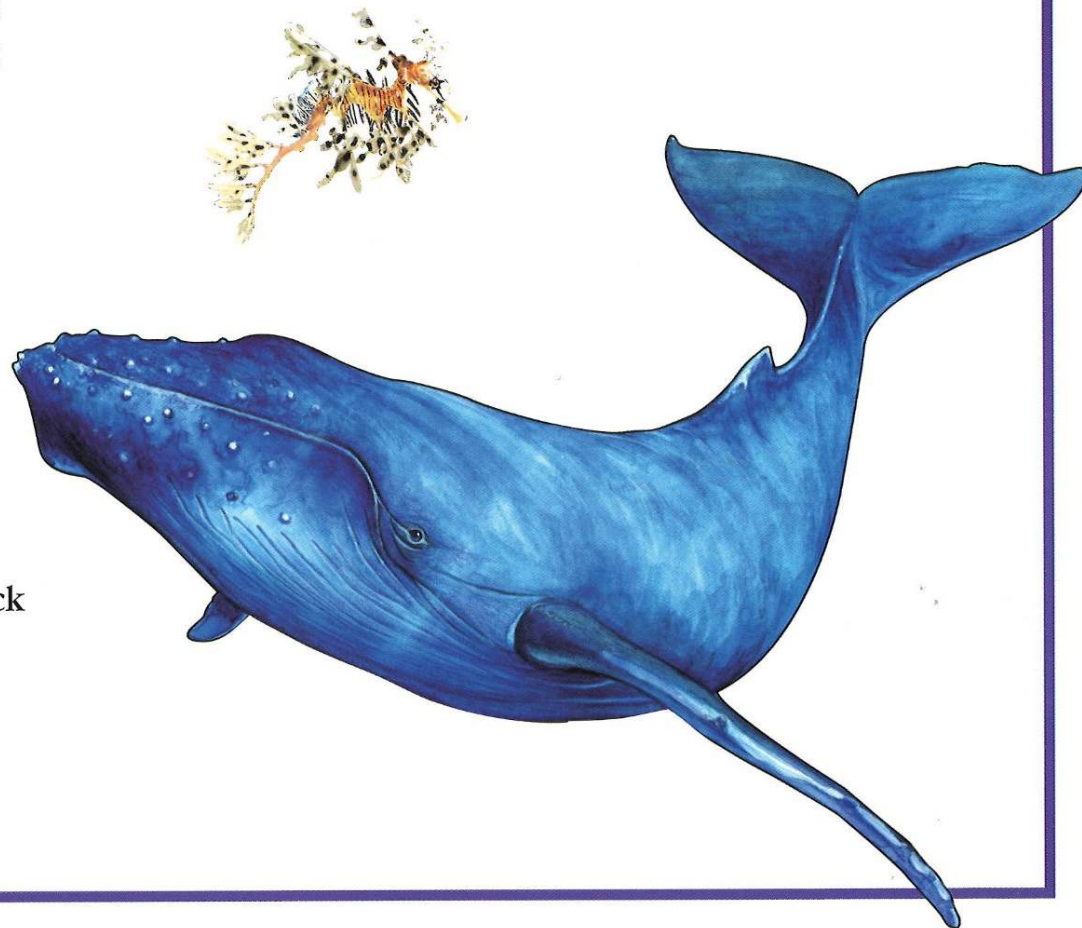
Thylacine - extinct

Also called the Tasmanian Tiger because of its black stripes, the Thylacine is Australia's best known extinct animal. It was Australia's largest hunting animal and lived in Tasmania when Europeans first landed. Thylacines were hunted because they killed sheep. They were protected in 1936 but it was too late, the last one died in Hobart Zoo that year. People have been searching for them ever since because we would all love to see one of these amazing marsupials. We never will. Extinction is forever.



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Lost animals of Australia

- gone forever!

These beautiful and unique Australian animals will never be seen again - they are almost certainly extinct. Australia has lost nineteen kinds of mammals, more than any other country in the world. The endangered and threatened animals in this book are facing the same fate unless we help them.

Pig-footed Bandicoot

These little creatures were always rare and became extinct soon after rabbits were introduced.



Eastern Hare-wallaby

These were once very common. Competition from rabbits, hunting by foxes and changes to the environment have wiped them out.



These pictures were made by John and Elizabeth Gould, after whom the Gould League is named, in the 1800's when these animals were common.

Over the last 200 years many animals have become extinct in Australia. There are many more animals that are endangered or vulnerable - this means that if things stay the same then these animals will probably also become extinct.

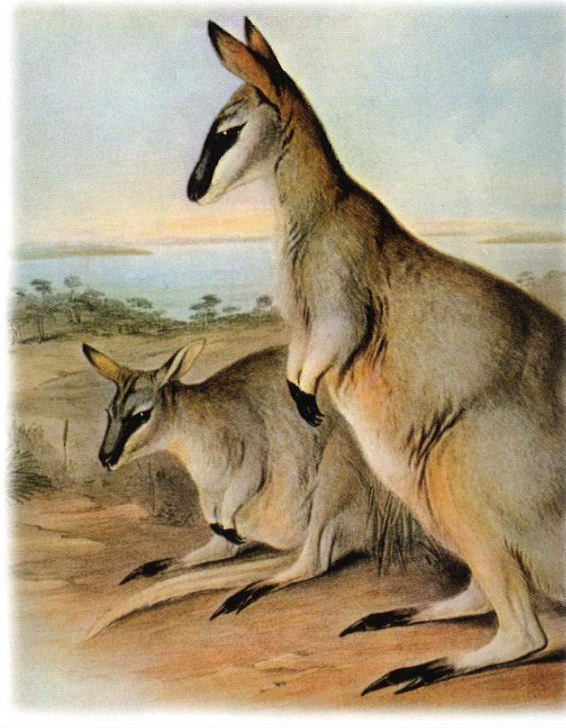
Lesser Bilby

These spectacular animals are one of the many small central Australian animals that have become extinct.



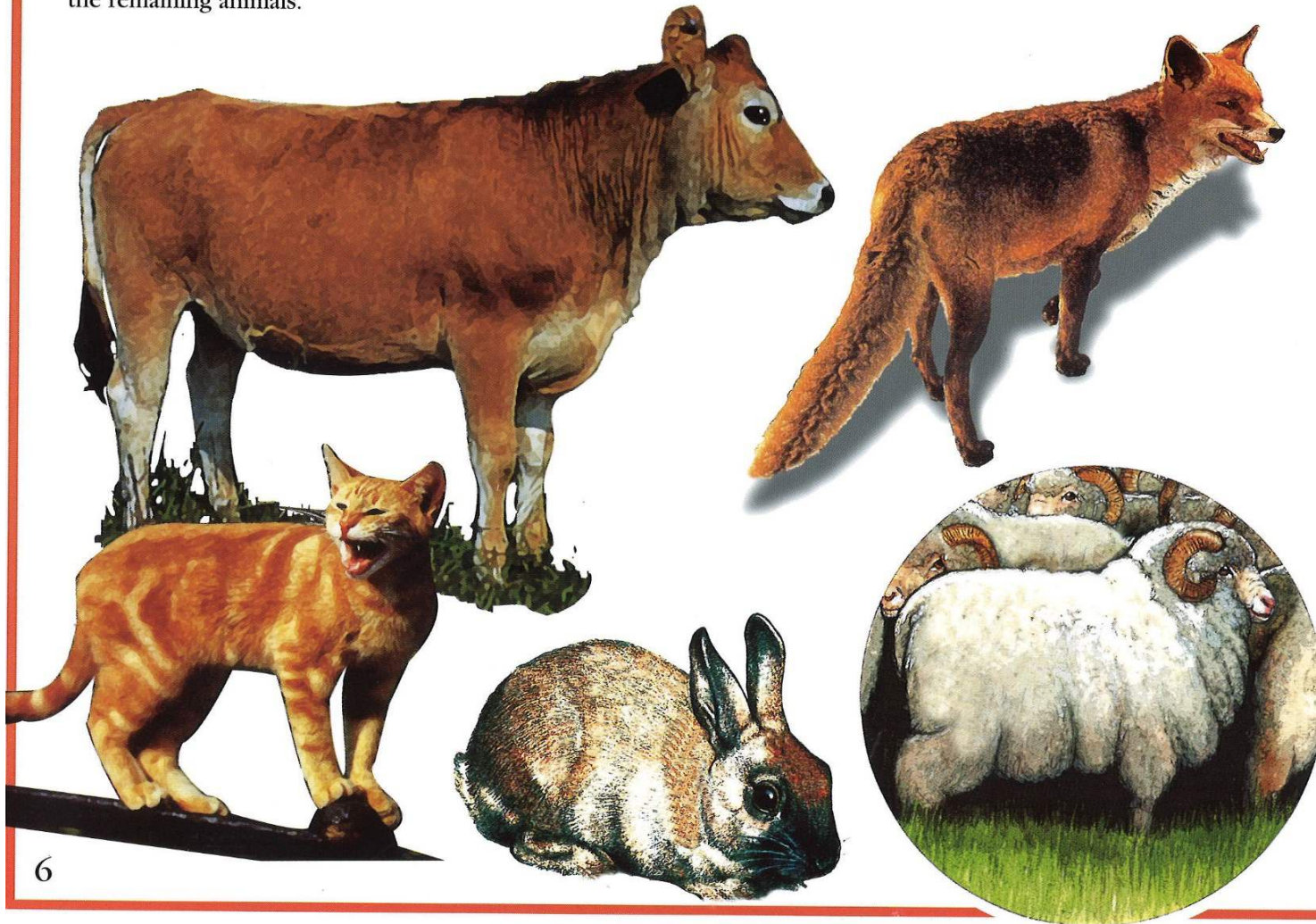
Toolache Wallaby

These swift and beautiful wallabies were found in open, grassy country in southern South Australia. Habitat destruction reduced their numbers and they were hunted for amusement and for their skins. The last few were shot in the 1970's.



Why have so many creatures become extinct in Australia?

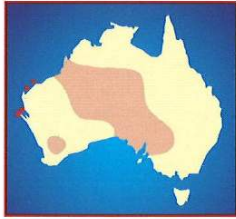
The main reason for the loss of animals in Australia seems to be changes to their habitat, mostly caused by the animals that have been introduced since Europeans settled in Australia. Most of the extinct animals were small and lived on the ground. Many lived in dry areas of Australia. It seems very likely that rabbits, sheep, goats and cattle stripped away the plants they needed for food, shelter and protection, especially during droughts. Cats and foxes probably hunted down the remaining animals.



Saved on islands

Luckily, some little mammals that have become extinct on mainland Australia also live on islands where foxes and rabbits have not been introduced, so even though they are extinct on the mainland they survive on these islands.

Burrowing Bettong - vulnerable



These unique marsupials build maze-like burrows where they stay during the day, coming out at night to feed on fruits, seeds, insects and roots. They used to be found over much of Australia but they are now only found on four islands off Western Australia. Rabbits, foxes and cats have caused their extinction on the mainland. The Burrowing Bettong is to be reintroduced to the mainland into areas protected from foxes.



More information is needed

We do not know what has made some animals endangered. We do not even know for sure which animals are extinct. The Night Parrot is a mystery. Cats have probably taken these once-common parrots to the edge of extinction. Odd reports of sightings have been coming in for the last ninety years and some people thought Night Parrots were extinct. A scientist recently discovered a dead Night Parrot by a roadside.



What causes extinction?

There are many causes of extinction, and often we are not sure what is affecting a particular kind of animal. Scientists study endangered animals to understand what is happening and then make plans to save the animals. The main causes seem to be:

- **change of habitat or living place**

All animals need a place to live. If they live in a forest and it is cut down they may have nowhere else to go. If they live in a grassland that is eaten down by rabbits, sheep or cattle they may have nowhere to hide from hunters. If they live in water that is polluted they may not be able to breed. Some kinds of animals are very sensitive to changes in their environment.

- **introduced animals**

Introduced animals such as foxes, rabbits, goats, cats, dogs and some kinds of fish are not a part of Australian environments. They threaten the survival of Australian animals by hunting them or by destroying their food and shelter. Introduced animals are still causing big problems for some kinds of animals and may make them extinct.

- **hunting and capture**

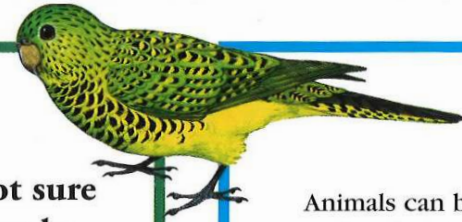
Obviously hunting kills animals, but many creatures keep breeding so hunting hardly affects their numbers. But animals that are already reduced by habitat destruction, are slow to breed, or are so valuable that people will go to great efforts to capture or kill them can become extinct. Illegal trapping of birds is a serious problem in Australia.

- **natural factors**

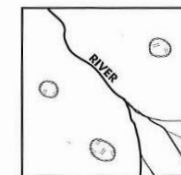
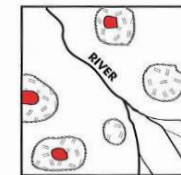
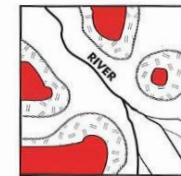
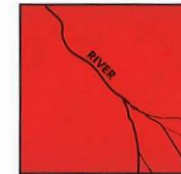
Fire, storms, drought, floods and disease, some of which may be started by people, can finish off populations affected by habitat destruction. Massive burning off, as happens in some places in Northern Australia, can be devastating to breeding animals.




- **unknown reasons**

Why some animals are endangered is a mystery. We do not know why their numbers are dropping. Introduced diseases or parasites, or pesticides may be involved. Changes in climate or ultra-violet radiation may also be affecting some animals.



Animals can become extinct in an area as habitat is gradually lost.



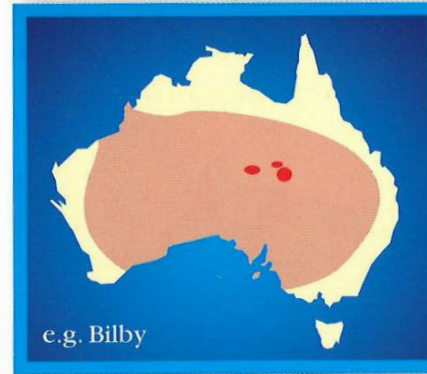
species distribution- 
habitat- 
(suitable vegetation) 

How does extinction happen?

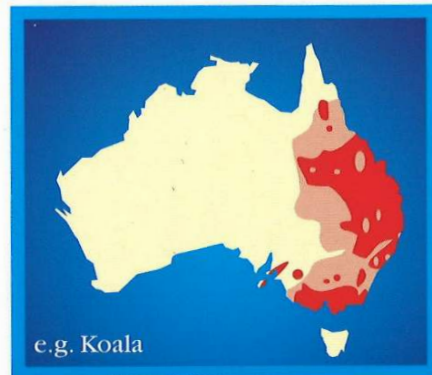
Most extinctions happen over many years. Loss of habitat is usually the basic reason. The actions of people or introduced animals are often involved.



1. The habitat of non-threatened animals is usually continuous. The animals can all move and interbreed.



3. As habitats are further reduced, feral animals and fire start to wipe out some groups of animals.





2. As suitable living areas are lost the habitat becomes patchy.



4. Eventually only tiny groups remain. The animals are endangered. Unless drastic action is taken they become extinct.

Maps

Legend:

-  - present distribution
-  - pre-European distribution



What is being done?

People all over Australia are working to save our endangered and vulnerable animals from extinction by finding out the causes, setting up protected areas, making recovery programs, clearing weeds, controlling introduced animals, planting the right plants, reducing land clearing and establishing captive breeding programs.

Fenced sanctuaries

Protected sanctuaries, where fences keep out unwanted pests, are safe places for some threatened animals to live and breed. Fenced sanctuaries are becoming an effective way to keep some threatened Australian wildlife safe in a natural environment. Fenced sanctuaries also act as a safe-guard for some naturally occurring groups. The Gould League is setting up a fenced sanctuary for educational purposes in an area of remnant habitat in a Melbourne suburb.

Plains Rat - endangered

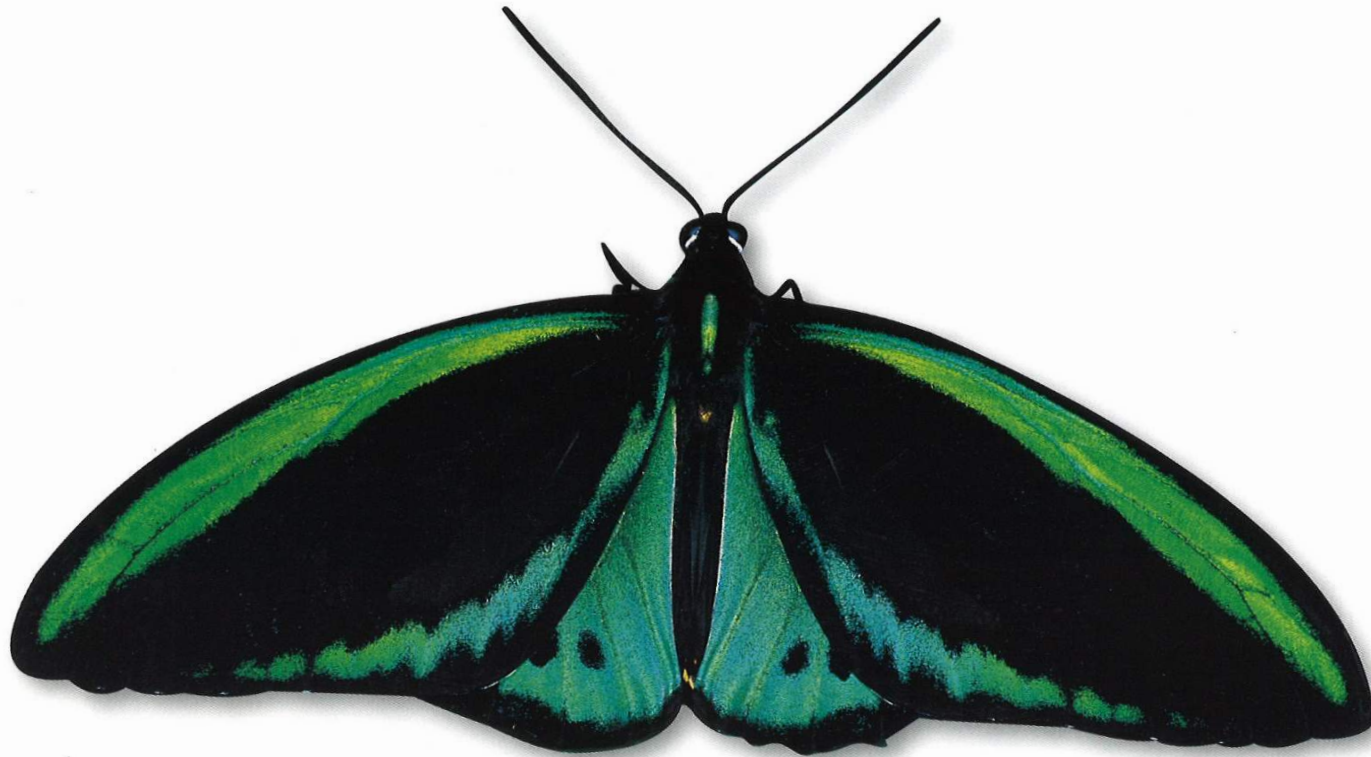


Plains Rats breed well in captivity, but are endangered by cats and foxes in the wild. Students at some schools in South Australia have bred

Plains Rats instead of the usual white mice in their classrooms.

They have released the Plains Rats into Yookamurra Sanctuary, a fenced sanctuary in South Australia.





Cairns Birdwing Butterfly

Richmond Birdwing Butterfly

Cairns Birdwing Butterflies are not endangered, because there is enough rainforest left to support them. Further south, where more clearing has taken place, some very similar birdwing butterflies are endangered.

The Richmond Birdwing Butterfly has disappeared from many places near Brisbane because of habitat destruction. More recently a creeper, introduced by gardeners, has been affecting the butterflies' breeding. Birdwing butterflies usually lay their eggs on a native Australian creeper that their caterpillars eat. The introduced South American creeper poisons the caterpillars but the butterflies still lay their eggs on it, mistaking it for the Australian one. Queensland school children have come to the rescue of the birdwing by planting the correct native creeper. Volunteer helpers are hacking out the introduced creeper and growing more of the right kind of creeper for the children to plant.

Volunteer your help

Many groups welcome help with tasks such as replanting native habitats, watching and recording animal activities and placing nest boxes in the bush.

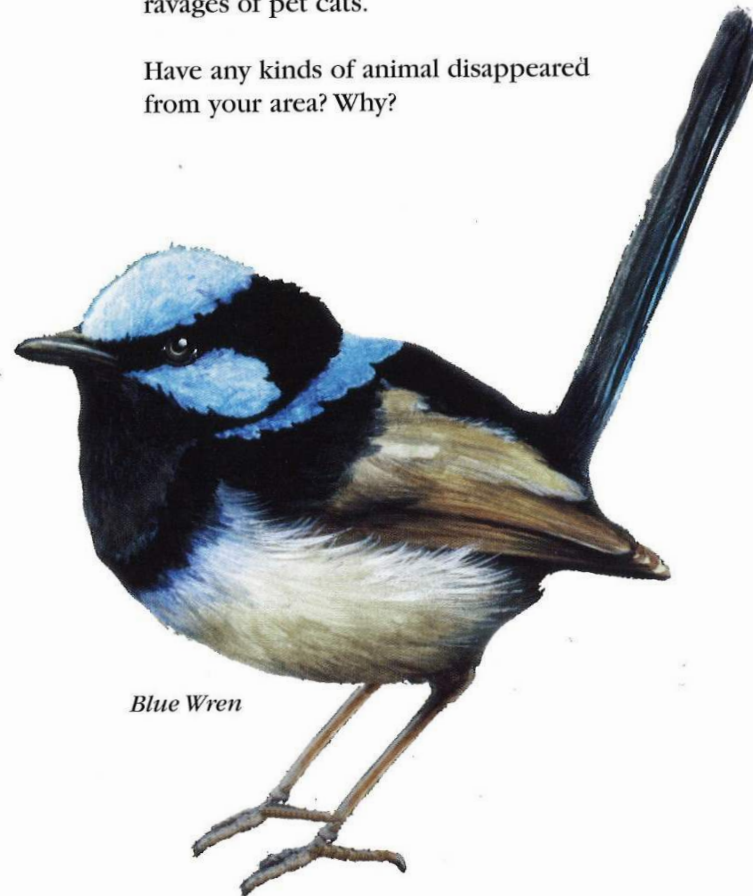
Contact your local council's environment officer or the Threatened Species Network (National Coordinator - 02 9299 6366 www.nccnsw.org.au) to find out what's happening in your area.

Everyone can help conserve our wildlife by:

- Looking after our natural places that provide homes for the animals.
- Planting native garden plants to encourage birds and other wildlife into your garden.
- Using resources wisely - saving water, recycling, composting and choosing things without too much packaging at the shops.
- Keeping cats indoors at night and putting bells on their collars.
- Not littering as litter can be deadly to animals.

Though the animals in your area may not be officially endangered, they may be threatened if you don't look after them. Many kinds of wrens, bandicoots, lizards and tortoises are becoming extinct in some suburban and rural areas. Blue Wrens are not endangered or threatened. They are still common in many places, but in some suburban areas they have become extinct due to the ravages of pet cats.

Have any kinds of animal disappeared from your area? Why?



Blue Wren



Helmeted Honeyeater - **endangered**



These boldly coloured birds need thick bush on the hillsides along creeks to feed on insects and nectar from flowers. Clearing for farms has meant that Helmeted Honeyeaters are now only found in one area near Melbourne. Even there, they are not safe because another bird, the Bell Miner, is driving them out of all the good spots. People in this area are planting thousands more flowering plants on the hillsides to help the Helmeted Honeyeaters.

Bringing them back



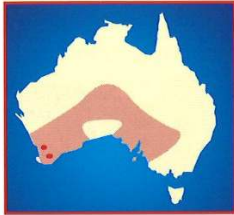
Yellow- footed Rock Wallaby



These attractive animals were becoming rarer and rarer on the rocky outcrops that they love. Competition from goats for food and hunting by foxes was endangering them. In some places goats and foxes have been reduced in number and the rock wallabies are increasing in number.



Numbat - endangered



Numbats are one of the few Australian mammals that are active during the day. Foxes, cats and dogs have

killed many of these beautiful animals so that now only two groups of them occur naturally in Western Australia. After a widespread fox control program their numbers have started to increase. At a fenced sanctuary in South Australia, Yookamurra Sanctuary, fifteen Numbats were released in 1993. The Numbats have done so well that there are now more than eighty of them.



Homeless

In the last 200 years, over half of the forests in Australia have been cut down. Removing native habitats leaves wildlife with nowhere to live.

Long-footed Potoroo - endangered



The same size as a rabbit, the potoroo is a type of marsupial. It has large, long feet and spends the night hopping around the forest digging for insects, plants, seeds and fungi. Most of the

forests where they live have been cleared. Logging has now been stopped in some areas to help these potoroos to survive.



Regent Honeyeater - endangered

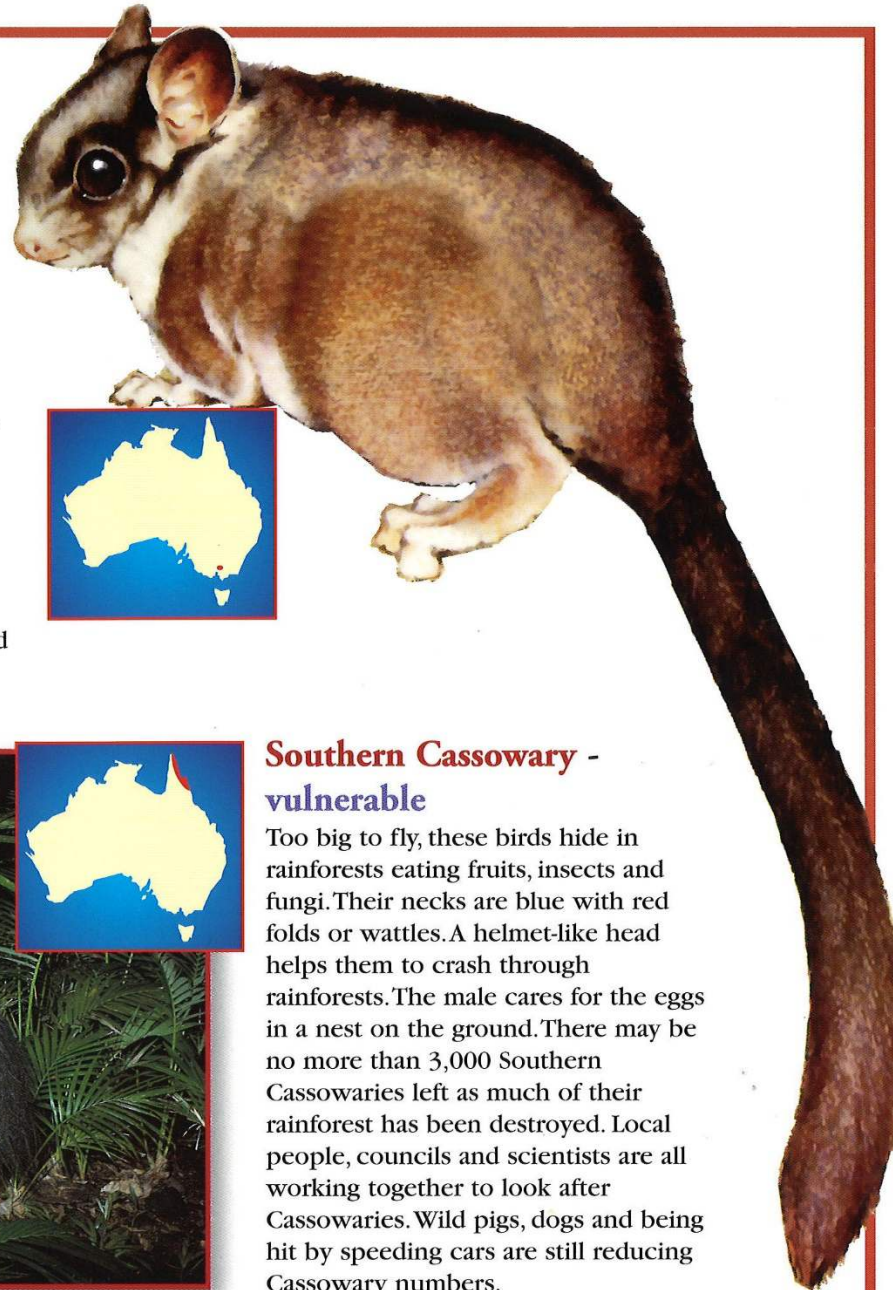


Adult Regent Honeyeaters are spectacular birds. They have patches of bare warty skin around their eyes and their black feathers are splashed with yellow and white. As they feed on nectar from gums they help the trees by spreading pollen. Much of the forest they live in has been cleared for farming. Birdwatchers around Australia are on the lookout for Regent Honeyeaters so they can learn enough about them to help them survive.



Leadbeater's Possum - endangered

These possums were thought to be extinct for more than fifty years until a small population was discovered in 1961. They weigh only as much as a medium sized apple. Large eyes and fleshy toes pads help them to run and leap through the trees at night, collecting plant sap, insects, spiders and centipedes. They need large, old trees with hollows to nest in, but most of these were destroyed in fires in the 1930's. Logging threatens some of the remaining old trees. Leadbeater's Possums are being bred at Melbourne Zoo to be released back into the wild when living places are found for them.



Southern Cassowary - vulnerable

Too big to fly, these birds hide in rainforests eating fruits, insects and fungi. Their necks are blue with red folds or wattles. A helmet-like head helps them to crash through rainforests. The male cares for the eggs in a nest on the ground. There may be no more than 3,000 Southern Cassowaries left as much of their rainforest has been destroyed. Local people, councils and scientists are all working together to look after Cassowaries. Wild pigs, dogs and being hit by speeding cars are still reducing Cassowary numbers.

Fox food

Foxes were brought to Australia 120 years ago for people who enjoyed fox hunting. There are now so many foxes that they are a pest, killing our native wildlife and sheep. The animals on these pages have been drastically affected by foxes.



Spotted-tailed Quoll
- endangered



Eastern Quoll
- endangered

Quolls

Once called native cats, Quolls are marsupial carnivores. They spend most of their time in the forest. They are also good climbers using fleshy pads on their toes for grip. They are active at night feeding on possums, mice, birds, lizards, and frogs. The forests they live in have been cleared and foxes hunt them.

- Once highly endangered, the Chuditch, or Western Quoll, is increasing in number where foxes have been controlled.
- Eastern Quolls appear to be extinct on mainland Australia, only surviving in Tasmania, where there are no foxes.
- Spotted-tailed Quolls still survive on the mainland but have become very rare.
- Because there are no foxes in their area, Northern Quolls are still common.



Rufous Hare-wallaby - endangered

Once found through most of the dry inland parts of Australia these animals became extinct on mainland Australia in the early 1990's. Now they only survive on islands off Western Australia. They are called hare-wallabies because they look like European hares.

They are being introduced into a fenced sanctuary where, protected from foxes and cats, they should be able to increase their numbers.

Eastern Barred Bandicoot - endangered



These bandicoots have pale stripes or bars across their back, large ears and a long nose. They eat grubs, worms, berries and roots. Their grassy homes have been grazed down by sheep and rabbits. This makes them easy targets for foxes, cats and dogs. In Tasmania, where there are no foxes, these bandicoots are more common. In Victoria, zoo bred animals have been released into the wild.



Fierce hunters

Mulgara - vulnerable



These cute, little animals are fierce hunters of spiders, crickets and scorpions. They live in sandy deserts and get enough water from their food. They escape the daytime heat by hiding in burrows. Their ears are short and rounded and the tip of their tail is covered with black hairs. Cattle have destroyed some of their homes and cats and foxes hunt them. Once found across the deserts of central Australia, they are now found only in scattered groups.



Peregrine Falcon - vulnerable



The world's fastest birds were once in danger worldwide. DDT and some other pesticides in their food caused their eggshells to become too thin so their eggs often broke in the nest. In Australia they were only affected in some areas but pigeon racers often shot them because they hunt other birds including pigeons. Now that some pesticides are banned and they are protected they are making a comeback in many places.



Ghost Bat - vulnerable



This bat's name comes from its pale fur and wings. Their large, rabbit-like ears are used to listen for sounds at night made by birds, frogs, mice and insects. When the bat finds a tasty animal it catches it in its wings and kills it with powerful bites. Disturbance of breeding colonies in caves by people is disastrous because the frightened young fall from the ceiling and die.

Red Goshawk - vulnerable

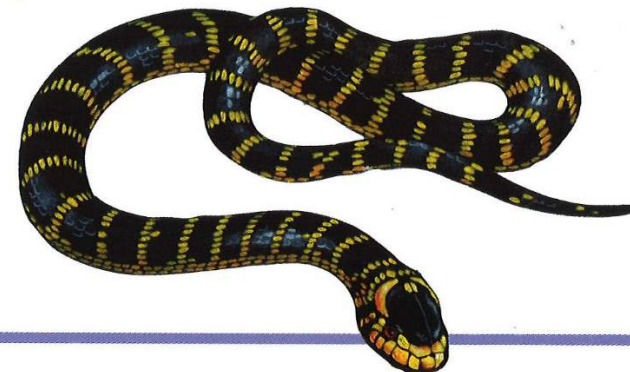


Found nowhere else in the world, this bird hunts other birds such as parrots, kookaburras, and water birds. Its huge, yellow legs and sharply hooked claws are used for holding and killing prey. There are only 350 pairs remaining in Australian because many of the large trees they nest in have been chopped down.

Broad-headed Snake - endangered



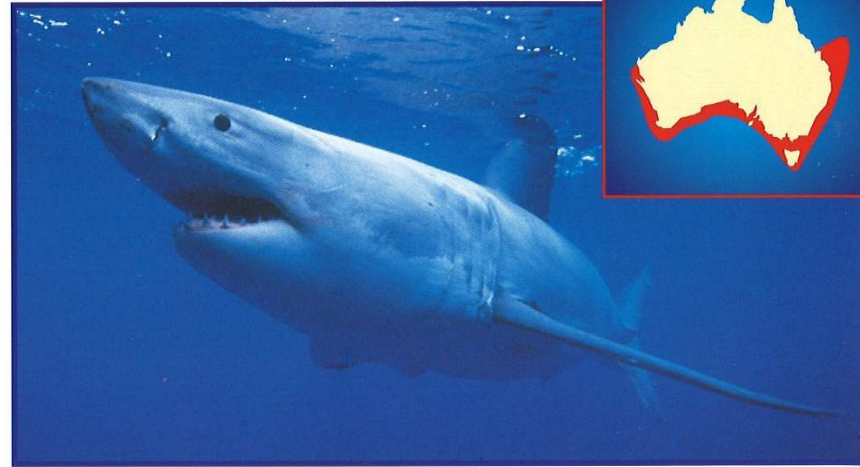
These snakes love rocky areas and can easily climb rough, vertical rock-faces. The spread of houses into their habitat and collection of rock slabs for gardens are causing problems for these snakes. Watch out! They are venomous and can be aggressive.



Giants of the sea

Great White Shark - vulnerable

This is the world's most dangerous shark. Its torpedo-shaped body helps it speed through the water. Strong jaws and saw-like teeth are used to grab large fish, turtles, seals and dolphins. The Great White, like other sharks, dies if tangled in fish nets. They were once killed by big game fishermen who loved to catch such big and dangerous creatures. Their numbers dropped rapidly so they are now protected.



Leathery Turtle - vulnerable

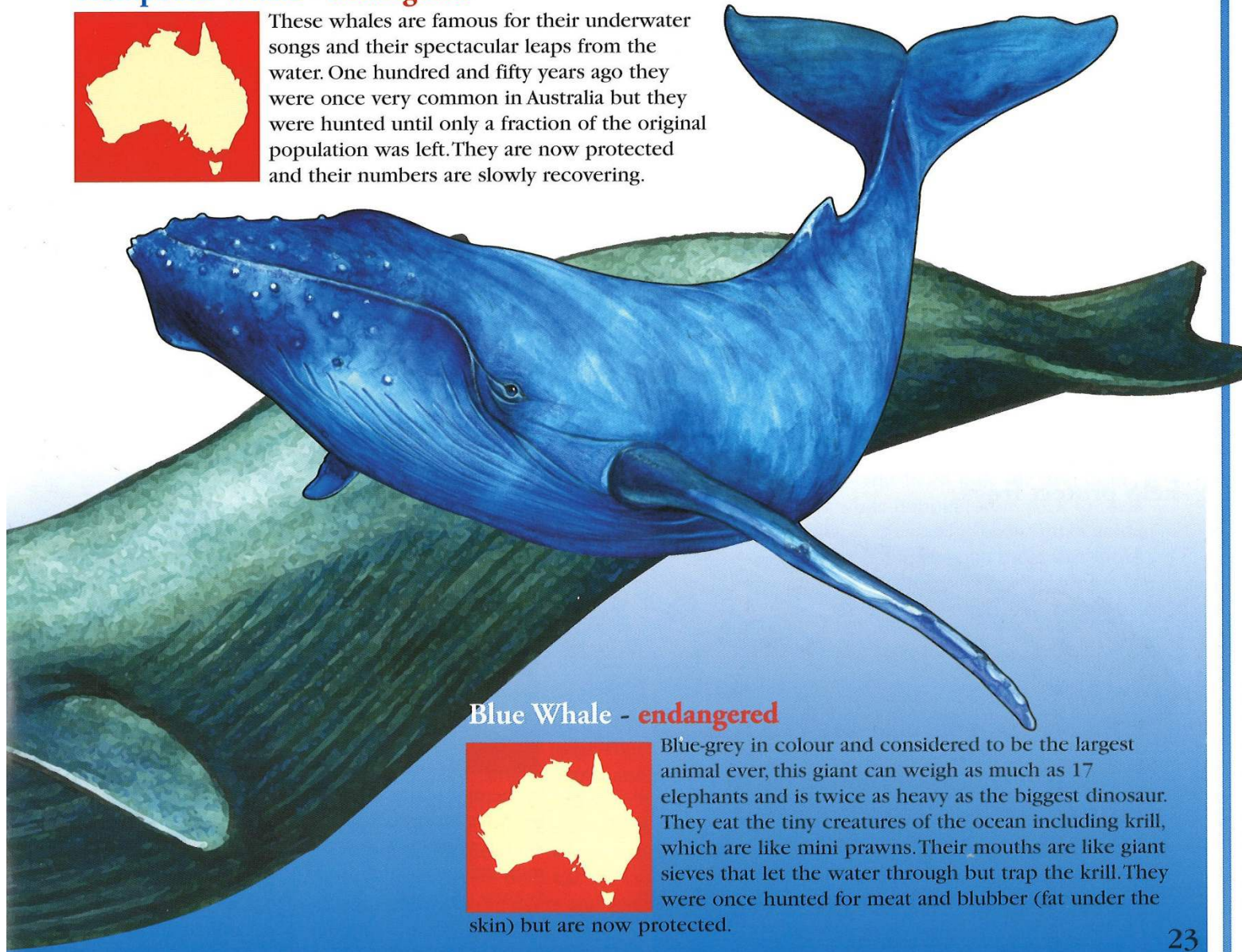
Paddle-like flippers help the world's largest turtles to glide through the water. They have a leathery shell which is black with light spots. They can get caught in rubbish and often die from eating plastic bags which look like their favourite food, jellyfish. Foxes and wild pigs eat the eggs and young turtles on the beach as they make their way to the sea.



Humpback Whale - **endangered**



These whales are famous for their underwater songs and their spectacular leaps from the water. One hundred and fifty years ago they were once very common in Australia but they were hunted until only a fraction of the original population was left. They are now protected and their numbers are slowly recovering.



Blue Whale - **endangered**



Blue-grey in colour and considered to be the largest animal ever, this giant can weigh as much as 17 elephants and is twice as heavy as the biggest dinosaur. They eat the tiny creatures of the ocean including krill, which are like mini prawns. Their mouths are like giant sieves that let the water through but trap the krill. They were once hunted for meat and blubber (fat under the skin) but are now protected.

Frogs

Almost all (94%) of the frogs found in Australia live nowhere else in the world. In the last ten years over 12 types of frog have disappeared. No one is sure why. Education projects such as *Frogwatch*, *Adopt a Swamp* and various frog days have let adults and children help protect frogs.



Green and Golden Bell Frog - endangered



These colourful frogs have a green back with gold markings. They live in warm, grassy areas. They eat cockroaches, crickets and grasshoppers. The tadpoles and eggs of these frogs are eaten by introduced Mosquito Fish. They are losing habitat, as creeks and swamps are changed. Fortunately, Green and Golden Bell Frogs have been bred in tanks and several thousand have been released into the wild.



Corroboree Frog - endangered



These colourful frogs are easily recognised by their black and yellow markings. Their colours warn of danger but this is only a trick as they are harmless. They are found in the mountains of Australia where they make burrows for breeding in the boggy areas during summer. They are now only found in the wettest mountain areas and not all over the mountains as they once were.

Mount Baw Baw Frog - endangered



The brown colour of these small frogs helps them hide around rocks and logs near streams on Mount Baw Baw. When it snows they bury themselves among plants and sleep until spring. It is thought that skiers and walkers may be disturbing them. They are no longer found all over the mountain but only in deep gullies with thick bush.



Lace-eyed Tree Frog - endangered



Found near streams in tropical rainforests in Queensland. The white markings on its back look like a type of plant that grows on rocks - this helps hide the frog from danger while hopping from rock to rock. It has large eyes and eyelids with a golden pattern running through them that looks like lace. Nobody knows why these frogs are disappearing.



Spotted Tree Frog - endangered

These are Victoria's rarest tree frogs. They have toe pads to help them cling to plants and rocks. They are usually spotted with dark blotches that look like warts. Tree clearing has changed the water quality and temperature of the rivers. Where these frogs breed, trout eat the tadpoles. Even with the work of a recovery team of volunteers and scientists, their numbers are still dropping.

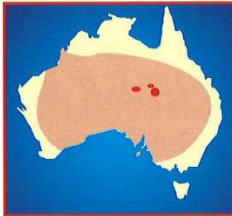


Bilby or bunny?

In 1858, about 20 rabbits were let go in Victoria for hunting. At that time, native animals that eat rabbits such as quolls, hawks and dingoes were being shot or poisoned to keep them away from sheep so the rabbits spread quickly. They have become a pest, destroying the habitat that our wildlife needs.

Bilby - vulnerable

The Bilby is also called the Rabbit-eared Bandicoot because of its long ears and the way it hops around. They dig burrows in the sand to escape the hot desert sun. They eat grubs, seeds, insects and fruit. Bilbies were once found all through inland Australia but they are now only found in a few places. This is because people have changed the Bilby's habitat by reducing fires and by introducing animals that eat their food or eat them - rabbits, sheep foxes and cats. Bilbies have been bred in zoos to be released into the wild.



Many Australians now celebrate Easter with chocolate Bilbies instead of Easter Bunnies.



Tipping the Scales

Australian reptiles are unique -
88 % occur nowhere else in the world.

Pernatty Knob-tail - vulnerable



These geckos look like alien creatures with their big, dark eyes and large head. Their wide mouths are used to catch spiders, scorpions and other geckos. They have a short, stumpy tail with a knob that wiggles when they are frightened.

Their body colour and patterns form a camouflage that looks like fallen leaves. These geckos live in a small area of sandy bushland. If cattle or rabbits were to feed in this area it would destroy the geckos' home and they would become extinct.



Border Thick-tailed Gecko - vulnerable

When still, these lizards are perfectly camouflaged. Their skin is coloured and patterned to look like lichen growing on rocks. They hide in the shade among rocks and logs, waiting for spiders and other crawling insects that get close enough for them to grab.

Freshwater

Tasmanian Freshwater Crayfish - vulnerable



This is the largest freshwater crayfish in the world. They can weigh as much as a big bag of potatoes. They live in streams and swamps in Tasmania where they are prized as a tasty treat. Some people have realized that we need to protect this unusual animal and have started to make plans for teaching others about saving this crayfish.



Honey Blue-eye - vulnerable



This honey-coloured fish with blue eyes and cheeks is losing its living places as streams, lakes and swamps are being changed for housing, farms and mining. Small groups of the Honey Blue-eye are being bred in tanks.



Lake Eacham Rainbow Fish - **endangered**



This beautiful fish has a silver or blue body and long orange fins. They used to live in the shallow waters around Lake Eacham but are now only found in captivity. They cannot be released back into the lake because the introduced fish that ate all the wild fish are still there.

Stop Press!
A very similar fish has been found close by - all may not be lost.



Trout Cod - **endangered**



These large, tasty fish were a popular catch. They have big, beady eyes and a rounded nose to search the bottom of streams for fish, yabbies, insects and tadpoles. Their top and sides are blue-grey with small black spots. They have been overfished so there are now bans on catching them. Captive breeding programs where they are bred and then put back into the wild should increase their numbers.

Saltwater

Leafy Seadragon - vulnerable



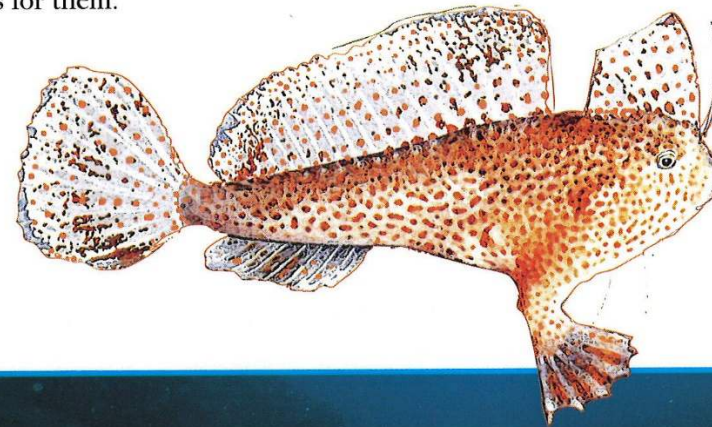
Looking like a frond of seaweed these small, delicate creatures swim in the waters off South Australia. The male seadragon looks after the eggs for many weeks after the female has layed her eggs under his tail. Millions of seadragons have been collected for aquariums or used in Asian medicine potions. Leafy Seadragons are now fully protected.



Derwent Spotted Handfish - endangered



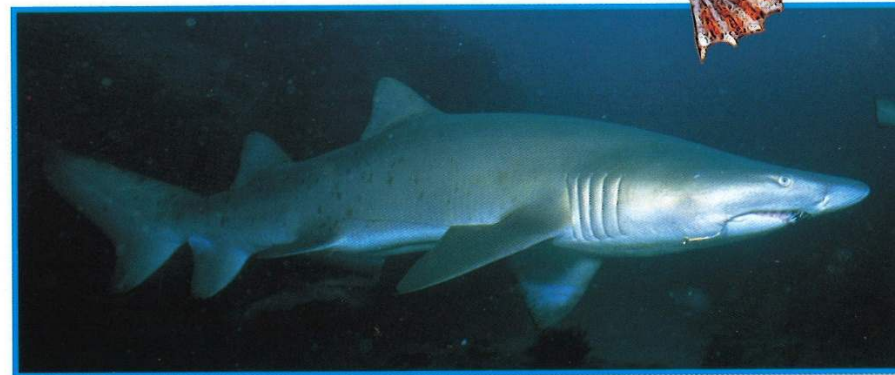
Instead of swimming, these small, slow-moving marine fish, walk across the bottom of the sea on fins that look like hands. When their eggs hatch the young look and walk just like the adults. Derwent Spotted Handfish are now being bred and studied at the CSIRO laboratories in Hobart. Scientists have found that this fish needs tall, standing sea-squirts. They lay their eggs up the sea-squirt pole, not on the sand like other fish. Introduced sea stars feed on the sea-squirts and the Derwent Spotted Handfish eggs. Plastic rods buried in the sand may provide other breeding sites for them.

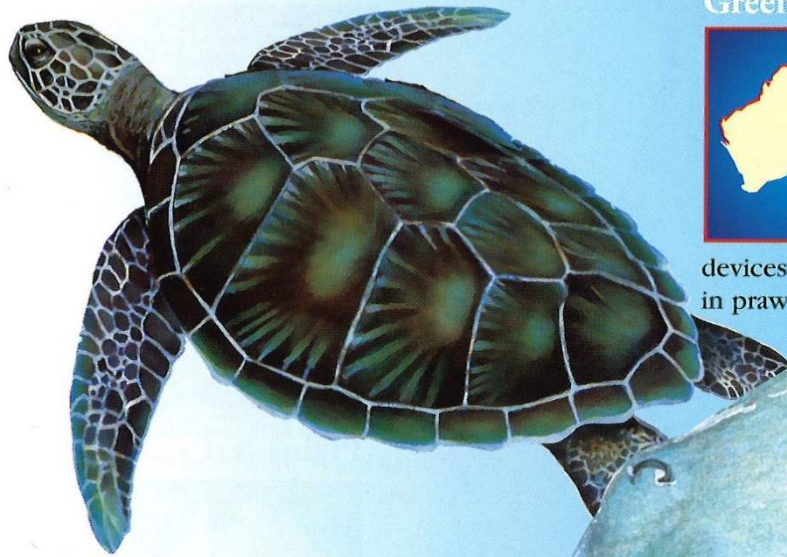


Grey Nurse Shark - vulnerable



This is the first shark in the world to be protected by law. They were hunted relentlessly because they were blamed for attacks on people. This was wrong because they only use their long, sharp teeth to eat fish, sea urchins and shellfish. Their eyesight is poor so they find their food by taste and touch. Fishing nets can trap and kill these sharks.





Green Turtle - **endangered**



These turtles have a beautiful streamlined shell. The young are carnivorous but adults feed on seaweeds and seagrasses. Foxes eat the turtle eggs and young. Some turtles drown by getting tangled in old fishing gear and prawn nets. New devices are being designed to stop them being drowned in prawn nets.

Dugong - **vulnerable**



These gentle creatures spend their time in warm, shallow waters where seagrass grows. They have a strange-shaped nose that faces downwards and a rubbery mouth for grazing on seagrass. This is where the dugong gets its other name - Sea Cow. Their heavy bodies help keep them at the bottom while feeding and a dolphin-like tail helps them swim. Seagrass is easily killed by pollution and without seagrass the dugongs starve. They are also drowned in fish nets.

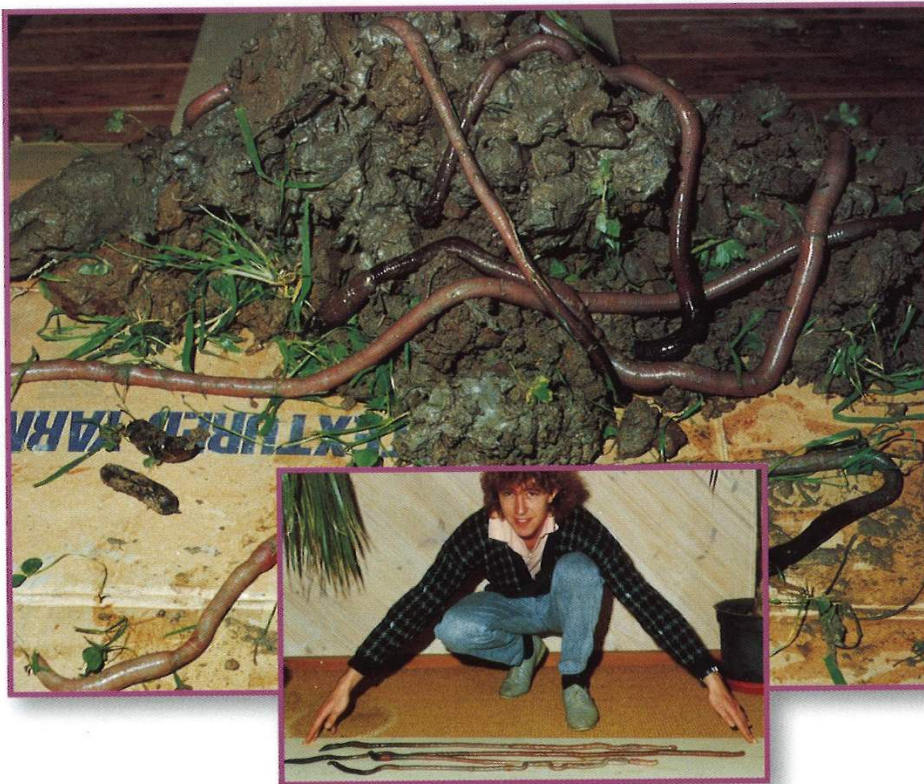


Burrowers

Giant Gippsland Earthworm - vulnerable



This is one of the largest earthworms in the world, growing to over one metre long. Changes to stream banks have meant that there are few places for these worms to make their burrows. Loud gurgling sounds can sometimes be heard as they move underground. Farmers and environment officers are working together to protect Giant Gippsland Earthworms.

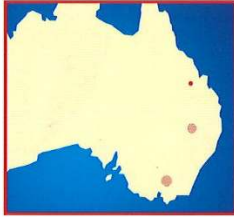


Plains Rat - endangered

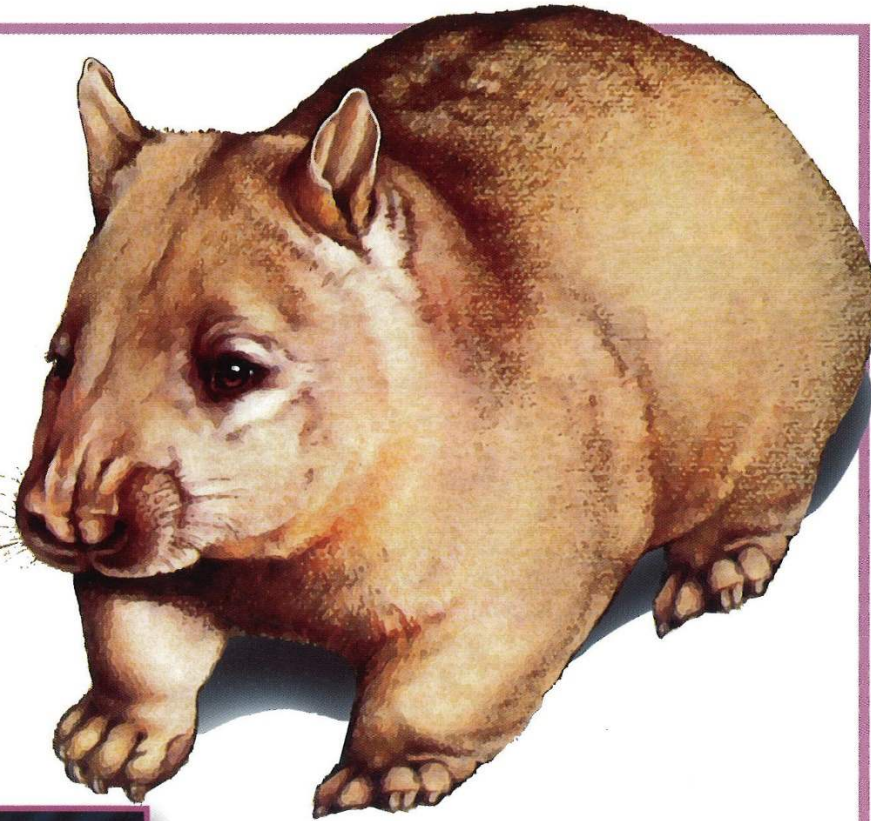


These little animals have soft, silvery fur and live in a system of burrows in drier areas of Australia. They have been reduced to scattered groups because rabbits and sheep eat their food. South Australian school children have been breeding the Plains Rat. Over 200 have been released at Yookamurra Sanctuary in South Australia.

Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat - **endangered**



This is one of the world's rarest mammals. It hides during the day in underground tunnels. It is built like a tank and can run as fast as 40km/hr. This is not quick enough however to escape wild dogs. Forests where this wombat once lived were cleared so now it has to share its food with cattle, sheep and rabbits. The land where the last group of these wombats live has been made into a National Park, so farm animals are kept out. Numbers of the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat are slowly increasing.



Marsupial Mole - **endangered**



These strange-looking animals are sausage-shaped and are covered in silky fur. They have no eyes, ears you cannot see and a large nose with a hard covering. They burrow through sandy soil to keep out of the hot sun and search for insects to eat. Changes to the deserts where the Marsupial Mole is found mean that there are fewer suitable living places for them.

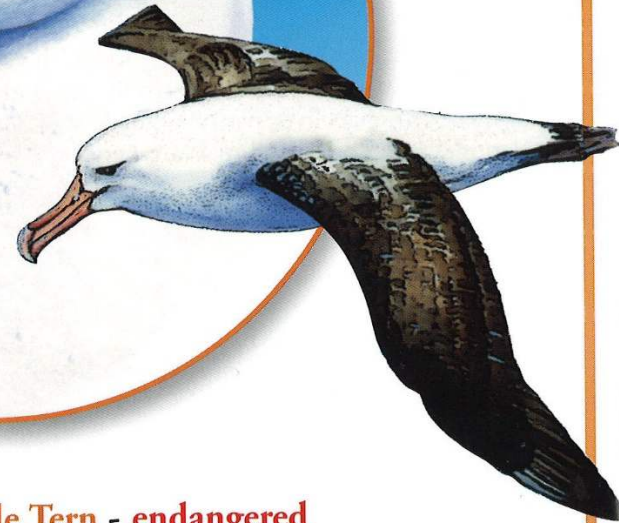
Sailing the Seas

Wandering Albatross - vulnerable



This is the largest of all seabirds. It breeds on cold islands near the Antarctic and spends the rest of its time around the coast of

Australia. They have long, slender wings and a hooked beak for catching cuttlefish and fish. Many albatrosses are drowned when they are hooked as they try to take baits off long-line fishing gear. New commercial fishing techniques are being tested that will reduce the number of albatrosses being killed.



Little Tern - endangered



Endangered worldwide, these elegant birds have long, pointed wings and feed by plunging into the sea to catch fish. When nesting on sandy beaches, they are easily disturbed by people and boats. Foxes and cats hunt their eggs and young.

To the edge and back

Koala



In the 1920s koalas almost became extinct because of hunting for their skins. Millions were killed and over half a million were shot in one month in 1927. A public outcry ensured their protection, but by then very few were left. Today populations have recovered

in some places but these world-famous, cute, furry animals still have problems with habitat destruction and in some places, disease.



Cape Barren Goose

Unique to Australia, this large, long-legged goose is found on rocky islands. They feed on grasses, seeds and other plants. Unlike other geese, they hardly ever go into the water. They were once hunted because they competed with sheep for pasture and eventually became endangered. They are now protected and breeding programs have been so successful that they are no longer threatened.



Feathered Friends

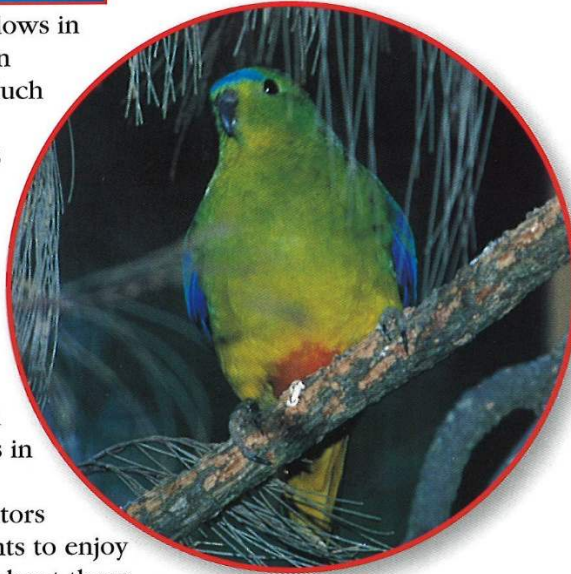
Australia has many unique birds, quite a few are in serious danger of extinction unless we find ways to help them.

Orange-bellied Parrot - endangered



There are only a few hundred of these parrots left in the wild. They spend their winters around the coast of Victoria and South Australia and cross Bass Strait to nest

in tree hollows in Tasmania in summer. Much of their habitat has been changed for housing and farming. Mini cameras in nest boxes in Tasmania enable visitors and students to enjoy and learn about these colourful birds. They still need more help if they are to be saved.

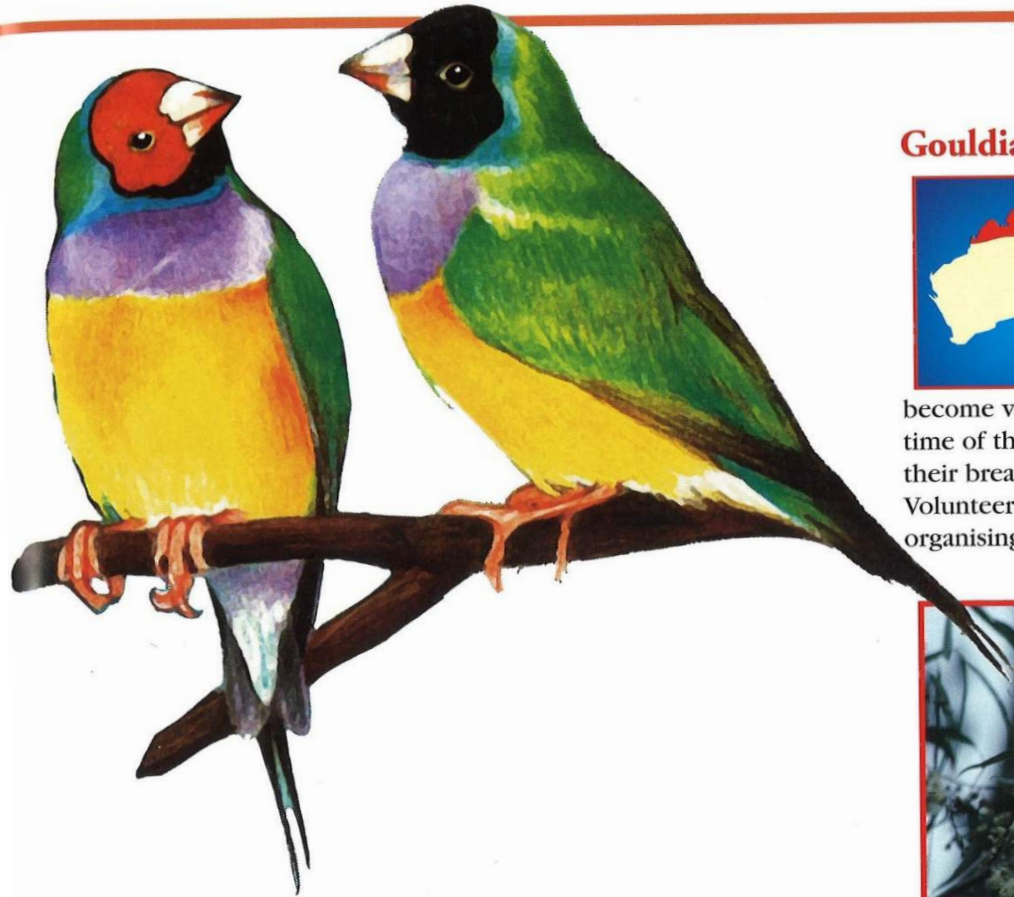


Malleefowl - vulnerable



The male bird builds a huge mound of warm compost to incubate eggs laid in it by the females. The young must fend for themselves when they hatch. Introduced foxes and cats wait by the mounds and catch the

small, young birds, often killing them all. People are now digging up the eggs and incubating them, then keeping the young until they grow big enough to be able to escape more easily from foxes. These released young have a good survival rate.



Gouldian Finch - endangered



These small birds live in grassy areas where they feed on the grass seeds. Their beautiful colours make them a target for trapping, but no one knows exactly why they have

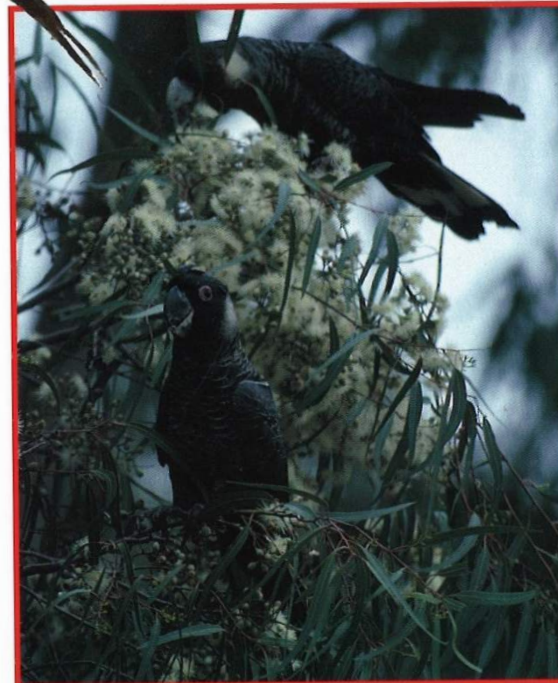
become very rare recently. Fires at the wrong time of the year and introduced mites that affect their breathing may be part of the cause. Volunteer helpers and wildlife workers are now organising a plan to help save these birds.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo - vulnerable



Glossy black feathers and white patches on the ear and tail make these cockatoos stand out. They use their sharp curved bills to open seed cases. Much of the woodland where these birds live has been cleared for farms, so grazing animals such as sheep and rabbits have stopped native plants from growing. This means there

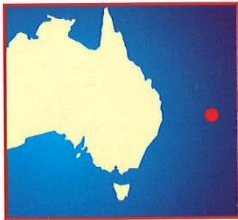
are fewer seeds for the cockatoos to eat and very few tree hollows to nest in. Replanting of native plants will give these birds more food but they are still short of nesting hollows.



Lonely islanders

Animals that live on isolated islands like Christmas Island, Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island, are very vulnerable because they are often unafraid of introduced hunters and cannot compete with introduced animals. Because they are on islands, new populations cannot arrive from other areas.

Norfolk Island Boobook Owl -



endangered

Considered to be the rarest owl in the world, its name comes from its call which sounds like 'boo-book'. They have large, round eyes to hunt at night for small reptiles and insects that they catch in their powerful claws. They make their nests in the hollows of old rainforest trees, many of which have been cut down.



Abbott's Booby - endangered



The Booby's body is shaped like a torpedo, which

helps it move quickly through the air and water when it dives for fish and squid. It nests in the rainforest on Christmas Island. Much of this rainforest has been cleared for mining so a National Park has been set up to protect the remaining nesting sites.



Lord Howe Woodhen - endangered



When Lord Howe Island was discovered in 1788, these birds were common. Introduced animals hunted them so heavily that only thirty of these birds survived in the 1970's. Captive breeding and release, and control of introduced pigs, goats and owls has now allowed their numbers to increase to over two hundred.



On the edge of extinction

Bathurst Copper Butterfly - endangered

The caterpillars of these butterflies are very fussy. They will only feed on a special bush where a certain type of ant is found. The ant looks after the caterpillars. Where the bush has been cleared for houses and farms, or where weeds have taken over, the butterflies disappear. This is the first animal without a backbone to be listed as endangered in



Australia, showing that we realise the importance of all our wildlife not just the cute and cuddly ones.



Gastric-brooding Frog - the Egg Swallower! - endangered



These frogs were only discovered in 1973 and may already be extinct. The female frog swallows the eggs and the tadpoles grow in her stomach. During this time she does not eat.

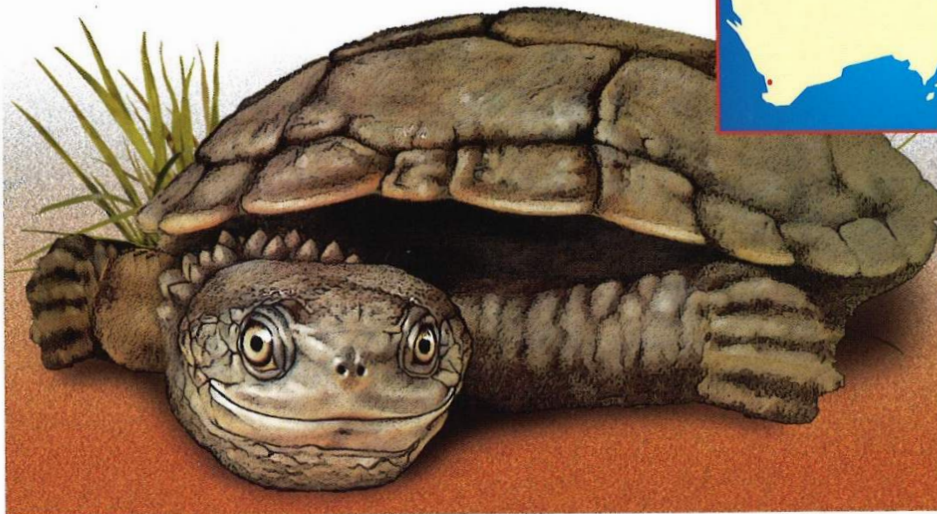
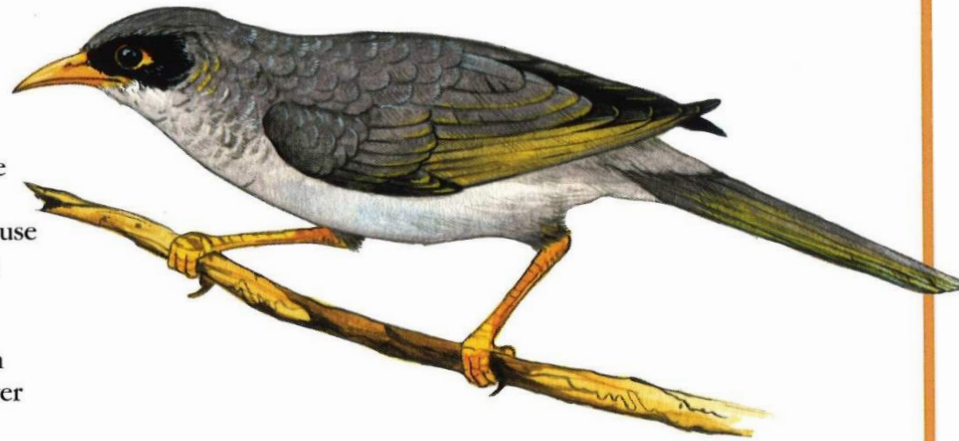
When grown, the froglets climb out the mother's mouth, quickly hiding under rocks in rainforest creeks. The reasons for the disappearance of these frogs are unknown.

Black-eared Miner - endangered



Black-eared Miners are Australia's most endangered birds. There are only about 11 left. Many of the trees they use for nesting and feeding have been cleared for

farms. The forests that survive have been changed so that they suit the more common Yellow-throated Miners, which are taking over the area.



Western Swamp Tortoise - endangered

These are the world's most endangered tortoises. During the summer when the swamps dry up they bury themselves in soil and leaves, sleeping until the rains come. Their swamps have been drained for farms and foxes eat them. They now survive in only one swamp in Western Australia. Fences have been built around the swamp to protect them from foxes and their numbers are now increasing.

Rediscovered

Mountain Pygmy Possum - endangered

Until 1966 only fossils of this cute little animal had been found. So it was very exciting when a live Mountain Pygmy Possum was found at Mount Hotham. Females often live in higher parts of the mountains where there are more insects, seeds and fruits to eat. The males only move up the mountain to join them during mating season. To help the males safely find the females a 'tunnel of love' has been made under a road in the area.



Bridled Nailtail Wallaby - endangered



Much of the special type of forest that these wallabies lived in has been cleared. Sheep eat the same grasses as these little wallabies.

Foxes love to eat these wallabies so they disappeared quickly from farmed areas. They were thought to be extinct until a small group was discovered in the 1970's. Captive breeding has created another group of Bridled Nailtail wallabies that will be released in suitable places in Queensland. Their numbers are now increasing.





Gilbert's Potoroo - endangered



Presumed extinct for over one hundred years, these creatures, also called Broad-faced Potoroos, were rediscovered very

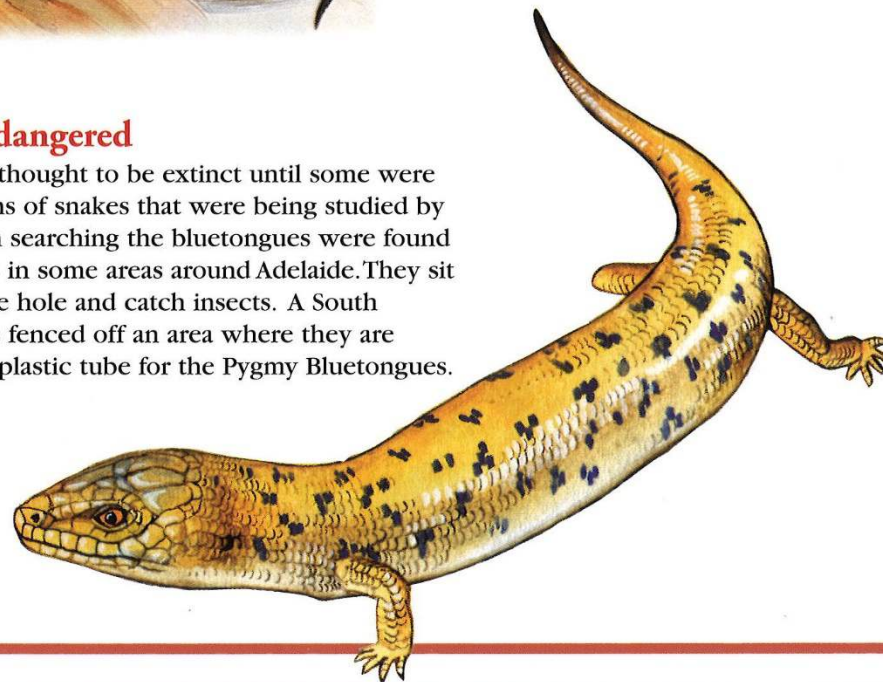
recently in Western Australia. They have survived in a patch of heathland that has not been disturbed or burned for a long time.

Scientists could not believe their eyes when they found one of these pretty little animals in a trap set to catch other small mammals for research.

Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard - endangered



This little lizard was thought to be extinct until some were found in the stomachs of snakes that were being studied by scientists. After much searching the bluetongues were found living in spider holes in some areas around Adelaide. They sit at the entrance to the hole and catch insects. A South Australian school has fenced off an area where they are making homes from plastic tube for the Pygmy Bluetongues.



A tale of two parrots

Hopefully the Golden-shouldered Parrot will not share the fate of the Paradise Parrot.

Paradise parrots became extinct in the 1920s because the grasses on which they fed were eaten away by cattle and rabbits during droughts. Some were also taken for pets or shot for display as stuffed birds.

Close relatives of the Paradise Parrot, Golden-shouldered Parrots are now under threat, but may be saved. Scientists have found that they need fire to prevent their grasslands being overtaken by shrubs, but fire during breeding season reduces the amount of grass seed available to feed their young. Some farmers are now burning off at a different time of year to help the parrots.

Illegal capture of parrots is still a big problem in Australia.

Golden-shouldered Parrot - endangered

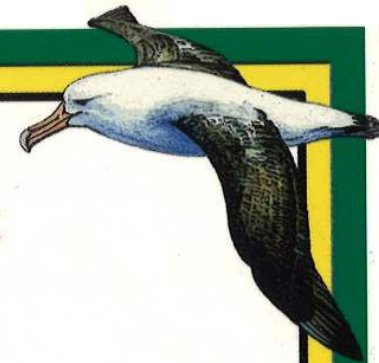


Paradise Parrot



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Australian Threatened & Endangered Animals

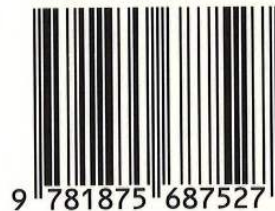


Sheree Marris works for the Gould League as an author, teacher and media officer. Sheree also works in community environmental education.

Australia has lost more species of mammal than any other continent in the world and many other Australian animals are endangered. This book highlights both the folly of European approach to the Australian environment and the work of volunteers, scientists, farmers and environment workers towards saving threatened species.

This book looks at over sixty species. It examines the reasons for their decline and what is being done to save them. It covers a broad range of interesting animals. It introduces a complex topic in a positive, realistic and simple way.

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