

Red Kangaroo

Macropus rufus

Range: Most of Australia

Habitat: Grasslands, plains, deserts, forested areas

Diet: Herbivores; feed on grass and other available plants. Red Kangaroos can go long periods of time without drinking water. They can gather moisture from their food sources.

Lifespan: Red Kangaroos can live up to their early 20's in the wild and potentially longer in captivity.



Description: The largest marsupials, Red Kangaroos stand between 4'-5' tall and can weigh 200 lbs. The adult males have a reddish hue to their coat, while the females can have a blue-gray tint to their fur. Red Kangaroos rely on their long, powerful hind feet for locomotion. They are able to leap over 25 feet horizontally and over 6 feet vertically! At top speed, Red Kangaroos can travel 35 mph for short periods of time. The shorter front legs are used primarily for grasping and collected food.

Breeding: Male kangaroos will physically compete over females. When fighting, they can lean back on their tails and use their powerful hind feet to "box". Young kangaroos are born only partially developed and immediately crawl into the mother's pouch. The baby will remain in the pouch for several months until it has developed enough to leave. Once outside, the baby joey may return to the pouch for safety and feedings until it is almost a year old. Females usually have one offspring at a time, but occasionally, they will have twins.

Behavior/Adaptations: Red Kangaroos are a marsupial, which means the females have a pouch where the offspring can develop and nurse until they are large enough to move about on their own. Kangaroos are highly social animals, living and traveling in groups called mobs. Each group is generally led by an older male as it travels around in search of food. The kangaroos usually rest, or move slowly during the heat of the day and become more active at night. If threatened, kangaroos will use their considerable speed to get away, but they will use their feet, claws, and teeth to defend themselves.

Predators: Dingos and humans. At one time, the Tasmanian Devil was also a predator of the kangaroo, but their numbers have dwindled and they are no longer considered a major predator.

Conservation: Millions of kangaroos roam across Australia. They have greatly benefited from the open areas of land that have been cleared for agriculture and livestock. However, Red Kangaroos are often shot on sight by farmers because they graze on the same vegetation as livestock. Kangaroos are also becoming increasingly popular as a food source for humans. Their meat and skins are sold commercially. They are not threatened as a species at this time.

Interesting Facts:

- A male kangaroo is referred to as a boomer, and a female is called a flier.
- Joeys are about the size of a jellybean when they are born.

Information taken from the following sources:

http://www.thebigzoo.com/Animals/Red_Kangaroo.asp

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/printable/red-kangaroo.html>

<http://www.lpzoo.org/animals/factsheet.php?contentID=210>



Bennett's Wallaby

Macropus rufogriseus fruticus

Range: Eastern and Southeastern Australia (especially common in Queensland), Tasmania, and islands in the Bass Strait. Introduced to Southern New Zealand

Habitat: Eucalyptus forests and tall, coastal shrubland habitat

Diet: Wallabies are herbivores and feed on grasses and other vegetation.

Lifespan: Bennett's Wallabies can live up to 15 years both in the wild and in captivity.

Description: Wallabies are similar in body shape to kangaroos, but smaller. Bennett's Wallabies are also known as Red-Necked Wallabies and are named

for the reddish fur on their napes and shoulders. The rest of the body is tawny gray with a white chest and belly. The tail is gray above and white below. Hands and feet are gray, becoming black at the ends of the digits. The muzzle is dark brown, and the ears of the red-necked wallabies are longer in proportion to other macropods.

Breeding: Females are able to breed at approximately 14 months old, while males breed at 19 months. After a gestation period of 30 days, one offspring is born and the joey climbs up to the mother's pouch. Pouch life is about 280 days, although young may be suckled until 12-17 months old. On mainland Australia, females can give birth in all months, with the greatest number of offspring born in the summer. In Tasmania, births only occur between late January and July, with the majority of young born in February and March.

Behavior/Adaptations: As in other macropods, red-necked wallabies use their tails as a prop. They are mainly crepuscular, spending daylight hours resting in cover, although they are often seen foraging until late in the morning and beginning evening foraging late in the afternoon. They cool themselves by licking their hands and forearms during nervous excitement or hot weather. They are essentially solitary, but may forage in groups of up to 30 individuals.

Predators: Dingos, Tasmanian devils, eagles, quolls, and humans, who hunt them for meat and fur.

Conservation: Considered a species of least concern. Forest clearing has reduced their numbers in some places, but population numbers have recovered in recent years. The species is protected by law in all States in which it occurs, but it may be killed under license as a pest of crops or pastures or during open season in Tasmania.

Interesting Facts:

- Bennett's wallabies were introduced to Great Britain in 1940 and still roam in Northern England and Scotland.
- Marsupials are named for their pouch, which is called a marsupium.
- A group of wallabies is called a mob.
- A Bennett's wallaby can cover 5 feet in one jump.

Information taken from the following sources:

http://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Macropus_rufogriseus/

<http://www.saczoo.org/document.doc?id=371>

<http://www.detroitzoo.org/Animals/red-necked-wallaby>



Brush-tailed Bettong

Bettongia penicillata

Range: Historically widespread in Western and Southern Australia – South of the tropics. Currently there are only a few small populations in Southwestern Australia near Perth.

Habitat: Desert grasslands, dry forests, and eucalyptus scrublands

Diet: They primarily eat fungus. They will also eat seeds, tubers, insects and plant resin. They rarely eat green plant matter.

Lifespan: 4-6 years in the wild.

Description: They are a small bipedal marsupial standing no more than 18 inches long. They have dense brown to buff gray fur with a black crest extending down their bodies. Their front feet are for digging up underground fungus.

Breeding: Bettongs are solitary in the wild except during breeding, which can happen year-round. Female Bettongs typically give birth to one offspring after an 18 day gestation and the young spends about 3.5 months in the pouch and lives in its mother's nest until it is displaced by the next infant. Bettongs become sexually mature between 5 and 6 months of age and females will continue to have an infant every 100 days for the majority of her life.

Behavior/Adaptations: The bettong is a nocturnal animal, spending its days in large domed nests and its nights digging 38 – 115 holes/night for food. They will store food in their cheek pouches to eat later. Plants and fungus rely on Bettongs to distribute seeds and fungus spores in their habitats. Brush-tailed Bettongs rarely drink water, instead they rely on their food sources for water. The tail of the bettong is partially prehensile and can be used to carry nesting material to build its large domed nests.

Invasive predators: Red fox and feral cats

Conservation: A once abundant mammal The IUCN red list has had them listed as **critically endangered** since 2008 due to predation by the introduced red fox and feral house cats.

Interesting Facts:

- They move approximately 6 tons of soil/year which increases the amount of water that reaches the soil.
- They are referred to as Woylies in Australia
- The Australian government is working on recovering the population. There have been many attempts at invasive species control and Woylie re-introduction in protected areas.

Information taken from the following sources:

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/brush-tailed-bettong>

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/2785/0>

http://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Bettongia_penicillata/

<http://www.australianwildlife.org/wildlife/woylie.aspx>

<http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/national-recovery-plan-woylie-bettongia-penicillata-ogilbyi>



Sugar Glider

Petaurus breviceps

Range: Sugar Gliders are widespread across much of Australia, as well as in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and on surrounding islands. The species was also introduced to Tasmania in 1835, where it has spread across the island.

Habitat: They can be found in a variety of forest types including rainforest, eucalypt forest, and woodland, and may also be found in plantations, rural gardens, and along roadsides.

Diet: Sugar Gliders are omnivorous. Sugar gliders are especially fond of the sweet sap which can be found in the eucalyptus tree. Their diet also includes pollen, nectar, insects and their larvae, arachnids, and small vertebrates. During the spring and summer months sugar gliders predominately feed up on insects, mainly moths and beetles, and during the fall and winter months they feed on plant products such eucalyptus sap and pollen.

Lifespan: Sugar Gliders can live to be 14 years old.

Description: Sugar Gliders are small, softly-furred marsupial with a bushy, prehensile tail. Like other gliders, they possess a thin, furred membrane, known as a patagium, which stretches from the wrist to the ankle and which can be seen as a wavy line along the body when not in use. The patagium is the membrane that aids them in gliding. The feet are hand-like, able to grasp branches, aided by an opposable toe on the hind foot, and the second and third toes of the hind foot are fused, which is a split claw that is used in grooming. The body of the sugar glider is light grey, paler on the underparts, with a distinct black stripe running from the nose to the rump, and a black line on each side of the face. The tail sometimes has a white tip. The mature male sugar glider can be distinguished by an almost bare patch in the middle of the forehead, over the frontal scent gland.

Breeding: Breeding may occur throughout the year in the north, but peaks between June and November in the south, usually occurring when insects, an important source of protein, are abundant. Female sugar gliders give birth to one or two young after a gestation period of around 16 days, and, like most other marsupials, the young develop within a pouch, where they attach to a nipple for about 40 days. The young first emerge from the pouch after around 60 to 70 days, and leave the nest around 111 days often riding on the female's back as she forages. The young become independent at 7 to 10 months, and the female sugar glider may then go on to produce a second litter.

Behavior/Adaptations: Sugar gliders use the membrane (called the patagium) along its body to glide up to 164 feet or more between trees. It is quite agile in the air, using the tail to help control the direction of the glide, and swooping upwards at the last moment to land with precision, using large claws to help it cling on. They are nocturnal and are awake at night.

Predators: Owls, kookaburras, quolls, cats, goannas, and snakes.

Conservation: They are considered a species of least concern.

Interesting Facts:

- Sugar gliders spend most of the time in trees and rarely touch the ground.
- Sugar gliders can live in groups of up to 15-30 gliders.
- They nest in holes in old growth trees and mark their nests with urine.

Information taken from the following sources:

<http://www.arkive.org/sugar-glider/petaurus-breviceps/>

http://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Petaurus_breviceps/

<http://www.drsfostersmith.com/pic/article.cfm?articleid=799>



Laughing Kookaburra

Dacelo novaeguineae

Range: Native to eastern Australia and has spread to western and southwest Australia. These birds have also been introduced to Tasmania, Flinders Island, and Kangaroo Island.

Habitat: Woodland areas including forests.

Diet: Mice and other small mammals, large insects, lizards, small birds and nestlings, and snakes (occasionally venomous snakes longer than their bodies).

Lifespan: They can live up to 15 years.

Description: These are the largest birds in the kingfisher family. They are 18 inches in length with a stocky body and large head. They have brown eyes and a very large bill. Males and females are similar in coloration, but the females tend to be larger and has less blue on their rump. They have a cream-colored body with brown on their backs and wings and a brown stripe through their eyes.

Breeding: Laughing Kookaburras mate for life and use the same nest hole in a tree or arboreal termite nest each year. Females lay 2-3 eggs and will incubate them for 20-22 days before they hatch. Once the young have fledged the nest, they may stay in their parents' territory to act as helpers. The helpers will assist in incubating eggs during the breeding season. At about 4 years old, the helpers will move on and establish their own territories.

Behavior/Adaptations: Laughing Kookaburras get their name from the very loud and distinctive call they use to establish and announce their territory. When they are hunting, they sit motionless on a perch and wait for prey to pass by. It keeps its head perfectly still while its body sways with the branch. When prey is sighted, the kookaburra swoops down, lands next to it, and grabs it with its beak. It carries the food back to a perch and beats it several times against the branch to kill and soften the prey. The food is swallowed head first and whole.

Predators: Raptors, pythons, monitor lizards, quolls (a carnivorous marsupial), foxes, and domestic cats.

Conservation: They are considered a species of Least Concern.

Interesting Facts:

- The Laughing Kookaburra used to be known as a Laughing Jackass or a Giant Kookaburra.
- The Laughing Kookaburra's call is commonly used as a sound effect in jungle movies and sounds like a group of monkeys.

Information taken from the following sources:

<http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/laughing-kookaburra>

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/laughing-kookaburra/>

<http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/animalbytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/aves/coraciiformes/laughing-kookaburra.htm>



Gouldian Finch

Erythrura gouldiae

IUCN Status: Near Threatened

Range: Northern Australia

Habitat: Tropical woodlands

Diet: Mainly sorghum grass seeds, but will also eat insects

Lifespan: 3 years in the wild

Description: A very brightly colored bird, their heads come in three color varieties- red, yellow, and black. Males have a bright purple breast and females have a dull yellow breast. All birds have a turquoise band across their head and neck and light green sides.

Breeding: The breeding season runs from January to April. The finches will build an open cup nest in tree hollows or termite mounds and the female will lay 4-8 eggs. The incubation period lasts 13 days and the nesting period lasts 21 days. They are social nesters and several finch pairs will share the same nesting hole.

Behavior/Adaptations: In the nonbreeding seasons they will live in flocks of up to several hundred individuals. They are always found near water and will change locations when water become scarce.

Predators: Snakes, Hawks, feral cats

Conservation: They have been downgraded over the past 30 years from Endangered to near threatened because their population decline has stopped. Their population remains small in the wild with approximately 2,500 adults at the start of their breeding season. They remain threatened from livestock grazing on the grass seeds they eat and improper fire management.

Interesting Facts:

- During the wet season they mainly eat sorghum grass seeds.
- Nestlings have pearlescent spots (papillae) in their mouths so their parents can find their mouths to feed them in the dark.
- The courtship period will begin months before mating occurs.

Information taken from the following sources:

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22719744/0>

<http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/gouldian-finch>



Gould's Monitor

Varanus gouldii

Range: Throughout most of Australia.

Habitat: Lives in woodlands as well as sandy deserts.

Diet: Small mammals, lizards, invertebrates, and carrion.

Lifespan: Around 18 years in captivity

Description: These monitors can grow to be 4.6 feet long and weigh up to 13 lbs. They are greenish-gray in color with uniform ringed small yellow spots over its body. The spots are faint towards the neck, but are more prominent on the tail and lower torso.

Breeding: Breeding occurs during the wet season. A male will locate the burrow of a female and digs a burrow of his own several feet away. Over several days, the male and female spend an increasing amount of time together, eventually copulating over several days. During their copulation period, they may share the same burrow. After copulation activity has decreased, the male will go on his own way. The female will dig into an active termite mound, lay 10-17 eggs and rebury them, allowing the termites to reconstruct the mound around her eggs. The termites regulate the temperature and humidity, making it an ideal location for the monitor's eggs.

Behavior/Adaptations: Gould's monitors are diurnal and are constantly foraging for food. They dig a lot to find their prey as well. When they feel threatened, they arch their back, inflate their necks, and hiss loudly. They can also produce powerful side-swipes of their tail. To get warmer, the Gould's monitor basks in the sun and burrows to cool down.

Predators: Humans (used for food), larger mammals, raptors

Conservation: No special status.

Interesting Facts:

- Also known as Sand Monitor, Sand Goanna, Racehorse Goanna, and Bungarra by Aboriginal people.

Information taken from the following sources:

http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Varanus_gouldii/

<http://www.pilbarapythons.com/gouldsmonitor.htm>



Mertens' Water Monitor

Varanus mertensi

Range: Northern and western regions of Australia, as well as the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland.

Habitat: Shorelines along rivers, creeks, billabongs & lagoons.

Diet: Mertens' water monitors are carnivorous and feed on fish, crabs, small mammals, frogs, carrion, and insects.

Lifespan: 20 years in captivity

Description: Mertens' water monitor is brown to dark green, with small cream spots. Their underbelly is white or cream colored, and the throat and chest are gray. Their tails are laterally compressed and aid in swimming. They can grow to be about one meter long.

Breeding: During the dry season, the female will lay 9-14 eggs in a burrow lined with leaves. Termite mounds are often chosen as a nesting site. After about 9-10 months, the eggs hatch during the wet season. The young monitors go directly to a body of water.

Behavior/Adaptations: Mertens' water monitors often bask in the sunshine on logs or rocks near water. If they sense danger, they will quickly slide into the water to take cover. They are able to stay underwater for several minutes. Their nostrils and eyes are placed on top of their head, which allows them to stay hidden under the water's surface when taking a breath, hunting, and swimming.

Predators: The eggs and young monitors are susceptible to salt water crocodiles, cane toads, and raptors. This species of monitor is also a traditional food of Aborigines.

Conservation: Mertens' water monitor is considered vulnerable. Their biggest threat is the cane toad. If a monitor eats a cane toad, the toxins from the toad's skin can kill the monitor. Mertens' water monitors and cane toads also compete for food.

Interesting Facts:

- As their name suggests, Mertens' water monitors are found near water. These monitors are excellent swimmers with their rudder-like tail and nostril valves that close while diving underwater.
- Mertens' water monitors have an acute sense of smell that allows them to locate and dig up their prey.
- Their tail is about 1.5x longer than the rest of their body.

Information taken from the following sources:

<https://perthzoo.wa.gov.au/animal/mertens-water-monitor>

<http://bie.ala.org.au/species/urn:lsid:biodiversity.org.au:afd.taxon:80775c81-177b-46f5-badb-1db904a06a21>

<https://www.cws.org.au/mertens-water-monitor/>



Prehensile-tailed Skink

Corucia zebrata

Range: Solomon Islands

Habitat: Primary and Secondary Tropical Forests.

Diet: They are the only true herbivorous skink, eating many kinds of fruits and plants.

Lifespan: They can live to around 15 years in captivity.

Description: Prehensile-tailed skinks are the largest of skinks measuring in at 32 inches from nose to the tip of the tail. Their bodies are olive to green in color, with scattered black scales on the black and legs, to help in camouflaging it from predators.

Breeding: These skinks are one of the few species of reptile that lives in a communal group called a "circulus". Females give birth viviparously after gestating the baby for 6-8 months. They usually only have single babies, but sometimes twins can be born. When the young are born, they can be about a foot long (that would be like a human giving birth to a 6 year old). Once born, the young will be protected by both parents as well as non-related adults in the group. At about one year old, they will leave to form their own family group, but would be allowed to remain with the group for longer.

Behavior/Adaptations: Prehensile-tailed skinks are mainly crepuscular. They like to hide during the daylight hours in trees. When defending themselves, they make a sharp hissing sound and can bite really hard.

Predators: Raptors, large mammals, humans.

Conservation: They are not listed, but they are threatened by extensive logging and being taken from the wild for the pet trade.

Interesting Facts:

- Use their tail for grasping and climbing.
- One of the few lizards that are not able to cast off their tail in defense and regenerate a new one.

Information taken from the following sources:

<http://www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org/assets/uploads/animals/pdf/Prehensile-tailedSkink.pdf>

[http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/animal-](http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/animal-bytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/reptilia/squamata/solomon-island-skink.htm)

[bytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/reptilia/squamata/solomon-island-skink.htm](http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/animal-bytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/reptilia/squamata/solomon-island-skink.htm)



Green Tree Python

Morelia viridis

Range: Indonesia, Papa New Guinea, Normanby Island, and Australia.

Habitat: Lives in rainforests where there are lots of shrubs and trees.

Diet: Mostly small mammals and occasionally birds.

Lifespan: Over 20 years in captivity

Description: This snake typically grows to 5-6 feet in length. They are a bright green in color broken up by white or yellow stripes down their back. They can also have spots of blue, white, and yellow scattered over their body. They are a slender snake with a diamond-shaped head.

Breeding: Female Green Tree Pythons lay 1-25 eggs per clutch. Females will incubate and protect the eggs (has been witnessed in captivity, but not the wild). The young look quite different as they are covered in bright yellow, orange, or red scales with black-lined white stripes on its body.

Behavior/Adaptations: These pythons are arboreal and will lure their prey by sitting very still on a branch and dangling their tail. Prey that get too close to the wiggling tail, get eaten.

Predators: May be preyed upon by frogs, birds, other snakes, and mammals when young. Adult pythons are threatened by birds of prey, other snakes, and humans.

Conservation: The Green Tree Python is considered a species of Least Concern.

Interesting Facts:

- The ball python has special temperature sensitive pits located on either side of its nose that help it locate prey.
- Snakes have a special tube in the bottom of their mouths that stays open while swallowing prey to prevent choking.
- The Emerald Tree Boa is very similar in appearance and serves the same ecological purpose, but in a different part of the world (South America). Green Tree Pythons lay eggs, while Emerald Tree Boas are ovoviviparous which makes it appear that they give birth to live young.

Information taken from the following sources:

<http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/animal-bytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/reptilia/squamata/green-tree-python.htm>

<http://whozoo.org/Intro98/jennglaz/jennglaz21.htm>



Golden Coin Turtle

Cuora trifasciata

Range: The Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, Hainan provinces as well as Hong Kong and Macau in China.

Habitat: Small waterways in hilly areas not exceeding 400m in altitude.

Diet: Golden Coin Turtles are mainly carnivorous and eat earthworms, crabs, and fish.

Lifespan: 30-40 years.

Description: Golden Coin Turtles are only about 6 inches in length. The Carapace is brown with three distinct black stripes. The plastron is almost entirely black except for a partial border of yellow. The top of their narrow and pointed head is yellow, green, or olive. There is a thick black strip which extends from the nose. It borders a yellow, green, or olive oval spot on each side of the head. The slightly hooked upper jaw is yellow and a yellow strip extends back from the mouth. The lower jaw is also yellow, but the underside of the neck is pink or orange. The plastron is hinged, but the lower half is too small to provide protection for the hind limbs. The male's plastron is only slightly concave, but males generally have a longer, thicker tail.

Breeding: They only lay 2-3 eggs.

Behavior/Adaptations: They can be seen wading and swimming in water, but can also be found walking on land.

Predators: Humans are the biggest threat to this turtle because some believe that they have medicinal properties.

Conservation: Golden Coin Turtles are listed as Critically Endangered and thought to be one of the more endangered turtle species in the world.

Interesting Facts:

- There are efforts to reduce turtles being illegally caught in the wild by raising and selling them on farms. The cost of one turtle is equal to \$1800.

Information taken from the following sources:

<http://www.turtlepuddle.org/cuora/trifasciata.html>

<http://www.tortoiseforum.org/threads/cuora-trifasciata.37300/>

http://www.asianturtlenetwork.org/library/reports_papers/reports/cons_of_golden_coin_turtle.pdf

<http://www.turtleconservancy.org/species/trifasciata/>



Spiny Turtle

Heosemys spinosa

Range: They are found throughout Southeast Asia, from Thailand and possibly southern Myanmar southward through Malaysia to Sumatra, Borneo and Natuna, numerous small Indonesian Islands, and the Philippines.

Habitat: Spiny Turtles are found in shallow, wooded mountain streams, but spends time on

land foraging or burrowing amongst the leaf litter of the forest floor.

Diet: Primarily herbivorous, but will sometimes eat meat in captivity.

Lifespan: 30-40 years

Description: Spiny Turtles, like their name suggests, have a sharp and pointed spikey-edged carapace and spiny keel. There are smaller spines on the scutes of the turtle. They are at their spiniest when young to help ward off predators like snakes when they are at their most vulnerable. The plastron is buff colored with an intricate pattern of dark radiating lines on each scute. They can grow to be between 6.8-8.6 inches in length.

Breeding: They only lay 1-3 eggs per clutch and can lay up to 3 clutches per year. Eggs will incubate 110-145 days before hatching.

Behavior/Adaptations: They use their coloration to camouflage in the leaf litter on the ground.

Predators: Humans are the biggest threat to this turtle because of over collection of wild individuals for food and the pet trade.

Conservation: Spiny Turtles are listed as Endangered.

Interesting Facts:

- This species is very difficult to breed in captivity

Information taken from the following sources:

<http://www.arkive.org/spiny-turtle/heosemys-spinosa/>

<http://www.chelonia.org/Articles/hermnsinosacare.htm>