

# Greater Glider

Scientific name: *Petauroides volans*

Greater Gliders are the largest gliding marsupials in the world. They are about the size of a large fluffy cat and come in different colours, from almost pure white, to grey to black and black and white. They need old forests and old trees that have large hollows for them to live in that are called dens.

It can take up to 250 years for a eucalypt (a gum tree) to form a hollow big enough for a Greater Glider to live in (this is called a den) and they can use up to 18 den trees within their range. They have small home ranges of about 1-5Ha and they only eat the leaves of certain eucalypt trees.



Photo: Third Silence Nature Photography



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

**Sound:** Greater Gliders do not make any sounds, except a whoosh as they glide. They can glide up to 100 metres in a single glide and can change direction at 90-degree angles mid-flight. They steer by using their long tails.

**Greater Gliders are marsupials** (they have a pouch) and for the first three to four months of their lives, the baby Greater Glider stays in their mother's pouch. Then, they ride on mum's back for up to three more months.

**Greater Gliders are threatened by:** Fires, cutting down their old forest and hot nights. When the temperature at night is over 20 degrees they have trouble digesting their food and they can die from hunger if there are too many hot nights in a row.

**Where Found:** in forests of East Gippsland, such as the Colquhoun Forest near Lakes Entrance and Mt Alfred Forest north of Bairnsdale and other forests and National Parks in East Gippsland.

NAME.....is a champion for Greater Gliders

# Growling Grass Frog

Scientific name: *Littoria raniformis*

**Growling Grass Frogs**, also known as **Growlers** and as **Southern Bell Frogs**, are one of the biggest frogs in Australia, growing to around 10cm in length. They are most often found in and around clusters of permanent or temporary swamps and wetlands, which they can move between on rainy nights.



Photo: Tereza T (commons/wiki)

## What do I sound like?

I make a distinctive “growling” or “grunting” sound, like the sound of a distant motorbike or a revving engine.

## What do I eat?

Growlers are known as ‘sit-and-wait’ predators, feeding on a wide range of insects, small lizards, fish, tadpoles and other frogs.

NAME.....is a champion for Growling Grass Frogs

## Where can you find me?

I need still or slow moving water with vegetation around the edges and mats of floating and submerged plants. You can usually find me hanging out in wetlands, swamps, dams and slow-moving streams.

Look out for me among the grasses, reeds, and water plants along the water’s edge. I am more likely to be heard than seen, so keep an ear out when exploring local wetlands and swamps!

## Why am I threatened?

The changes to my habitat caused by clearing native species are threatening my survival. Many swamps, wetlands and bogs have been cleared and drained leaving me with limited access to safe areas to live and breed. Pollution from stormwater and agricultural runoff affects the water sources I rely on to survive.



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

## How can you help?

Be careful to avoid polluting stormwater, and waterways. Protect and plant local native plants around water sources and wetlands, farm dams and avoid draining water from swampy areas.

# Hooded Plover

Scientific name: *Thinornis cucullatus*

**Hooded Plovers live on Australia's coastline** and are **non-migratory**. They spend their whole lives on the beach, between the dunes and shoreline. They are mostly found in pairs or small groups, darting around the water's edge and pecking and foraging along the shore.

**Hooded Plovers eat** insects, sandhoppers, small shellfish and soldier crabs. They forage at all levels of the beach during all tide phases.



Hooded Plover: JJ Harrison <https://www.jjharrison.com.au/>

Hooded Plovers lay their sand-coloured eggs in a little dent in the sand near the high-water mark. Their eggs blend into the sand, helping hide them from predators. This also makes them hard for beach-goers to see and easy for them to be accidentally crushed. They also risk their nests being washed away on high tides.

NAME.....is a champion for Hooded Plovers

# Hooded Plover



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

**Hooded Plovers are threatened by** their nests being disturbed and where they live being damaged. Hooded plovers nest on the beach during the busiest time of year, in spring and summer, and that increases the danger of nests being damaged by humans and their pets. Many Hooded Plover eggs and chicks are taken by dogs, foxes, and cats.

**You can help by keeping your dog on a leash when you go to the beach** – especially during spring and summer. Only walking below the high tide mark during the nesting season, not driving on the beach or dune areas, looking out for signs and fences, indicating there is a nest or chicks! Moving away quietly if you see hooded plovers.

## Little Tern

Scientific name: *Sternula albifrons*

Little Terns are small seabirds that live near the coast and in estuarine (river) areas of Australia. Every year, they fly a long way from northern Australia and further afield to come to the Gippsland Lakes to build their nests and raise their chicks. Sadly many chicks don't survive because their nesting areas get disturbed.

**Little Terns eat** small fish, insects, crustaceans and other invertebrates. They prefer to feed in shallow coastal water and sometimes hover before plunging into the water to catch prey.



Photo by PotMart186 Wikimedia Commons

Little Terns fly fast and they are noisy in breeding groups, where they perform aerial displays. The male calls and carries a fish to attract a mate, who then chases him up high before he descends, gliding with wings in a 'V'.

NAME.....is a champion for Little Terns



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

**Little Terns make their nests in a shallow dip in the sand** on the beach, usually just above the high tide mark. They decorate their nests with bits of seaweed, sticks, shells, and small pebbles.

**One of the biggest threats to Little Terns is disturbance at nesting places by human activity**, including dogs off-leash. Nesting sites can be located on beaches where humans swim, walk, exercise dogs, picnic and drive off-road vehicles. Many of their eggs are accidentally stepped on by walkers or crushed by vehicles on beaches. Many Little Tern eggs and chicks are taken by dogs, foxes, and cats.

**How you can help:** Next time you are at a beach or estuary, watch where you are stepping, especially in sandy areas with lots of plants where a hidden nest might be easy to miss. If you find a nest, leave it alone! Keep your dog on a leash at beaches where shorebirds are nesting.

## Pookila or New Holland Mouse

Scientific name: *Pseudomys novaehollandiae*

**Precious Pookila is no ordinary mouse:** The Pookila might be similar in size to the introduced house mouse we all know, but it's also so different. It has larger eyes, rounded ears, a bi-coloured pink and dusky brown tail, and no mousey odour at all. It's just gorgeous.

**Where found:** You might find Pookilas in the open heathland and banksia forest in Providence Ponds Flora Reserve between Bairnsdale and Stratford. They are also found at Wilsons Promontory.

**The Pookila is a rodent** (like a Guinea Pig or a house mouse) which means it has to chew on hard things like wood and tree roots, to wear down its teeth, as all rodents have teeth that keep on growing.



Photo by PotMart186 Wikimedia Commons

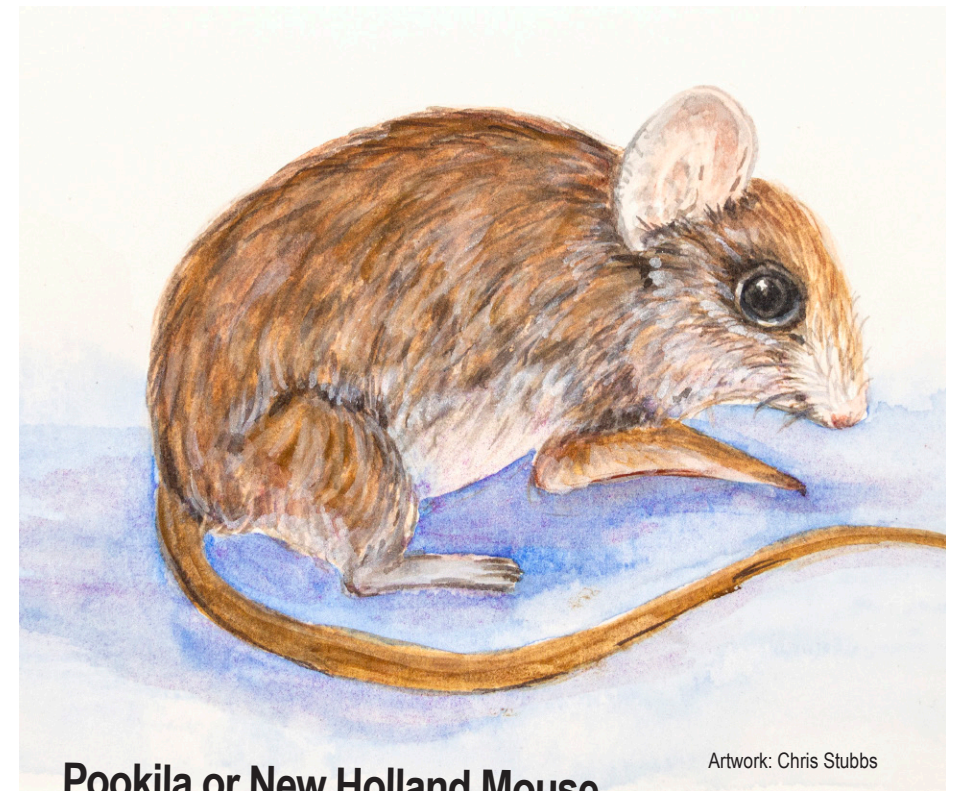
### What do Pookilas eat?

They mostly eat native plant seeds, flowers, fruits, leaves and fungi. The Pookila plays an important role in spreading seeds and fungi – that helps the heathland and forests it lives in, to reproduce and regrow.

### Threatened by:

The Pookila is under threat from drought, the coastal heathland and forests it lives in being cut down or burnt, as well as introduced predators such as roaming cats and foxes, who eat them. Bushfires and competition from introduced rats and mice, for food and their homes, also put this precious native mouse at risk.

Sadly, the Pookila or New Holland Mouse is now classified as extinct in seven out of twelve of its known Victorian locations



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

## Pookila or New Holland Mouse

NAME.....is a champion for Precious Pookila

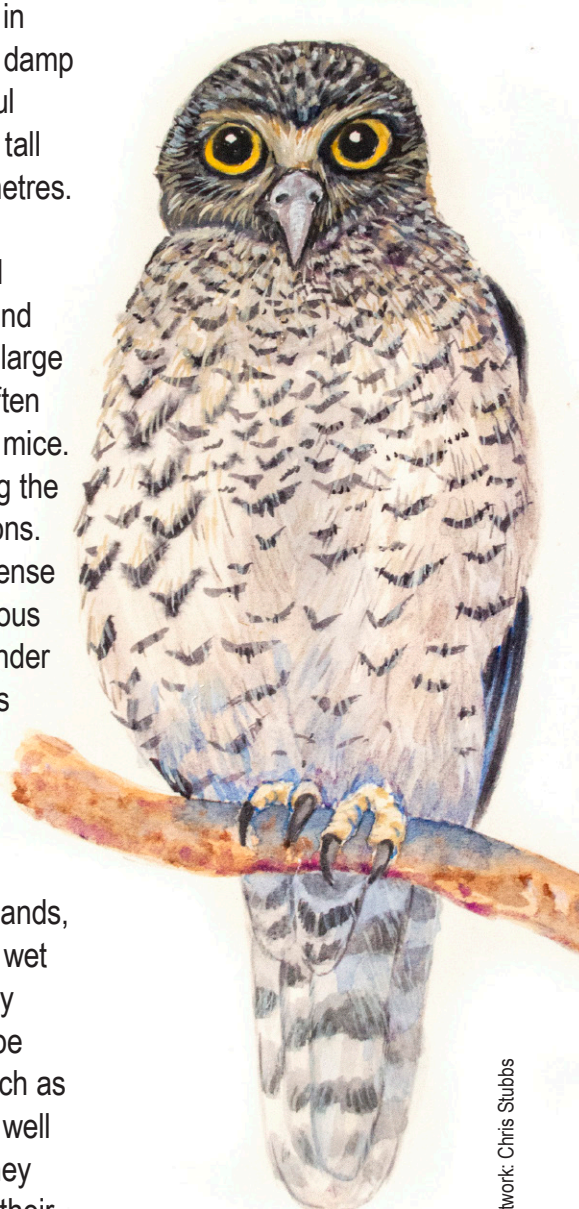
# Powerful Owl

Scientific name: *Ninox strenua*

Powerful Owls are the biggest owls in Australia and they live mostly in the damp forests of eastern Australia. Powerful owls can grow up to 70 centimetres tall with a wingspan of up to 140 centimetres.

**What Powerful Owls eat:** Powerful Owls are carnivores (meat eaters) and their main food is possums, though large bats such as flying foxes are also often caught as well as rabbits, rats and mice. Powerful Owls catch their prey using the sharp claws on their feet (called talons). They roost by day, perched in the dense shade of a tree, often with the previous night's dinner held in their talons; Under the shade of a tree, in the daytime is where people most often see Powerful Owls.

**Where found:** Powerful Owls are found in old open forests and woodlands, as well as along sheltered gullies in wet forests with dense shrubs, especially along creeks. They will sometimes be found in open areas near forests such as farmland, parks and town areas, as well as in remnant bushland patches. They need very old hollow trees to make their nests in.



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

**Powerful Owls live for over 30 years and mate for life.**

The male prepares the nest, which is usually a vertical hollow in a large old tree, and provides the female and the chicks with a constant supply of food during the early part of the nesting period. The female sits on the eggs and broods the young, emerging later in the nesting period to hunt for food as well. Young birds remain with the parents for several months after fledging and may stay in their parents' territory for over a year.

**Threatened by:** Powerful Owls need big areas of forest. Fires that burn their old hollow trees they need for nests and cutting down their forest homes is a threat to them. Rat and mice poisons also kill powerful owls, if they eat a sick or dead rat or a mouse that has eaten poison.



Photo: Greg Sharkey

NAME.....is a champion for Powerful Owls

# East Gippsland Spiny Crayfish

Scientific name: *Euastacus bidawalus*

At night, the East Gippsland Spiny Crayfish comes out of its burrow home to explore the creeks and forest floor. It looks for food and starts building new burrows. Every night, it leaves its burrow, works on a new one, and then goes back home before the sun comes up. They only move out when their new burrow is ready. Their burrows can be long, deep, and twisty, with lots of chambers that go into the ground. They like living near the edges of forested streams, temporary streams, and swampy areas.



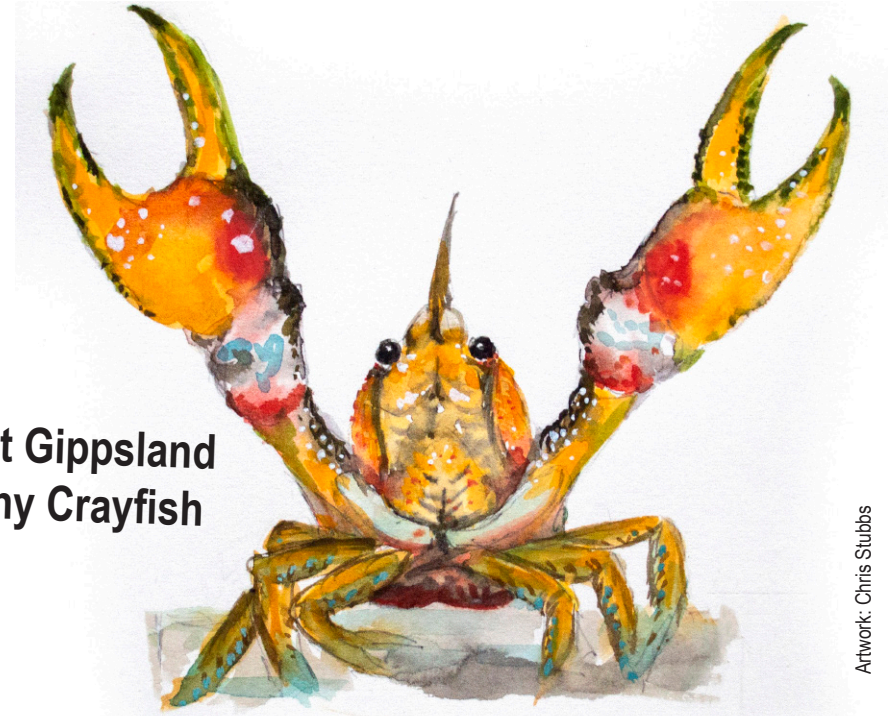
Photo: Matt Clancy

## The Biggest Danger to Spiny Crayfish

Spiny crayfish are in trouble because they are losing their homes, both in the ground and in the water. Their homes are being damaged in different ways, like: Less water in streams and underground. Plants and forest being removed from around streams. Bushfires. Soil being dug up or washed away. Mud covering their homes after heavy rain. Harmful chemicals in the water. When soil and plants near water are disturbed, crayfish can lose their food and shelter. This can cause big changes, like: More dirt and mud in the water, making it harder for crayfish to live. Warmer water because there's no shade. Fewer leaves and sticks in the water, which crayfish need for food and hiding spots.

Freshwater crayfish are super important for rivers, lakes, and streams!

They help keep everything balanced and healthy. They control the numbers of tiny water insects and invertebrates and eat things like dead plants, roots, and other plant material. They help keep their freshwater homes clean and healthy. If we take care of crayfish, we also help many other animals that need them and freshwater creeks to survive!



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

## East Gippsland Spiny Crayfish

### How can you help?

Big pieces of wood in the water help crayfish stay safe, and small bits of debris are food for them. Protect native plants around streams. Without these things, streams become bad places for crayfish to live. When these things disappear, streams become less suitable for spiny crayfish to live in.

NAME.....is a champion for EAST GIPPSLAND SPINY CRAYFISH

## Australian Grayling

Scientific name: *Prototroctes maraena*

The Australian Grayling is a small fish that loves cool, clear rivers and streams with pools and gravel bottoms and flowing water. These fish travel a lot!

Grayling swim downstream to estuaries, where the river meets the sea to lay their eggs, then swim back upstream to fresh water. Their babies start life drifting out to sea, moving between freshwater and the sea as they grow. Eventually, they move back up the river and this is where they stay until it's spawning time again.



Photo: Tarmo Raadik

**Australian Grayling are omnivorous.** This means they eat plants and animals. They snack on tiny water insects, bits of water plants, and algae (the green stuff that grows in water).

### Keep Trees and Plants Healthy for Fish!

Grayling need flowing waterways to survive, so things like dams and barriers can make life really hard for them. The baby fish (larvae) need flowing water to carry them to the sea, where they start growing. They also wait for floods to tell them when it's time to move!



**Australian Grayling**

Artwork: Chris Stubbs

**How you can help:** Taking care of plants and trees near rivers helps fish stay safe and happy. Keeping big trees and shrubs along the water makes great homes for fish. Trees and branches hanging over the river help stop the riverbanks from washing away, give fish places to hide, and keep the water cool and shady. Fish love that!

NAME.....is a champion for AUSTRALIAN GRAYLING

# Grey-Headed Flying-Fox

Scientific name: *Pteropus poliocephalus*

Grey headed Flying foxes are called megabats and are one of the largest bats in the world. They navigate by their excellent sight and smell - not by sonar as microbats do.

**What Grey-headed flying-foxes eat:** Their favourite food is the nectar and pollen of flowering eucalypts, banksias and paperbark trees. They also eat rainforest fruit like lilly-pillies. They will also eat fruit from backyard trees when they are hungry, but it isn't as good for them, or provide them with as much energy as nectar and pollen.

Grey-headed flying foxes can fly up to 100kms a night and are a bit like giant long range bees, with over 100 native trees and shrubs depending on Grey-headed flying foxes for pollination and effective reproduction.



Photo: Lisa Roberts

## Threatened by:

Grey-headed flying foxes are threatened by losing the east coast forests that they need to supply them with nectar and rainforest fruits all year round.

**Extended periods of extreme heat during the day** (over 38 degrees) can kill them. They also need rainforest type jungles, often near water or a big river, to roost in in the day to protect them from very hot weather.



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

## Grey-Headed Flying Fox

**Where Found:** You can see Grey-headed Flying-Foxes in colonies on the Mitchell River in Bairnsdale and at Lake Gutheridge in Sale and also Maffra. They come to Gippsland where there are lots of trees blossoming in the forests - like eucalypts, banksias and melaleucas and they move somewhere else when the blossom is gone.

NAME.....is a champion for GREY HEADED FLYING FOXES

# Glossy Black Cockatoo

Scientific name: *Calyptorhynchus lathami*

It is estimated there are maybe less than 100 Glossy Black Cockatoos left in East Gippsland and since the bushfires, Glossy Black Cockatoos are only found in coastal forest between Lakes Entrance and Orbost. Nearly half of the Glossy Black Cockatoo's trees they use as homes and the trees they need for food were burnt in 2019/20 bushfires.

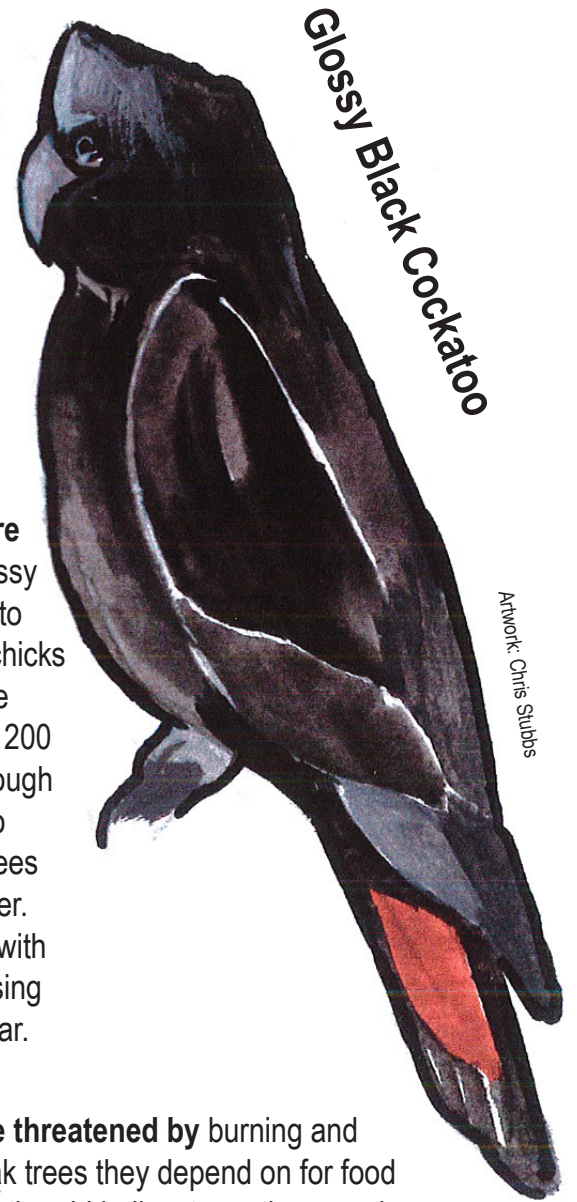


Photo: Warren Chad

**What Glossy Black cockatoos eat:** In East Gippsland, Glossy Black-Cockatoos only eat the seeds that are in the cones of Black she-oak trees. Some people are planting more Black-she-oak trees for them, but it can take up to ten years for the black she-oak trees to start producing the seed Glossy Black Cockatoos need to eat.

**Hollows in old tree are where they make their homes.** Glossy Black Cockatoos make nests to lay their eggs and raise their chicks in big tree hollows in old, large eucalypts, that can take up to 200 years to form a hollow big enough for Glossy Black Cockatoos to make a nest in. These nest trees need to be near food and water. Glossy Black-cockatoos stay with their mates for life, often re-using the same hollow year after year.

**Glossy-Black cockatoos are threatened by** burning and cutting down the black she-oak trees they depend on for food and cutting down and burning the old hollow trees they need for nests.



Glossy Black Cockatoo

Artwork: Chris Stubbs

## Spotted-Tailed Quoll

Scientific name: *Dasyurus maculatus*

Spotted-tailed quolls are about the size of a cat and look cute with their pink noses and soft brown fur with white spots, but they have sharp teeth and claws, are good climbers and are mostly meat eaters (carnivores). Spotted-tailed quolls are mainly nocturnal (awake in the night-time) although they also hunt during the day.



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

**Where Spotted-tailed quolls live:** They need really big areas of forest to roam in. They are very good climbers and they make their homes (dens) in rocky outcrops, small caves, old hollow logs on the ground and hollows in old standing trees. They use their dens for shelter and to raise their babies that are called joeys.

**Spotted-tailed quolls are marsupials** (they have a pouch for their babies). Quoll joeys are first carried in their mother's pouch until they get too big and then they will ride on her back.



Photo: David Paul

**Spotted-tailed quolls are threatened by** clearing forests and bush (they need really big areas of forest to roam in), cars on roads where quolls have to cross, bushfires and foxes and feral cats who prey on them and their joeys and compete with them for food.

Since 2004 there have been only 26 confirmed sightings of Spotted-tailed quolls in Victoria.

NAME.....is a champion for SPOTTED-TAILED QUOLLS

# Platypus

Scientific name: *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*

Platypuses are unusual creatures with thick fur, webbed feet and a bill like a duck. They are monotremes - that is a mammal who feeds her baby milk, but also lays eggs. The only other monotremes are echidnas.

Platypuses only live in eastern Australia, and Tasmania, and they need healthy freshwater rivers, creeks and billabongs to survive. Their habitats are under threat from pollution, land clearing and climate change.



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

Platypuses have a cool superpower called *electroreception*. It helps them feel tiny electric signals under the water made by other animals.

Using *electroreception* means Platypus can find food without using their eyes - even in dark or muddy water!

**What Do Platypus eat?** They eat things like bugs, worms and yabbies, bringing them up to the surface to munch on.

When not foraging, the Platypus spends most of the time in its burrow in the bank of the river, creek or a pond.



Photo: Charles J. Sharp

**Why are Platypus endangered?** Long droughts, bushfires, climate change, expanding cities and towns, water pollution and cutting down trees have damaged platypus homes and reduced their numbers.

Platypus can also suffer attacks by foxes, dogs, and cats, especially when their habitat gets destroyed.

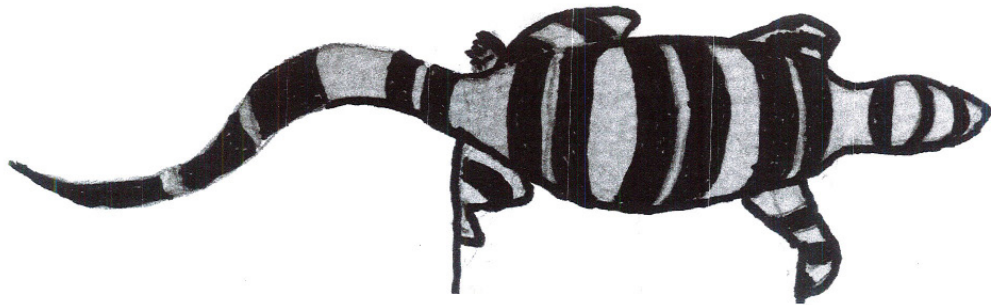
It's really important to help protect platypuses and their habitat, the fresh water rivers, creeks and billabongs they call home.

NAME.....is a champion for PLATYPUS

# Goanna or Lace Monitor

Scientific name: *Varanus varius*

Goannas, also known as Lace Monitors are one of Australia's largest lizards and can grow to over 2mtrs long. They have strong claws and powerful legs. They are dark grey to black in colour with cream or yellow scales forming bands and blotches or spots. There are usually black bars across the snout, throat and chin. The tongue is long and forked like a snake. Goannas are the only lizards that have a forked tongue.



**What goannas eat:** Goannas are predators and scavengers eating insects, small mammals, lizards, nestling birds, eggs and dead animals.

After a large feed they can go for many weeks without eating. The female Goanna lays from 6-12 eggs - usually in ant nests, particularly those found in trees. The female digs a hole on the side of the termite mound, lays the eggs and then leaves the termites to reseal the eggs inside the nest. She sometimes returns to the nest and opens it up with her strong claws to allow the baby goannas to escape.



Photo: Lisa Roberts

**Where found:** Most of the time, Goannas are up fairly large trees. They forage for food on the ground, but will quickly climb up a tree for safety when they are disturbed. They are found in forests, tall woodlands and open tablelands and slopes.

**Goannas are threatened by:** clearing and burning forests and destroying termite mounds, that they lay their eggs in and other habitat features such as fallen trees and old hollow logs. Foxes and cats also eat young goannas and Goannas can die from eating a rat or a mouse that has eaten poison.

NAME.....is a champion for GOANNAS

## Diamond Firetail Finch

Scientific name: *Stagonopleura guttata*

The Diamond Firetail Finch is a small bird and one of the most beautiful coloured birds of the finch family. Their size is about 12cm (about half the size of this photo) and their weight is just 17 grams (that is the same weight as 17 paperclips).



Photo: JJ Harrison

Diamond Firetail Finches are known for their courtship dance, during which the male Diamond Firetail holds a long piece of green grass in his bill, then flies to a branch where he sits near the female and begins to bob up and down.

Diamond Firetail Finches build a nest with green grass and they line their nest with fine grasses and feathers. To keep their eggs and chicks safe, Diamond Firetails sometimes build their nests into the base of the large stick-nest of a bird of prey such as a Wedge-tailed Eagle.

**Where they live:** Diamond Firetail Finches live in open grassy woodland, heath and farmland or grassland with scattered trees.



**What they eat:** Diamond Firetails feed on the ground and mostly eat ripe native grass seeds and occasionally they eat insects.

**Diamond Firetail Finches are threatened by:** Clearing trees and bushes, by fire and by roaming cats. They don't fly very far, so if the gaps in their trees and bushes area get too big, they can't just fly somewhere else.

NAME.....is a champion for DIAMOND FIRETAIL FINCHES

# Broad-Toothed Rat

Scientific name: *Mastacomys fuscus*

## Broad-toothed Rat – A Special Native Rodent

The Broad-toothed Rat is a small, chubby-cheeked animal, with a short, wide face and ears. They eat native grasses and like living in places where it rains a lot and there are lots of plants on the ground to hide in.

The Broad-Toothed Rat is not actually a real rat. It's nickname is the 'Pygmy Wombat'. It has a shy, sweet nature that is much more like a guinea-pig. They are mostly out at night, and live in cold, wet, mossy swamps, forests and heathlands.

It has big teeth, which is why it's called "broad-toothed". Its body is about as long as a pencil (14–19 cm) and its tail is shorter (9–13 cm) than its body. It has a round body and sits in a hunched position. Its fur is brown and thick, with paler fur underneath. Its ears are small and rounded. Its poo (scats) is bright green!



Photo: Museums Victoria

**Where do they live?:** Broad-toothed Rats can live from the coast all the way up into snowy mountains. You might find a Broad toothed rat in the high country up near Dargo.

The Broad-toothed Rat lives in a home of runways and tunnels that it makes through the dense vegetation of its wet grass, or heath environments, and under the snow in winter. This keeps them warm under the snow and they stay active throughout winter. While true rats breed year-round and can produce hundreds of babies, the Broad-Toothed Rat only breeds once or twice a year and has only to 2 or 3 babies a year.

## What Do Broad Toothed Rats Eat?

Broad toothed rats eat the stems, leaves and seeds of grasses and herbs as well as Fungi, bark and moss. During winter, they gather food in the afternoon and early evening – and this is when you might see one if you were very quiet and still.

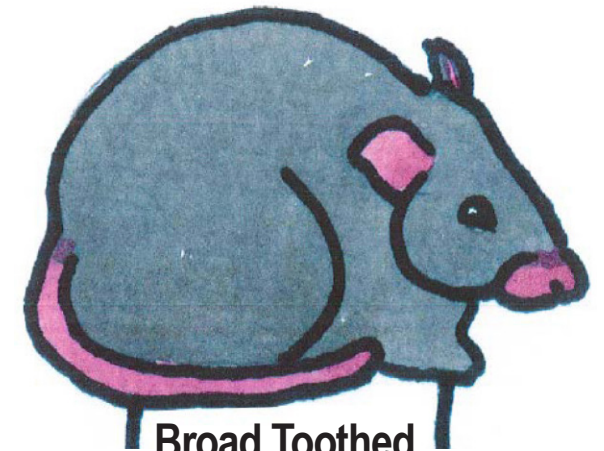
## Why native rodents matter

This little Aussie rat might be shy and quiet, but it plays an important part in the environment because they spread seeds. They are sometimes called 'ecosystem engineers', because they make burrows and runways for other small animals that cannot make their own.

## What's Putting Them at

**Risk?** Their homelands are overrun with feral predators, like cats and foxes that eat them.

Feral horses, pigs and deer trample their swamps, which destroys and opens up the understorey, exposing the Broad-Toothed Rat to predators and taking away their homes.



**Broad Toothed Rat**

**How We Can Help:** Protect the places they live. Control feral animals like foxes and don't let cats roam at night. Make sure areas of thick grass and bush are kept safe. Don't let their homes get broken up or destroyed