

# **Native plants and animals of the Chewton Bushlands**

**Karen Baker  
Antoinette Birkenbeil  
Hannah Nicholas**





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The Chewton Bushlands Association acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, also known as the Jaara People, as the Traditional Owners and custodians of this land and recognise the Dja Dja Wurrung's ongoing connection to Country.

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First published in 2017 by the Chewton Bushlands Association Inc.

PO Box 60, Chewton 3451

[www.chewtonbushlandsassociation.org.au](http://www.chewtonbushlandsassociation.org.au)

ISBN: 978-0-646-97600-6

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Researched and written by Karen Baker, Antoinette Birkenbeil and Hannah Nicholas.














Design and layout by Mark Carter.

Printed by Bart 'n' Print on Ecostar 100% Recycled Silk.

**Front cover: Swamp Wallaby** PHOTO: ANTOINETTE BIRKENBEIL

**Inside front cover: Brush-tailed Phascogale** PHOTO: JESSICA LAWTON

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## Acknowledgements

**T**HIS GUIDE is for residents, visitors, family, friends and members of local environmental groups, many of whom have recorded sightings of the species that have been included. We hope that you enjoy exploring the beautiful environs of the Chewton Bushlands and surrounding area.

Although the authors have made every effort to ensure that the information in this book is correct, the authors do not claim that the book is without errors and inconsistencies. Please report any errors or additional flora and fauna sightings to the Chewton Bushlands Association [contact@chewtonbushlandsassociation.org.au](mailto:contact@chewtonbushlandsassociation.org.au).

Many thanks to Steve Charman, Frances Cincotta, Tanya Loos, Bonnie Humphreys and Chris Timewell who have provided invaluable assistance in proof reading the book. Our thanks again go to Steve Charman, Frances Cincotta and the Goldfields Revegetation nursery for their assistance in species identification.

Photographs have been kindly contributed by Karen Baker, John Barkla, Doug Beckers, Antoinette Birkenbeil, Steve Charman, John Ellis, Andrew Haysom, Ian Higgins, Peter Hut, Patrick Kavanagh, Jessica Lawton, LocktheGate, Hannah Nicholas, Geoff Park, Mitchell Parker, Tim Purdie, Peter Robertson, Bronwyn Silver and Bernard Slattery. Photo credit details can be found on page 144.

Tree identification illustrations have been kindly contributed by Leon Costermans.

The Chewton Bushlands Association has produced this free publication with the funding assistance of the Mount Alexander Shire Council.

Assistance was also provided through a donation from the late Cate Freeman for the support of the Chewton Bushlands community.





## Introduction

**T**HIS BOOK is a guide to the local native plants and animals of the Chewton Bushlands and the immediate surrounds. Throughout this guide, this area is referred to as the Bushlands and is shown on the map on pages 8 and 9. The species recorded in this book have been observed by community members and visitors to the area. Additional species are likely to occur in the area, and where possible these have been noted.

Native fauna (animals) are grouped together based on their broad type: mammals; frogs; reptiles, and birds. Native flora (plants) are grouped together based on their form and by scientific order: creepers and climbers; herbs and ground covers; lilies; orchids; grasses, rushes and sedges; shrubs, and trees.

Whilst the natural area has been modified by dwellings and gardens, dams and some cleared areas, the Bushlands still provides protection of a valuable piece of Victoria's remaining 17% of Box-Ironbark Forest. Local residents are committed to the preservation of the environment and manage threats like pest plants and animals. A number of properties also have conservation covenants through Trust for Nature, permanently protecting the vegetation and habitat values.

There are three important public conservation reserves: the Parks Victoria managed Chewton Bushland Reserve, the Mount Alexander Shire Council conservation-managed Wallaby Crescent Reserve and the natural areas of the Chewton Cemetery. Roadsides also support



**Sun Orchid**

significant vegetation and provide valuable habitat.

The Bushlands consists of a series of undulating rises and low hills formed by sedimentary deposits with shallow clay soils of low fertility and water-holding capacity. These hills can be seen from the township of Chewton and rise to over 500 metres above sea level allowing the viewer on Look Out Ridge Road or Mount View Road to see Mount Franklin to the south, Mount Tarrengower to the west and Mount Alexander to the north.

The low rises support a Heathy Dry Forest vegetation community with an overstorey dominated by Red Box, Grey Box, Yellow Box, Long-leaved Box and Red Stringybark. Many of these trees are coppiced, a historical reminder that the area was used for timber harvesting during the 19<sup>th</sup> century goldrush. These trees

provide an important food source for birds and bats, and nesting hollows for a range of species including the threatened Brush-tailed Phascogale.

The understorey of these areas is rich in shrubs, grasses and herbs and includes a spring wildflower season that demonstrates the resilience of the environment to recover after the human impacts of the goldrush. Fallen trees and branches, and lichen-covered rocks provide habitat and refuge for a range of reptiles and frogs, and birds can often be seen picking through the leaf-litter feasting on a range of insects.

After heavy rains, ephemeral creeks are formed that run down to neighbouring pastureland and out to Forest Creek. The alluvial soils of these gullies support a Valley Grassy Forest vegetation community with an overstorey of Yellow Box, and a scattering of Candlebarks and River Red Gums. The shrub layer is sparse in these gullies and groundcover consists of grasses, sedges and herbs. Mobs of kangaroos, solitary Swamp Wallabies and Short-beaked Echidnas can often be seen feeding at dawn and dusk and frogs can be heard calling from the many dams.

## What can we do to protect our local native flora and fauna?

1. **Control and remove pest plants** including garden escapees
2. **Retain native vegetation** and encourage natural regeneration
3. **Use indigenous plants** in your garden around your house
4. **Replant with local indigenous plants** where natural regeneration is not occurring or species are missing
5. **Preserve ground cover** of logs, fallen trees, rocks and leaf litter
6. **Retain large trees with hollows** and introduce nest boxes
7. **Make your dams more wildlife friendly** by improving habitat
8. **Control pest animals** such as foxes and rabbits
9. **Keep your pets confined** within a fenced section of your property and cats inside the house or in an enclosed cat run
10. **Do not use rodent bait** outside your home



## Colourful plants for your garden

These flowering plants are easily grown in the garden and are available from native nurseries. Planting local provenance plants maintains our local species and provides important habitat for wildlife.

### ORANGE AND YELLOW

Common name	Scientific name	Page
Gold-dust Wattle	<i>Acacia acinacea</i>	109
Bulbine Lily*	<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>	91
Clustered Everlasting	<i>Chrysocephalum semipapposum</i>	77
Billy Button*	<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	78
Hoary Sunray	<i>Leucochrysum albicans</i>	83
Wattle Mat-rush	<i>Lomandra filiformis</i>	106
Sticky Everlasting	<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	90

### RED AND PINK

Common name	Scientific name	Page
Downy Grevillea, Cat's-claw Grevillea	<i>Grevillea alpina</i>	118
Running Postman	<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	72
Magenta Stork's-bill	<i>Pelargonium rodneyanum</i>	84
Pink bells	<i>Tetralthea ciliata</i>	124

### WHITE

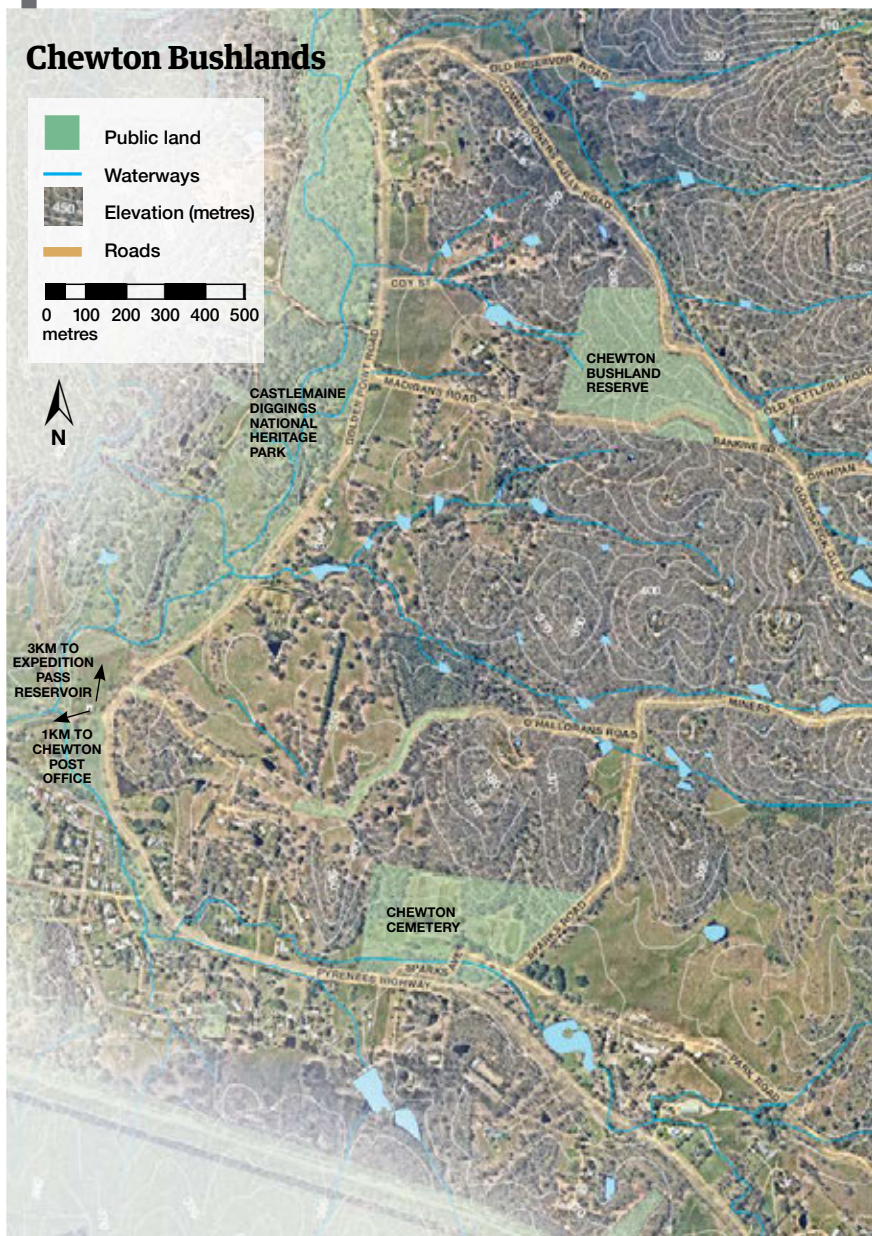
Common name	Scientific name	Page
Sweet Bursaria	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	113
Bushy Needlewood	<i>Hakea decurrens</i>	118

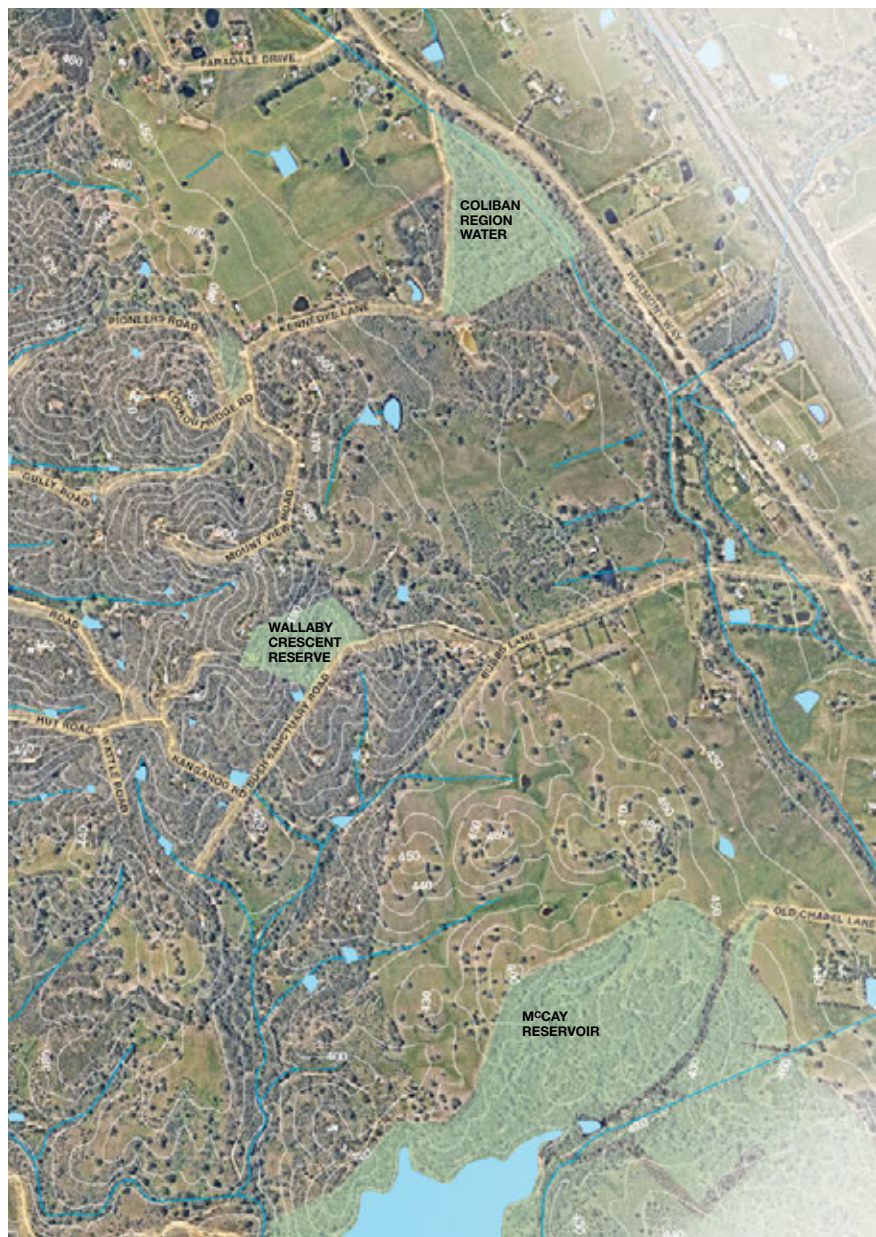
### PURPLE AND BLUE

Common name	Scientific name	Page
Chocolate Lily*	<i>Arthropodium strictum</i>	91
Black-anther Flax-lily	<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	92
Purple Coral-pea	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	72
Austral Indigo	<i>Indigofera australis</i>	120
Digger's Speedwell	<i>Veronica perfoliata</i>	88
Tall Bluebell	<i>Wahlenbergia stricta</i>	89

\*These plants will die down after seeding but will survive the hottest months of the year as underground tubers.

# Chewton Bushlands







## Symbols key

When looking through this book, please use this key

### CALL TIME

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Months when male frogs are calling

### IN FLOWER

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Months when plants are in flower



Butterfly attracting plant



Bird attracting plant



Hollow dependent fauna species

### Threatened

Listed on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988  
Threatened Species List 2021

## Where can I buy local indigenous plants?

### Goldfields Revegetation

230 Tannery Lane, Mandurang Vic 3551

Open 7 days a week 9am to 5pm

Website: [www.goldfieldsrevegetation.com.au](http://www.goldfieldsrevegetation.com.au)

Phone: (03) 5439 5384

Email: [info@goldfieldsrevegetation.com.au](mailto:info@goldfieldsrevegetation.com.au)

### Neangar Nursery

8 McClelland Drive, Eaglehawk Vic 3556

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Closed Public Holidays

Website: [www.neangarnursery.com.au](http://www.neangarnursery.com.au)

Phone: (03) 5446 9260

Email: [neangarnursery@bigpond.com](mailto:neangarnursery@bigpond.com)

### Newstead Natives Nursery

4 Palmerston St, Newstead Vic 3462

Open by appointment only

Frances Cincotta

Phone: (03) 5476 2691

Email: [natives@newstead.vicmail.net](mailto:natives@newstead.vicmail.net)

# Fauna



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**Short-beaked Echidna***Tachyglossus aculeatus*

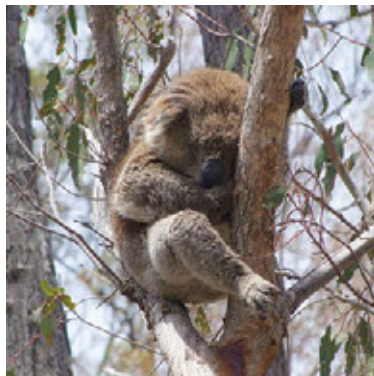
These small egg-laying mammals (monotremes) break into ant and termite nests for food with their pointed snout and sharp claws. They use their sticky long tongues to catch their prey. Puggles (baby echidnas) live in their mother's pouch for up to three months until they become too prickly when they will move into a purpose built burrow. Echidnas enter into a torpor or state of hibernation over winter.



---

**Koala***Phascolarctos cinereus*

These solitary marsupials feed almost entirely on eucalypt leaves including Yellow Box, River Red-gum, Yellow Gum, Red Stringybark and Long-leaved Box. Males give loud bellowing territorial calls during mating in spring and early summer. Females give birth to one joey per year that stays in the pouch for six to seven months. It then rides on the mother's back until it is too big to be carried.



**Previous page: Short-beaked Echidna**

PHOTO: HANNAH NICHOLAS



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**Black Wallaby, Swamp Wallaby*****Wallabia bicolor***

These shy, solitary marsupials are more active at night than during the day. They are stocky in build, dark brown on their upper surface, yellowish underside, and often have a white striped face. They feed on shrubs, ferns, grasses and underground fungi. They can breed at any time throughout the year, but mostly in winter. Joeys stay in the female's pouch for eight to nine months and continue to suckle until 15 months of age.



---

**Eastern Grey Kangaroo*****Macropus giganteus***

These are the only species of kangaroo found in the area. Males are larger than females, standing up to two metres tall. When food is abundant and water is reliable they can live in large 'mobs.' They can breed at any time of the year with females often having a joey at foot and another young in her pouch. They shelter in the shade during the day – particularly during warmer weather – and graze on grasses and shrubs at dawn and dusk.



**Brush-tailed Phascogale, Tuan***Phascogale tapoatafa*

These small, shy, nocturnal mammals have a conspicuous black bottle-brush shaped tail. They occur in low densities throughout the landscape and forage over a very large home-range (females 20-70 ha, males 100 ha). They feed on insects, spiders and centipedes, and occasionally eucalypt nectar both in trees and on the ground. They form nests of bark and feathers in eucalypt hollows and custom designed nest boxes. Males only live for one year and will die after mating in early winter.

**Threatened****Sugar Glider***Petaurus breviceps*

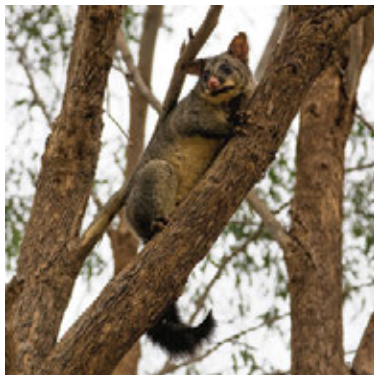
These social, nocturnal marsupials live in eucalypt trees with hollows and custom designed nest boxes in groups of up to eight, actively defending their territories. They feed at night, gliding up to 50 m between trees, and climbing in canopy foliage to feed on tree sap, nectar, pollen, and invertebrates. Breeding occurs from July to August with females commonly giving birth to twins that remain in the pouch for 70 days. Young disperse at 7-10 months old.



### Common Brushtail Possum

#### *Trichosurus vulpecula*

These social, nocturnal marsupials feed mainly on plant material including leaves, flowers and fruit in trees and occasionally on the ground. They nest in hollows where they have one young generally in spring. The young stays in the female's pouch for four to five months. It then rides on the mothers back for four to eight weeks until weaned and then disperses at about 18 months of age.



### Common Ringtail Possum

#### *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*

These social, nocturnal marsupials feed on leaves, flowers and fruits using their prehensile tail as a fifth limb to climb among the branches to feed. In the Bushlands they appear to build their nests in hollows rather than in foliage (dreys) like in other areas of Victoria. They breed from April to November having two young that stay in the pouch for four months. Both parents care for the young taking turns to carry the young on their backs.



**The Eastern Pygmy Possum and Feathertail Glider may also be present in the Bushlands.**

---

**Yellow-footed Antechinus***Antechinus flavipes*

These small marsupials (body 9-16 cm; tail 6.5-14 cm) have a slate-grey head with warm orange-brown sides, underside, rump and feet. They have white to light grey eye-rings and a black tip at the end of the tail. These agile climbers can be seen during the day foraging with jerky movements in trees, amongst rocks and tree stumps on small vertebrates, eggs and nectar. They build their nests in tree cavities, amongst rocks or buildings.



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**Lesser Long-eared Bat***Nyctophilus geoffroyi*

These small (4 cm) microbats, weigh only 6 to 10 grams. They roost in hollows, fissures and under bark and at times in large groups. They feed at night on a large range of insects. They use echolocation to catch their prey during mid flight, from foliage or the ground. During winter they enter a state of torpor. Breeding generally occurs from late spring to early summer.



### **Little Forest Bat**

#### *Vespadelus vulturnus*

These small (4 to 5 cm) agile microbats weigh only 3 to 6.8 grams. They feed at night on a range of insects. They use echolocation to catch their prey during flight or from foliage. They roost in groups in tree hollows and fissures often

in separate male and female colonies. They breed once a year, producing only one young in the summer that is sometimes carried by the mother on her back.



**Gould's Wattled Bat, Chocolate Wattled Bat, Gould's Long-eared Bat, Large Forest Bat, Southern Forest Bat, White-striped Freetail Bat and Southern Freetail Bat *Mormopterus* sp. 4** are also likely to be resident or semi-regular visitors to the Bushlands.

**Plains Froglet****Eastern Sign-bearing Frog***Crinia parinsignifera*

These small (less than 3 cm) ground dwelling frogs have highly varied colouring and patterns. They shelter under logs and other debris, near water or in moist depressions. They lay their eggs in ponds and dams where you will often see tadpoles. Their call is a squelching 'eeeeeeeeek' repeated every few seconds. They are almost indistinguishable in appearance to the Eastern Common Froglet but can be identified by their call.

**CALL TIME****J F M A M J J A S O N D****Eastern Common Froglet***Crinia signifera*

These small (less than 3 cm) ground dwelling frogs have highly varied colouring usually with a ridge down the back. They are usually found near water sheltering under logs, rocks and other debris. They lay their eggs in ponds and dams where you can find tadpoles from October to January. Their call is a series of pulsed repeated calls 'crick crick crick'. They are almost indistinguishable in appearance to the Plains Froglet but can be identified by their call.

**CALL TIME****J F M A M J J A S O N D**



**Pobblebonk, Eastern Banjo Frog**  
*Limnodynastes dumerilii*

These large (6 to 9 cm) burrowing frogs have a pale brown gland running from beneath the eye to the top of the front leg. They are often seen in the garden and at night after rain on the roads in the Bushlands. They lay white frothy egg masses on dams. Their call is a short musical 'bonk' repeated every few seconds, which can sound like someone plucking the string of a banjo.

**CALL TIME**

**J F M A M J J A S O N D**



**Spotted Marsh Frog**  
*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*

These medium (3 to 5 cm) frogs are usually found in waterbodies and flooded areas. During dry conditions they shelter in cracks in the ground and under large rocks. They lay their eggs in waterbodies that appear as a floating foam mass. There are two 'call' races in the area – one which makes a single 'click' call, and another that gives a 'click-click-click' call like two stones being struck together.

**CALL TIME**

**J F M A M J J A S O N D**



**Southern Brown Tree Frog***Litoria ewingii*

These medium (2.5 to 4.5 cm) tree frogs are agile climbers and have horizontal pupils. They feed on insects, and are capable of leaping to catch their prey in mid-flight. They frequent wet and

**CALL TIME****J F M A M J J A S O N D**

flooded areas for breeding but can often be found calling long distances from water. Their call is a rapid pulsing 'creeeeeeeeeee creee creee cree cree cree'.

**Peron's Tree Frog****Maniacal Cackle Frog***Litoria peronii*

These medium (4.5 to 7 cm) tree climbing frogs have distinctive '+' shaped pupils and yellow and black marbled inner thighs and armpits. The adults are often found away from water on trees, sheltering under bark and under fallen logs. Their call is distinctive with a long and drawn out 'cra-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ahhk' that increases in loudness.

**CALL TIME****J F M A M J J A S O N D**

**Bibron's Toadlet***Pseudophryne bibronii*

These small (2 to 3 cm) frogs have a distinctive black and white marbled underside and orange patches on their upper arms. When threatened they will lie on their backs, not moving, playing dead. They shelter in leaf litter and fallen timber and lay their eggs in moist depressions or burrows that become inundated after rain. Their call is a short harsh 'cre-ek' repeated every few seconds.

**Threatened**

**CALL TIME**

J F M A M J J A S O N D



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**Eastern Brown Snake***Pseudonaja textilis*

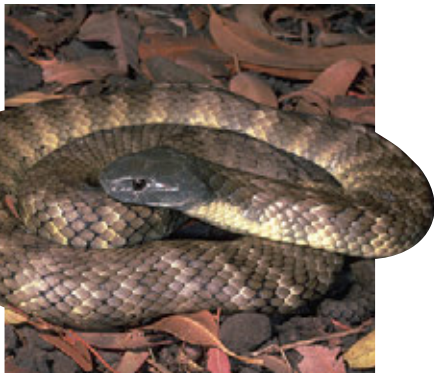
These large (up to 2 m) quick moving, slender snakes vary from pale to dark brown in colour. They favour sparse dry sites, feeding on other reptiles, small mammals, frogs and birds. Mating occurs from spring to early summer with females laying up to 35 eggs in cracks in the soil. The eggs are not guarded after they are laid. Young emerge in late summer and are totally independent. The young have a dark patch on the top of their head.

**Highly venomous**

---

**Eastern Tiger Snake***Notechis scutatus*

These medium (up to 1.2 m) thick bodied snakes have dark brown and yellow bands on the upper surface, but vary in colour shades. They favour sites with fallen timber and leaf-litter, usually in damper areas, and feed on frogs, small mammals, lizards and birds. They mate in spring with females giving birth to about 20 to 30 live young in late summer to early autumn.

**Highly venomous**

---

**Stumpy-tailed Lizard, Shingleback*****Tiliqua rugosa***

These large (up to 41 cm) slow moving lizards have a short blunt tail and rough scales and favour areas with a high cover of leaf litter and native tussock grasses. They feed on a variety of plants and animals including flowers, fruits, fungi, soft plant foliage, arthropods and occasionally small bird eggs. They form life-long breeding pairs, with the females giving birth to one to three young in autumn.



---

**Common Blue-tongued Lizard*****Tiliqua scincoides***

These large (up to 60 cm), slow moving lizards shelter in and under fallen timber, leaf litter, vegetation and crevices, and can be seen basking on local roads during the day. When threatened they display their blue tongue. They feed on plant material (flowers, soft foliage and fruits), arthropods, small vertebrates and bird eggs. Females give birth to up to 12 live young in late summer.



**Jacky Lizard***Amphibolurus muricatus*

These medium (up to 12 cm) fast moving lizards shelter in hollows, tree stumps, fallen timber, rocks and logs. They perch on tree trunks and rocks to search for prey including insects, small skinks and ants. Females lay three to eight eggs in shallow excavated burrows. The young emerge in late summer to early autumn. The sex of the young is determined by the temperature of the nest.

**Large Striped Skink***Ctenotus robustus*

These medium (up to 12 cm) well camouflaged skinks feed during the day amongst debris near rocky outcrops and fallen timber for beetles, grasshoppers, spiders and cockroaches. They enter a torpid state during winter sheltering in burrows, under rocks or logs. Eggs are also laid in these shelters in late spring with young emerging in late summer.





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**Bougainville's Skink***Lerista bougainvillii*

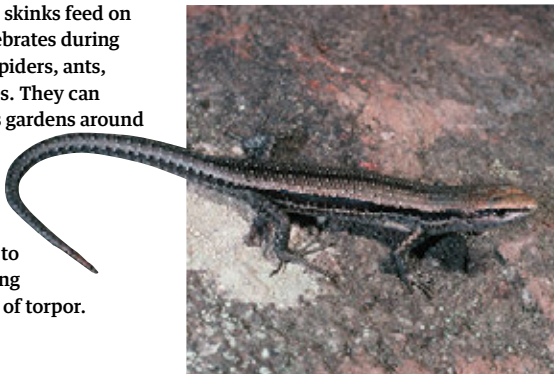
These small (up to 70 cm) skinks shelter under logs, rocks and leaf-litter and can easily burrow into the soil. They have a pronounced black stripe down their side from snout to the base of the tail and very short legs. The tail is speckled in adults and reddish in juveniles. They feed during the day on a variety of arthropods including spiders, beetles, termites and larvae.



---

**Garden Skink***Lampropholis guichenoti*

These small (up to 4 cm) skinks feed on a variety of small invertebrates during the day including flies, spiders, ants, cockroaches and termites. They can often be seen in people's gardens around houses, under pieces of wood or pot plants, or basking on paved areas. Females nest communally, laying two to six eggs in a clutch. During winter they enter a state of torpor.



**Other species of skinks and the Eastern Bearded Dragon are likely to be resident in the Bushlands.**

---

**Common Long-necked Tortoise***Chelodina longicollis*

These tortoises are found in some dams throughout the Bushlands and can be seen with their head peering out of the water. The female lays over ten eggs in a hole dug on the bank of the waterbody she inhabits. During summer these tortoises will sometimes disperse overland across the landscape.



---

**Marbled Gecko***Christinus marmoratus*

These nocturnal geckos feed on small invertebrates such as scorpions, insects and spiders. Like other geckos they are capable of shedding their tails when attacked. The females lay two eggs beneath bark or debris in spring that hatch in mid-summer, or are laid in summer and hatch in spring. They can often be seen around people's houses, under wood, pot plants, or rocks.



---

**Wood Gecko, Eastern Stone Gecko***Diplodactylus vittatus*

These geckos prefer exposed sites with flat rocks and lots of fallen timber and leaf litter. They shelter during the day under rocks, logs and in burrows and hunt at night for insects and other small arthropods. Like other geckos they are capable of shedding their tail when attacked. This species can be identified by the zigzagging (or straight) line down the middle of the back from head to tail.



---

**Thick-tailed Gecko***Underwoodisaurus milii*

These nocturnal geckos have a large head and yellowish spotted colouring. They feed at night on small vertebrates and insects, and shelter in holes in the ground and under rocks during the day, sometimes with up to six individuals. Like other geckos they are capable of shedding their tails when attacked.

