

Kangaroo

Kangaroos are marsupial mammals that are found in Australia including Tasmania. They are also found in New Guinea.

The kangaroo has large, 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 3m high.

Did You Know...?

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

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.



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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.



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Did You Know...?

Echidnas have no teeth.

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 for 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.

Wombat

Wombats are native only to Australia. They are marsupial mammals.

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 basic kinds of wombats, the bare-nosed wombat, and the hairy-nosed wombat.

Wombats are nocturnal grazers, which means they hunt for their food at night.



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

They are extremely strong and proficient diggers. Wombats can be anything from sandy coloured to brown or black, to 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 poop is cube-shaped.

Possum

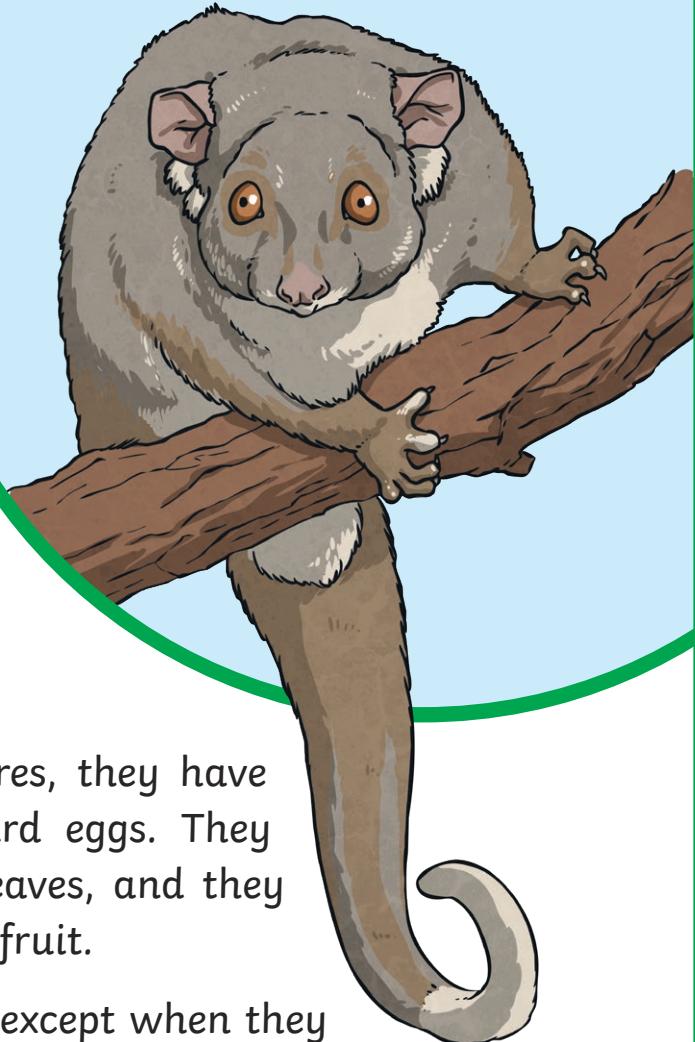
There are 23 possum species in Australia. The most common species are the brushtail possum and the ringtail possum.

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. The ringtail possums tend to live in family groups of three or more.



Did You Know...?

Possums are native to Australia

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-nutrition diet that they eat. Sleeping is the best way to conserve their energy.



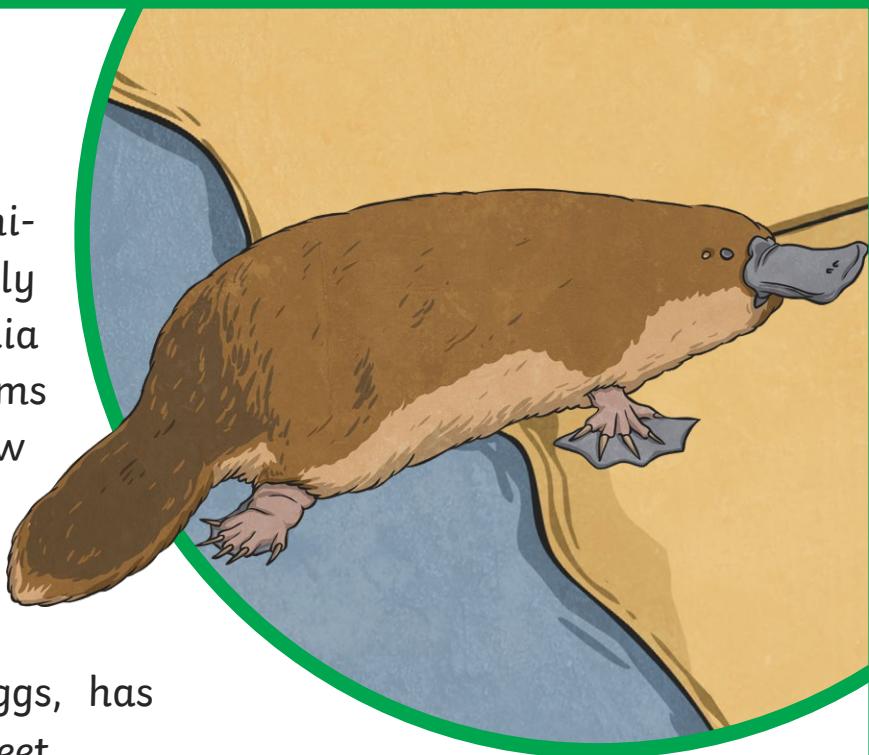
Did You Know...?

Koalas sleep for around 18-20 hours a day.

Platypus

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

It is duck-billed, has a beaver-like tail, lays eggs, has otter-like fur and webbed feet.



Platypuses are monotremes which means that they lay eggs instead of giving birth.

Platypuses 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 for a female is 43cm. They can weigh from 1-2.4kg.

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.

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 marking 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.

Adult 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.



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 common in parts of the north and eastern coastal areas of Australia. They can also be found in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and then across the north of Australia to the tip of Cape York. In Victoria, sugar gliders can be found in the south and in 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 the season's 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.

Numbat

Numbats are small marsupials that can be found in southwest Australia. Their bodies range between 20 and 30cm in length and their tails are a further 12 to 21cm long.

They are reddish-brown, with a small pointed head, four short legs and a long bushy tail. Numbats are known as 'the banded anteater' due to the black and white stripes on their backs and their diet - they live on termites and nothing else. They don't even need to drink water as they get enough water from the termites they eat.

Unlike most marsupials, numbats are active during the day. They live in eucalyptus woods where there are lots of fallen trees and hollow logs for shelter, nesting and places to find food.

Numbats live alone in underground burrows or inside trees or logs and come out when termites are active (Usually in the morning or late afternoon). They forage on the forest floor, smelling for termites. When they catch scent of some, they dig to reveal the termite tunnels (galleries) and prod their long, sticky tongues inside.

Numbats are prey to many birds: they often forage for food near small bushes so they can duck under them if they sense a threat. Their striped coat acts as camouflage against the forest floor.

Female numbats don't have a pouch like other marsupials, instead pups attach themselves to one of four nipples and are kept protected by her long fur for up to 7 months. They spend up to a year with their mother before leaving the nest and looking after themselves.

Did You Know...?

Their tongues are 11cm long and they eat up to 20,000 termites a day.

