

Threatened Species Day 7th September 2025

National Threatened Species Day is commemorated across Australia on September 7th to raise awareness of plants and animals at risk of extinction. National Threatened Species Day is commemorated annually on the anniversary of the death in captivity of the last known thylacine, or Tasmanian Tiger.

Australia has one of the highest mammal extinction rates in the world. Over the last 200 years, more than 100 animal and plant species have become extinct in this country. Australia is home to many animal and plant species, most of which are found nowhere else in the world.



Above: The last Thylacine in a Tasmanian Zoo about 1936. Photo: National Museum Australia

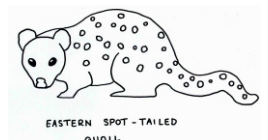
In East Gippsland Shire alone there are:
70 species of threatened birds
29 species of threatened mammals
16 species of threatened fish
12 species of threatened reptiles
8 species of threatened amphibians
17 species of threatened invertebrates



More info about threatened species in East Gippsland Shire here
https://www.swift.net.au/cb_pages/threatened_fauna_east_gippsland_shire.php

Visit **East Gippsland Art Gallery's** website to learn more about threatened species in our area, the Schools Collaborative Artwork Project and upcoming activities at the Gallery commemorating Threatened Species Day 2025

www.eastgippslandartgallery.org.au/threatened-species-2025



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.

Sound: Greater Gliders do not make any sounds, except a whoosh as they glide and 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.

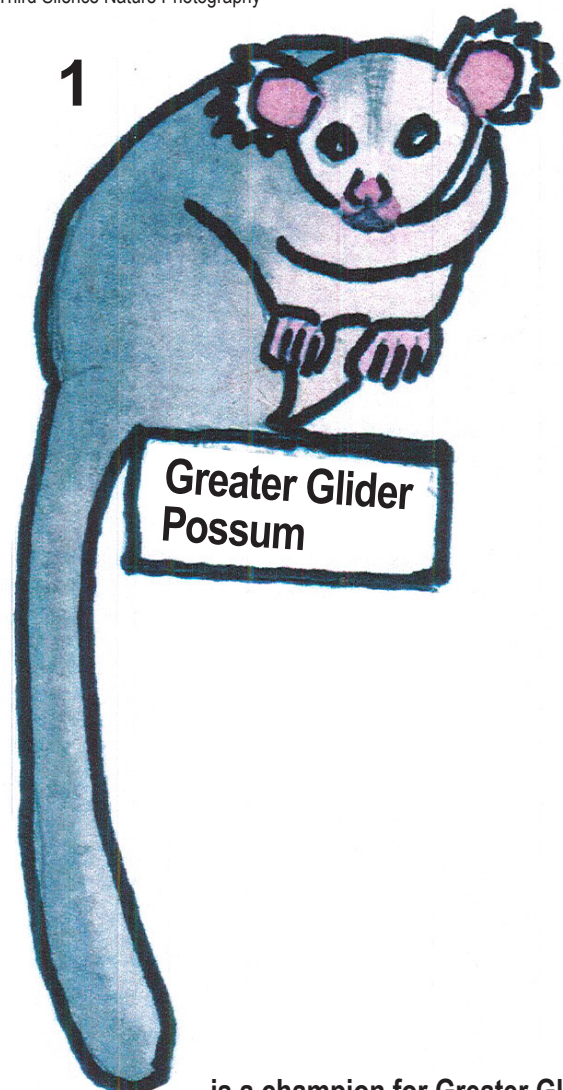
Greater Gliders are marsupials (they have a pouch) and for the first three to four months of their lives, the baby Greater Glider stays in their mother's pouch. Then, they ride on mum's back for up to three more months.

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 Colquhuon Forest near Lakes Entrance and Mt Alfred Forest north of Bairnsdale and other forests and National Parks in East Gippsland.



Photo: Third Silence Nature Photography



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 commonswiki

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.

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.

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.



2 Growling Grass Frog

NAME.....

is a champion for Growling Grass Frogs

Giant Burrowing Frog

Scientific name: *Heleioporus australiacus*

The Giant Burrowing Frog is a large, round, slow-moving frog that grows to about 10 cm long. It is a strong, powerfully built frog, with muscly back legs and enlarged lumps on their feet called so they can burrow really well.

Giant Burrowing Frogs eat mainly insects including ants, beetles, cockroaches, spiders, centipedes and scorpions. This frog is slow growing and lives for up to 10 years, maybe even longer.

Giant Burrowing Frogs lay about 500-800 eggs at a time and the eggs are laid in burrows or under vegetation and dead leaves in small pools near creeks.

After it rains, the eggs hatch and the tadpoles are washed into larger pools where they finish growing in the pond areas of the creek.

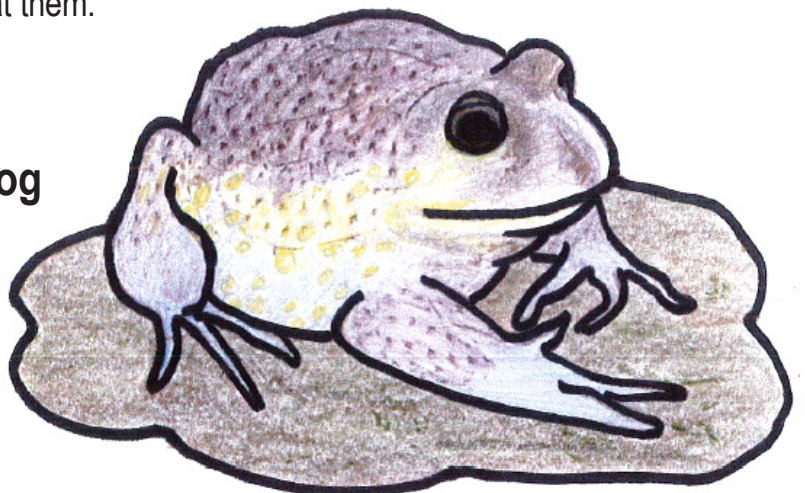


Photo: Brendan Casey

When not in breeding season, the Giant Burrowing Frog spends most of its time up to 300 metres away from the creek. During this time, it burrows below the ground or under the leaf litter. Individual frogs occupy a series of burrow sites, some of which are used over and over again.

Giant Burrowing Frogs are threatened by water pollution in creeks, by draining and damming creeks, by cutting down the forest and native plants around creeks they need to live in, and by cats and foxes who dig them up and eat them.

3 Giant Burrowing Frog



NAME..... is a champion for Giant Burrowing Frogs

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.

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'.



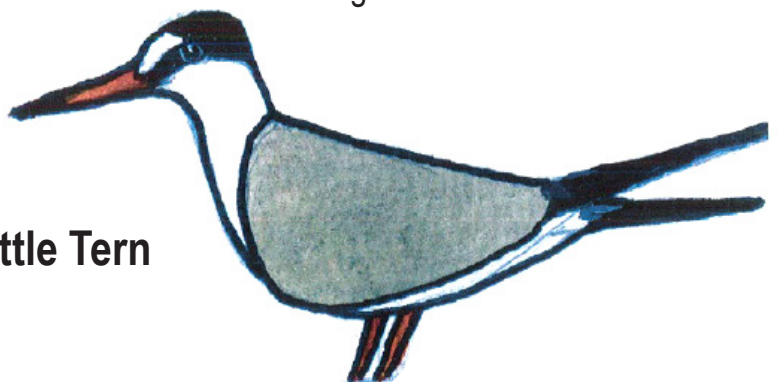
Little Tern: PotMart186 Wikimedia Commons

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.

4 Little Tern



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

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 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.



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

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.



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

5 Hooded Plover

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

Pookila

Scientific name:

Pseudomys novaehollandiae

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

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.

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.



Photo: Doug Beckers wikipedia/flickr



6 Pookila

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.

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: Grea Sharkev



7 Powerful Owl

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

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!

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.

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.

8 East Gippsland Spiny Crayfish



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

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!

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!



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

9 Australian Grayling

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

Where Found: You can see Grey-headed Flying-Fox colonies on the Mitchell River in Bairnsdale and at Sale and 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.



Threatened by: Losing forests that they need to supply them with nectar and rainforest fruits all year round. Extreme heat during the day will 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. They are also threatened by people wanting to cut down there trees they roost in during the day, as sometimes people think they are too noisy and smelly.



Artwork: Chris Stubbs

10 Grey-Headed Flying Fox

NAME..... is a champion for Grey-headed Flying-foxes

Glossy Black Cockatoo

Scientific name: *Calyptorhynchus lathami*

Where found: It is estimated there are 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



11
Glossy Black Cockatoo

What Glossy Black cockatoos eat: In East Gippsland, Glossy Black-Cockatoos only eat the seeds 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.

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.

NAME..... is a champion for Glossy Black Cockatoos

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 hunters and are mostly meat eaters (carnivores). Spotted-tailed quolls are mainly nocturnal (awake in the night-time) although they also hunt during the day.

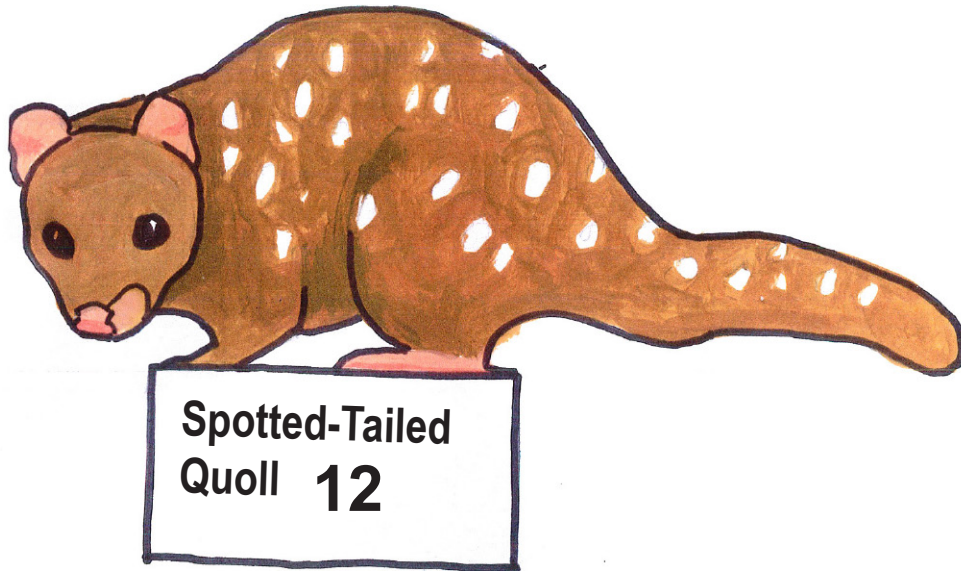


Photo: David Paul

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, hollow logs 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.

Spotted-tailed quolls are threatened by clearing forests and bush (they need 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