

Emu

The emu is Australia's largest bird and the world's second largest. It comes second to the ostrich.



Emus are very unique in the way they look. They have long necks and very sharp beaks.



Their ears are quite small and they have two sets of eyelids. One eyelid is used to keep the dust out while the other is used for blinking. Altogether they have six toes, three on each foot. On each foot there is a talon which is used for fighting and protecting themselves against predators. Emus have very soft light brown feathers. They are also known to grow between 1.5-2 metres in height and can weigh up to 60kg. They are flightless birds.

Emus like to eat whatever they can find. However, they really enjoy grains, flowers and berries. They also like to eat insects and grubs which they find by digging around in the ground.

Emus like to eat a lot of food, especially if there is a lot around them. When they eat lots, the food is stored as fat. They can then survive for longer periods as they go in search of more food. Emus live in flocks or pairs.

Did you know...?

Males make a grunting sound like a pig and females make a loud booming sound.

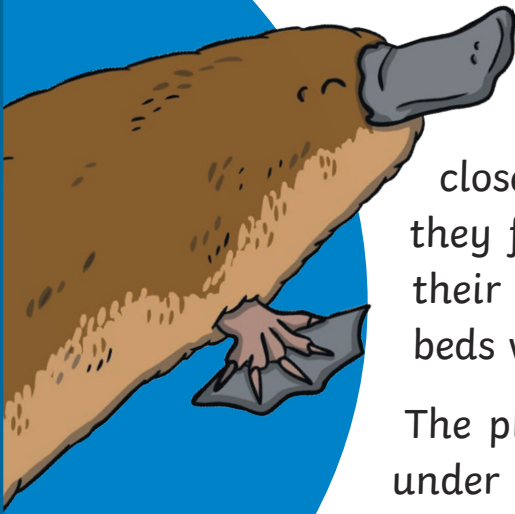


Platypus

The platypus is a semi-aquatic mammal found in small rivers and streams in Queensland, New South Wales, ACT, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.



It is duck-billed, has a beaver-like tail, has otter-like fur and webbed feet. Platypus are monotremes, which means they lay eggs instead of giving birth.



Platypus are nocturnal, which means they come out at night or at twilight to feed. They close their eyes and ears when under water. When they feed on worms, insects and shrimp, they use their sense of electroreception and dig up the river beds with their bills.

The platypus is an excellent swimmer. It can stay under water for around 30 seconds before coming up for air. The average length of a male platypus is 50cm and the average length of a female is 43cm. They can weigh between 1 and 2.4kg. Their predators include snakes, water rats, hawks, owls, eagles and sometimes crocodiles.

Did you know...?

The platypus has been used as a mascot for national events in Australia and is featured on the Australian 20 cent coin.



Wombat

Wombats are native only to Australia. They are mammals and marsupials. Wombats are small and look like a cross between a bear, a pig and a gopher.



Their bodies are built for digging, with short legs, a compact head, short broad feet and strong claws. There are two kinds of wombats, the bare-nosed wombat and the hairy-nosed wombat. Hairy-nosed wombats are nocturnal grazers, which means they hunt for their food at night.



Wombats mainly eat grass and roots. They live in burrows up to 30 metres long. The burrows are made mainly from roots of fallen trees, soil, leaves and rocks.

They are extremely strong and excellent diggers. Wombats can be many different colours, from light brown to black or grey. The average wombat is about 1 metre long and weighs about 25kg. Wombats are generally solitary, which means they are unsociable and like to be alone.

Did you know...?

A wombat's pouch is backwards and their poo is cube-shaped.



Tasmanian Devil

The wild Tasmanian devil can only be found in the wild in Tasmania, Australia. The Tasmanian devil is a marsupial.



Female marsupial animals have pouches in which they carry their young. The pouch helps the Tasmanian devil mother to feed and protect newly born babies. There are four teats in the pouch, so she can look after four little devils at one time.



Tasmanian devils are mostly black, but usually have white markings on their bottom or the chest. Tasmanian devils are carnivores which means they only eat meat. They are also known to be scavengers. They eat lizards, frogs, insects and any animal meat they can find.

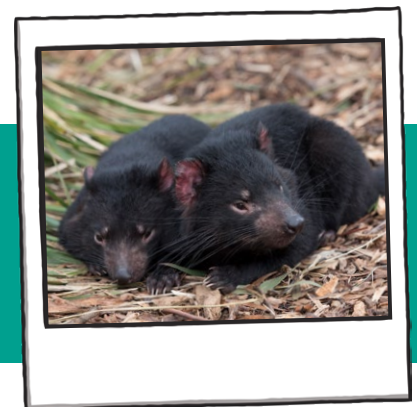
The Tasmanian devil stores fat in its tail so that it has something to draw on when there isn't a lot of food to eat. Their eyesight is better when it's dark.

They are good at spotting things that are moving, but if things are still they probably won't see it as clearly.

Male devils are usually bigger than females. They are about 30 centimetres tall and weigh up to 14kg.

Did you know...?

Devils can eat up to 40% of their body weight in a day.



Kangaroo

Kangaroos are mammals and marsupials that are found in every state in Australia.



The kangaroo has large and powerful hind legs, large feet, a long muscly tail for balance and a small head. Male kangaroos can be seen boxing when competing for the attention of a female.



Kangaroos are social animals that live in groups called mobs. They are herbivores so they eat plants, leaves and different grasses.

Kangaroos can reach a weight of 90kg, and can hop at speeds of up to 60km/h.

A male kangaroo is known as a boomer, buck, jack, or old man. The female kangaroo is known as the doe, jill, or flyer. A baby kangaroo is known as a joey. The Red Kangaroo is the largest marsupial in the world. It can leap as far as 8m and can jump up to 3m high.

Did you know...?

Kangaroos cannot move backwards and adult kangaroos can live for months without drinking anything at all.



Possum

There are 23 possum species in Australia. The most common species are the brushtail possum and the ringtail possum.



Most possums live in hollows of tall trees, while some build nests (known as 'dreys') in bushes or trees. Possums are nocturnal marsupials.

While possums are mainly herbivores, they have been known to eat insects and bird eggs. They mainly eat eucalyptus and other leaves, and they also love eating nectar, flowers and fruit.

Most possums are solitary animals, except when they are raising their young. Ringtail possums tend to live in family groups of three or more.



Did you know...?
Possums are native to Australia.

Sugar Glider

The sugar glider is a small nocturnal marsupial that has stretchy membranes that extend from both sides of its body between the front and back legs. When the sugar glider jumps from tree to tree, it extends these membranes and glides between the trees. This is where the sugar glider gets its name.



The sugar glider is most common in parts of the north and eastern coastal areas of Australia. They can also be found in parts of Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. They are common where there are many tree hollows for shelter and food.

Sugar gliders have a diet of tree sap, nectar, pollen and small invertebrates that they hunt for at night. They live in colonies and during the day these groups (several adults and their young) can be found huddled together in the tree hollows or balls of leaves.



Adult sugar gliders are 16–21cm long, with a tail that can grow to the same length. They can weigh between 100–160 grams with the females weighing less than the males. They are covered with grey-brown fur with their signature dark stripe that runs the length of their foreheads.

They have large eyes that help them see at night. Sugar gliders communicate with one another using sounds and odours. They can produce a number of sounds that include a barking sound and hissing. Their chemical odour is the most common way they communicate and these odours are a way to mark territory, indicate the health of a glider or mark the rank of the colony members.

Did you know...?

The sugar glider can withstand very cold temperatures. As they live in groups, when the weather is cold, they group together and sleep near one another to keep warm. They conserve energy by going in to 'torpor' – a condition similar to hibernation.

Echidna

The echidna is a highly adaptable creature that can be found throughout Australia. They are found in coastal forests, alpine meadows and deserts. The echidna has the widest distribution of any native Australian mammal.



The echidna has a skinny snout and a long flicking tongue which is perfect for catching insects. It also has very sharp spines, known as quills, along its back and sides.

When an echidna is threatened, it will curl inwards leaving only its quills exposed. This is a form of protection from predators. Termites and ants are what echidnas love to eat.

They especially love eating beetle larvae which are a type of soil invertebrate. Their sharp claws are what help them to find termites, as they often hide in rotting logs.



Did you know...?

Echidnas have no teeth.



Koala

Koalas are native to Australia. People still incorrectly refer to koalas as 'koala bears'. They are actually marsupials and are closely related to the wombat and kangaroo.



Koalas have sharp claws which they use to help them climb trees. They have five digits on each front paw, with two of them acting like thumbs. This helps them to hold firmly onto the branches and to grip their food. Their back paws are used as grooming paws.

A baby koala is called a 'joey'. Joeys live in their mother's pouch for around six months and will remain with them for another six months or so afterwards. An adult koala can eat about half a kilogram to one kilogram of leaves each night. Koalas are mostly nocturnal which means they are awake at night and asleep during the day. Koalas sleep a lot during the day because they require a lot of energy to digest the toxic, low-nutrient diet that they eat. Sleeping is the best way to conserve their energy.



Did you know...?

Koalas sleep for around 18-20 hours a day.