

# Frankston City Council Indigenous Fauna Guide



*Lifestyle Capital of Victoria*





## Contents

Introduction	4
Mammals	15
Reptiles	23
Frogs	29
Bushland birds	33
Birds of prey	41
Waterway and wetland birds	47
Fish	56
Common name index	58
Observations	61
Further information	63

# Introduction

Australia is an island continent that was geographically isolated for more than 40 million years. As a result, many of our native animals are found nowhere else in the world. 93 per cent of our amphibians, 89 per cent of reptiles, 83 per cent of mammals and 45 per cent of our birds can only be found in Australia, making their conservation even more important.

Frankston City is home to a wide variety of indigenous fauna from dolphins, echidnas, owls, skinks, bats, honeyeaters, koalas, frogs, parrots and turtles. At least 312 species of native fauna has been recorded, and that is not including the huge diversity of invertebrate species such as butterflies, dragonflies and native bees.

Frankston City has a number of natural reserves from the Seaford Foreshore, Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve, Little Boggy Creek Reserve and the southern part of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands – the only urban wetlands in Victoria listed under the international Ramsar Convention. Pick up a copy of Natural Reserves within Frankston City and visit these important areas of natural habitat and biodiversity.

This Indigenous Fauna Guide provides information on a selection of animals that may be commonly encountered in Frankston, or only occasionally seen by a fortunate few. Just being aware that all these incredible animals exist in Frankston is a great start. Doing all we can to help them survive the challenges of widespread landscape change is an important role we can all play.



## Using this guide

This booklet has been divided into sections to make it easy for you to identify different species. An index of common names can be found on pages 58 to 60. An observation page has been included on page 61 so you can start to record when and where you see indigenous fauna.

You can find further information on reference books, websites, citizen science apps and groups to join on pages 12 and 63.

## Conservation status

Each species featured in the guide will have its current conservation status listed as either:

<b>Endangered or Threatened:</b>	at risk of extinction in the wild.
<b>Vulnerable:</b>	not endangered but facing a high risk of extinction in the medium-term future.
<b>Rare:</b>	small populations that are not at present endangered or vulnerable, but are at risk.
<b>Common:</b>	not endangered, vulnerable or rare in the wild.



## Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the rich variety of plant and animal species in an environment, the genetic differences within and between species and the differences between the ecological systems in which they live. High biodiversity improves the chances of local species to survive destructive events or processes such as weed and pest animal invasion and climate change. Low biodiversity with fewer species living in isolated pockets is a recipe for extinction.

Indigenous plants are the original or local plants that occur naturally in a given location. These plant species have evolved alongside indigenous wildlife. A greater variety of indigenous plants creates more diverse habitats for indigenous fauna to feed, move, shelter and breed.

Most indigenous plants and animals are specifically adapted to a particular habitat. They typically only survive within that habitat. Loss of or changes to habitat is a major factor driving population decline of our wildlife.




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## Habitat

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The environment where a species naturally lives or occurs. It provides the organisms that live there with food, water and shelter. Many different habitats exist within an ecosystem. Examples of habitats within a woodland ecosystem include a log on the ground, tree bark, the tree canopy, grass understorey and shrubs.

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## Ecosystems

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An ecosystem includes all of the living things (plants, animals and organisms) in a given area, interacting with each other, and also with their non-living environments (weather, earth, sun, soil, climate, atmosphere). Examples of ecosystems include grasslands, forests, marine, wetlands, woodlands and dunes.

## Threats to indigenous fauna

Frankston's geographical position on Melbourne's urban fringe, between the natural and rural landscapes of the Mornington Peninsula and Westernport and the south east growth corridor means that the objectives of urban growth and development and the protection of native plants and animals are potentially in conflict.

The introduction of carnivorous pests with European settlement such as the European red fox, cat, dog and rat has had a devastating impact on the populations of small native animals. Of the 37 species originally recorded 28 are either locally extinct or endangered.

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**Of the 312 species of native fauna recorded in Frankston City in 2017, 40 are listed as threatened species.**

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Major factors that affect the survival of our indigenous fauna include the following:

### Habitat loss

Land clearing and habitat loss is the biggest single threat to wildlife. By 2017, 85 to 90 percent of Frankston's native vegetation had been cleared since European settlement. The loss of native

vegetation resulted in habitat loss for indigenous animals that has led to the local extinction of large iconic species such as kangaroos, emus, wombats, goannas and dingos. Some well-loved natives such as Koalas, Swamp Wallabies and Short-beaked Echidnas are now vulnerable to extinction as native vegetation continues to be cleared.

Aquatic habitats are also vulnerable with the drainage of swamps, marshes and wetlands for urban development and the modification of waterways to change locations and flow rates. Marine environments have also undergone habitat loss as infrastructure has been added, watercraft traffic increased and dredging occurring in Port Phillip Bay.

Vegetation in the landscape often exists in fragmented patches which are not well connected. Species populations within these patches become smaller, more isolated and more vulnerable to predation and competition. It is also more difficult for wildlife to safely move around to find food, shelter and mates. Millions of animals are killed on our roads each year from motor vehicles.

## Invasive species

Feral animals, such as the fox and cat, prey on small mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs throughout Australia. The Northern Pacific Seastar is a voracious predator that feeds on native marine species including pippies, mussels and crabs. Rabbits and hares have vastly altered the landscape in many regions with their burrowing and eating of indigenous plants.

Weed species are an enormous problem. They compete with local plants for space, nutrients, water and light. In a short period of time they can replace indigenous plants effectively removing the food source and habitat of indigenous fauna.

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**Disease outbreaks such as the Amphibian Chytrid fungus have decimated frog populations worldwide and is a significantly threat to the survival for our local frogs.**

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**Photo credit:** David Paul, Museums Victoria

## Climate change

Changes to our global climate are impacting our native plants and animals. It is difficult for indigenous species to adapt quickly to new conditions, particularly with a reduced gene pool, resulting in a loss of species and biodiversity.

Ongoing lower rainfall and an increase in heatwaves and storm events are predicted to continue and intensify. In regions of highly fragmented habitat (where animals may have nowhere to escape to) and during excessively long droughts or heatwaves or very intense fires, many animals can be in danger during the event and find themselves with inadequate food and shelter afterwards. Storm events can result in trees falling, juvenile birds and mammals falling from nests and migratory shorebirds dying from exhaustion.

Hotter, drier conditions will result in a reduction of water flow into our watercourses and wetlands. Poor water quality for fauna will result if water temperature rises, oxygen levels drop and minerals become more concentrated.

Rising sea levels will also have ongoing impact on foreshore fauna such as the Hooded Plover that nests on the beach.

## Pollution

Herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers from our gardens, parks and farms can enter our stormwater system where they end up polluting our local waterways and bays. They can cause an explosion of aquatic weeds or harm local wildlife. Frogs are particularly sensitive to pollutants in water because their skin is porous and their eggs have no hardened shells to protect them.

Marine plastic pollution is a huge problem affecting all the world's oceans. Marine animals such as turtles, seabirds, dolphins and whales are swallowing plastic bags, bottles and straws dumped in our oceans and it is killing them.

## Recreational fishing

Marine fauna populations can be threatened when people exceed the legal bag limits on certain species or fish during the closed season imposed to allow fish numbers to recover. They also face danger of being struck by boats and propellers or getting tangled in discarded fishing nets, lines and hooks.

## Recently missing fauna

Sadly like many places across Australia, Frankston City has suffered the loss of some once common indigenous fauna.

Local extinction of large iconic species includes kangaroos, emus, wombats, goanna, dingos, platypus, potoroos and quolls. Below are three examples of

the factors that have led to the local extinction of amazing native animals.

The Growling Grass Frog population has disappeared due to habitat loss (drained waterbodies, land clearing, removal of rocks and logs), exposure to chemical pollutants, Chytrid fungus and predation of tadpoles from introduced Mosquitofish. Climate change leading to drought and poor water quality. As a basking frog Growling Grass Frogs may also be exposed to higher ultraviolet-B radiation levels caused by atmospheric ozone depletion.

The Southern Brown Bandicoot has been preyed upon by foxes and feral/roaming pet cats. Clearing of habitat has either completely destroyed populations or forced bandicoots into smaller fragmented areas of habitat making them more susceptible to predation and vehicle collisions.

*Southern Brown Bandicoot*  
**Photo credit:** *Heath Warwick*



from feral cats and foxes. Bushfires and the competition from introduced rodents has also contributed to the decline of this native mouse.

## What is government doing?

Frankston's indigenous fauna is protected federally under the Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, and state legislation, in particular the Wildlife Act 1975 and the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Amendment Act 2019).

Under the Wildlife Act 1975 it is an offence to:

- hunt, take or destroy wildlife or game without a licence
- possess, buy or sell parts of wildlife without a licence
- import into, and export wildlife out of Victoria without a permit.

The Fauna and Flora Guarantee Act protects threatened native fauna species which are listed on the Threatened Species Advisory List.

Some fauna species, in particular migratory birds that visit Frankston City, may also be protected under international agreements such as the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA), the Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory

*Growling Grass Frog* Photo credit: Ian Moodie



(CAMBA). These agreements list the birds that migrate between Australia and the respective countries and agree to protect and conserve the important habitats of these birds.

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**Council strives to protect and conserve our local wildlife by enhancing public parks and reserves and working with residents to create wildlife corridors for animals to move between the large bushland reserves that exist across Frankston city.**

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## How can you help?

### Knowledge and awareness.

Picking up this booklet and finding out more information on your indigenous fauna is a great start. You will also find references at the back of this booklet for further information. Ensure you also have a copy of the Frankston City Council Indigenous Plant Guide and the Invasive Species Guide.

### Get involved

Contribute to one of the many important citizen science projects that are monitoring nature and wildlife using smart phone apps.

### Join a group.

It may be a statewide group like the Field Naturalists of Victoria or a local group like your local volunteer Friends Group ([frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment\\_and\\_Waste/Environment/Get\\_Involved/Environmental\\_Volunteers\\_and\\_Groups](http://frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment_and_Waste/Environment/Get_Involved/Environmental_Volunteers_and_Groups)) or Wildlife Rescue Group. They all offer a wealth of information, experience and learning opportunities.

Join the Gardens for Wildlife program that assists residents to create wildlife-friendly habitat by providing simple and practical advice. The program is provided by Frankston City Council and supported by garden guide volunteers. For further information visit:

**[frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment\\_and\\_Waste/Environment/Get\\_Involved/Gardens\\_for\\_Wildlife](http://frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment_and_Waste/Environment/Get_Involved/Gardens_for_Wildlife)**

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For more information visit the following websites:

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**Wildlife Map:** [frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment\\_and\\_Waste/Environment/Biodiversity/Native\\_Fauna](http://frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment_and_Waste/Environment/Biodiversity/Native_Fauna)

**Frog Census:** [melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/waterwatch-programs/frog-census](http://melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/waterwatch-programs/frog-census)

**Birdlife Australia:** [aussiebirdcount.org.au](http://aussiebirdcount.org.au)

**iNaturalist:** [inaturalist.org/](http://inaturalist.org/)

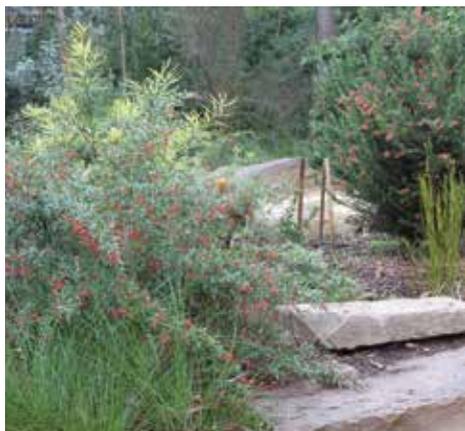
**Wild pollinator count:** [wildpollinatorcount.com/](http://wildpollinatorcount.com/)

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## Habitat Garden

Create gardens for wildlife by including indigenous plants to provide food and shelter, using a wide range of trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers, groundcovers, rocks, logs and leaf litter. You don't have to convert your whole garden to an indigenous garden, but every little effort helps.

Plant prickly shrubs and a range of trees to provide shelter from bad weather, predators and competitors. If there is a shortage of old trees with hollows in your area, install habitat boxes with different designs available for various species of wildlife. Leave logs and rocks on the ground for shelter together with leaf litter or mulch.



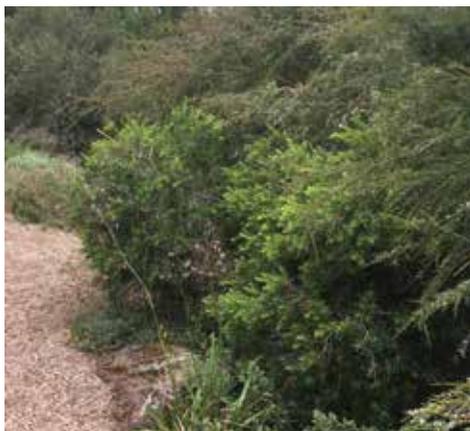
A reliable source of water, particularly in summer, will help indigenous fauna. A shallow birdbath on a pedestal next to a prickly bush will help protect birds from predators while they drink and bathe. Frogs need a permanent or semi-permanent water source to keep their skin moist and provide opportunities to breed. Lizards appreciate a shallow dish of water on the ground.

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### Practice natural pest control in your garden.

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Your garden can become a stepping stone for fauna to move safely across our urban landscape. Talk to your neighbours to help build Frankston's wildlife corridors. (Refer to the map on page 6 of the Frankston Indigenous Plant Guide.)



## Sick or injured wildlife

Native wildlife generally does not benefit from artificial feeding. In many situations it can make them sick. Artificial nectar feeders can ferment in warm weather making birds ill. Birds can also become dependent on a food supply of bread, nectar, mince meat or seed and fail to eat a wide range of natural food types. Animals that expect to be feed by humans can also become quite aggressive and demanding. Feed pets indoors or where birds and pest animals cannot access their food bowls.

Please lock up your pets at night as cats and dogs are one of the main threats to indigenous fauna. Cat bells have limited success. Walk dogs on a lead at all times unless in a designated off-lead area.

Drive safely to avoid hitting animals on the road. Be particularly vigilant at dawn and dusk.

Loosely woven garden netting will trap bats, birds, reptiles and mammals often resulting in their death. As a rough guide if you can insert your finger through the netting it is capable of trapping wildlife. If you must net your fruit trees for example, choose densely woven netting with a mesh size less than 1cm<sup>2</sup>. Ensure your netting is securely fixed to the ground or tied to the base of the tree above ground level. Remove nets when not required.

If you find sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, timely help may be critical. Do not try to unnecessarily handle the animal, but immediately call for assistance.

Always treat wildlife with caution, especially when distressed or injured, as they can react unpredictably and be dangerous. Whenever possible wait for an experienced/qualified person to arrive.

For assistance contact local veterinary clinics, animal shelters or one of the following wonderful volunteer organisations that work tirelessly to help our injured wildlife. Keep a copy of these phone numbers in your home and car.

- **Australian Wildlife Assistance Rescue and Education (AWARE)**  
– 0412 433 727
- **Animalia Wildlife Shelter and Rescue Brighton to Portsea** including Frankston  
24 hour Emergency Hotline –  
0435 822 699
- **Help for Wildlife Emergency Service** – 0417 380 687
- **Wildlife Help On Mornington Peninsula (WHOMP)** – 0417 380 687
- **Wildlife Victoria** – 1300 094 535

# Mammals



### *Acrobates pygmaeus*

#### **Feathertail Glider**

##### **Common in Victoria but possibly locally extinct.**

This is the world's smallest gliding possum, with adults weighing only 10-15 grams. It has a body length of 6-8cm with a fine, feather-shaped tail 7-10cm long. The tail is often used to grip branches. They have a gliding membrane (patagium) between the elbows and knees allowing them to glide as far as 28 m. Serrated pads on the toes help the Feathertail Glider grip smooth surfaces. Their upper body parts are grey with white underparts. Their diet consists of insects and the nectar of eucalyptus blossoms. They are nocturnal and social animals forming small groups of 2-5 individuals.

**Habitat:** Feathertail Gliders live in eucalypt forests with a diversity of trees that provide year-round nectar. Old records indicate distributions of Feathertail Glider in the Grassy woodlands of Frankston South and Langwarrin South.

**Threats:** Loss of habitat is a major threat to the Feathertail Glider. They nest in hollows which are only found in mature age trees. Entire colonies of Feathertail Gliders have been wiped out by feral cats.



Feather Tail Glider **Photo credit:** P9754 by Eyeweed  
CC BY NC-ND- 2.0

### *Antechinus agilis*

#### **Agile Antechinus**

##### **Common in Victoria but locally rare.**

A small, carnivorous marsupial with a pointed face and small, sharp teeth. Body length from 8-11 cm, tail 7-12cm long. It has light-brown to grey fur that covers the tail (unlike the House Mouse). Like other antechinus species, all the males die just before they reach a year old at the end of the annual mating season. They mainly feed on insects and small invertebrates, but may also eat small lizards and berries.

**Habitat:** Agile Antechinus live in forest, woodland and heathland. It prefers areas of dense ground cover with hiding places to take refuge, such as fallen logs on the ground. Several records have been noted at Langwarrin Flora and Fauna reserve.

**Threats:** Loss of habitat due to agriculture, urban development and weed invasion. Predation by cats and foxes.



**Photo credit:** David Paul, Museums Victoria



**Photo credit:** Dolphin Research Institute

### *Delphinus delphis / Tursiops truncatus*

## Common and Bottle-nosed Dolphin

### Common

The Common Dolphin grows up to 2.5m long. It has a dark upper body, distinctive pale-yellow sides, black stripe along beak and a black patch around the eye. The Bottle-nosed Dolphin grows up to 3m long and has a short, rounded snout. The upper body is dark to light grey, grading to white on the belly. Dolphins are highly active 'porpoising' to the surface to breathe, and often swimming next to boats and leaping from the water. Dolphins swim in pods feeding on small school fish and squid.

**Habitat:** Open water, shallow coastal seas and bays. Research by the Dolphin Research Institute has established that there is an unusual population of around 30 Common Dolphins that are resident in Port Phillip Bay and do not venture out into the open waters of Bass Strait.

**Threats:** Dolphins are at risk from entanglement in nets, boat and water vehicle collisions, noise pollution and ocean warming. Power vessels by law are to required stay 100m distance from dolphins.



**Photo credit:** Ian Moodie

### *Hydromys chrysogaster*

## Rakali

### Common in Victoria but locally rare.

Common in Victoria but locally rare. The Rakali is an amphibious native Water Rat. They grow up to 60cm long with a tail length of around 27cm. Rakali have waterproof fur that is variable in colour. It may be black to grey above and white to orange below. Rakali have a thick, dark, rudder-like tail characteristic for its white tip. They have partially-webbed back feet to assist with swimming. Rakali eat fish, shellfish, frogs and aquatic insects. They forage by swimming underwater. Once it catches its prey, it usually carries it back to a regular feeding site.

**Habitat:** River banks, estuaries, and around dams and creeks. Rakali live in burrows alongside river banks. They are a key indicator of a healthy wetland. Rakali have been spotted in Kananook Creek.

**Threats:** Rakali were hunted for their fur until 1938. Today the main threats are habitat alteration as a result of flood mitigation and swamp drainage, and predation from introduced animals such as dogs, cats and foxes.

*Macropus giganteus*

## Eastern Grey Kangaroo

### **Common but locally rare**

The Eastern Grey Kangaroo has uniform woolly, grey-brown fur slightly darker on the shoulders and mid-back, paler underneath. The tail is often black at the tip. They grow up to 1.3m tall with a tail length of 1.1m. The Eastern Grey Kangaroo mainly feeds on grasses and herbs, but sometimes eats leaves from trees and shrubs.

**Habitat:** Open grassland with areas of woodland or forest for daytime shelter. Also golf courses and parklands. This species would have once been widespread throughout Frankston city however recent sightings along Cranbourne Road are unfortunately from road kill. Sightings have also been made near Langwarrin Flora and Fauna reserve.

**Threats:** The main threats to the Eastern Grey Kangaroo include habitat loss, drought, vehicle collisions and dog attacks.



*Petaurus breviceps*

## Sugar Glider

### **Common in Victoria but locally rare**

The Sugar Glider is a small possum with a gliding membrane between its fifth front finger to its hind ankle. In flight it uses its brushy tail for balance and steering. They can glide around 50m. Sugar Glider body length is 15-20cm with the tail and additional 15-20cm. Upperparts grey, underparts pale-grey or creamy-yellow. The tail is grey becoming black towards the tip which is often white. They are nocturnal and sleep in leaf nests in tree hollows or artificial nest boxes. They eat insects and sap from eucalypts and wattle, nectar, pollen, and seed.

**Habitat:** Forests and woodlands with stringybark, box eucalypts and large wattle species.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation particularly of large, hollow-forming trees, cats and dogs.



**Photo credit:** Ian Moodie



*Phascolarctos cinereus*

## Koala

### Common but locally rare

The Koala has a stocky body that is built for climbing. It is covered with grey-brown water-repellent fur with white tipped ears, rump and chest and a large black nose. Mature males have a brown scent gland in the centre of their chest which they rub on tree trunks to deter other Koalas, especially males, from entering their home trees. They grow to 80cm long and weigh up to 12kg. The Koala has a highly specialised diet made up of the leaves of certain eucalyptus as well as some flowers and stems.

**Habitat:** Eucalypt forests. Sightings of koalas in Frankston South and Langwarrin are more common during the koala breeding season, August to February, when the young from the previous year leave their mothers and disperse and during heatwaves, when koalas come down from trees to cool off or relocate.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, bushfires, disease, vehicle collisions and dog attacks.



*Photo credit: Graham Alexander*

*Pseudocheirus peregrines*

## Ringtail Possum

### Common

The Ringtail Possum has grey-brown fur on its upperparts and white underneath. It has a distinctive white-tipped tail, used to grip branches and carry nesting material, and often carried in a coil. Body length up to 35cm with an additional 35cm length for the tail. They build nests (dreys) in tree hollows or artificial nest boxes. Ringtail Possums mainly feed on eucalypt leaves, but will also eat flowers, nectar and shoots.

**Habitat:** Eucalypt forest and woodlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation particularly of large, hollow-forming trees, electrocution on power lines, vehicle collisions, foxes, cats and dogs.

*Rattus lutreolus*

## Swamp Rat

### Common in Victoria but locally rare

The Swamp Rat body fur is dark-brown, usually lighter underneath. The feet, ears and tail are dark-brown. Swamp Rat's ears are small, almost concealed by fur. Its tail length at 14cm is shorter than its body length at 20cm. They do not climb. Swamp Rats make tunnels through the vegetation. They eat mostly stems of grasses and sedges.

(The Black Rat has pink ears, tail and feet, large ears and a tail longer than its body. They also climb, unlike the Swamp Rat.)

**Habitat:** Coastal heath, sedgeland, dune scrub and grassland, mainly in coastal areas. Sightings in Frankston city span from the wetlands in Seaford, to small pocket reserves in Carrum Downs to the treed environs of Langwarrin and Frankston South

**Threats:** Habitat loss including swamp drainage and vegetation clearing. Frequent fires will also prevent the Swamp Rat from recolonising an area. Predation by cats.



Photo credit: David Paul, Museums Victoria

*Tachyglossus aculeatus*

## Short-beaked Echidna

### Common in Victoria but locally rare

Short-beaked Echidna has a rounded body covered in sharp spines with fur between. The spines are yellow-cream with black tips. The Short-beaked Echidna has a smooth tubular snout and long sharp claws. They grow to around 44cm long. They have a long sticky tongue for capturing ants, termites and other small invertebrates.

**Habitat:** Forests, woodlands, heathlands and grasslands. This welcome visitor has been spotted walking past homes and crossing roads near areas of large bush land reserves and golf courses. Sadly they are often seen as roadkill on the side of the road.

**Threats:** Habitat loss, especially the loss of fallen logs and tree stumps and protective understorey vegetation. Dogs and foxes will attack adults, while cats have been known to kill young echidnas. Vehicle collisions.



Photo credit: Raf Heriot



*Photo credit: Ian Moodie*

### *Trichosurus vulpecular*

## Common Brushtail Possum

#### **Common**

The Common Brushtail Possum has variable fur colour but is generally silver-grey above and cream-white underneath with dark markings around the eyes. They have a thick, black tail for gripping branches. Body length is around 55cm with a tail length of 40cm. Common Brushtail Possums feed on a variety of plants, leaves, fruits and flowers. They make nests in tree hollows. Common Brushtail Possums have adapted well to urban urban areas, often nesting in roof cavities and feeding on garden plants.

**Habitat:** Forests, woodlands and heathlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Foxes and cats. Vehicle collisions.



*Photo credit: (CC BY 2.5 AU)  
Chris Clarke via natureshare.org.au*

### *Wallabia bicolor*

## Black-tailed Wallaby

#### **Common but becoming locally rare**

The Black-tailed Wallaby, is also known as a Swamp or Black Wallaby. It is a small stocky wallaby with dark-brown fur, often with lighter rusty patches on the chest, belly and base of the ears. Black-tailed Wallaby grow to around 85cm tall with a similar tail length. They feed on the leaves of shrubs, ferns and grasses. They are a shy and usually solitary animal.

**Habitat:** Undergrowth of forest, woodland and heath. Sightings recorded in Langwarrin.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, vehicle collisions, dog and fox attack.

## Microbats

Microbats are small, mouse-sized bats that grow to 4-15cm long and weigh only a few grams. Most microbats have black, brown or grey fur and wide grey wings. They are mammals that feed their young milk. They feed by echolocation consuming large numbers of insects. It is estimated that the Little Forest Bat consumes around 1,000 mosquitoes per night. A great natural pest controller! Some microbats fly above the trees catching insects, while others fly close to the ground sometimes even landing to snatch a juicy grasshopper. Most microbats roost in tree hollows or under bark during daylight hours. These tiny creatures generally live in small colonies. Once the nights become cooler and the insects disappear, the microbats lower their body temperature and go into a state of mini-hibernation until their food returns in spring.

**Habitat:** Forest and woodland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss particularly of large, hollow-forming trees, cats, pesticides.

### Frankston Microbats

Gould's Wattled Bat (*Chalinolobus gouldii*)

Chocolate Wattled Bat (*Chalinolobus morio*)

Lesser Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus geoffroyi*)

Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat  
(*Saccolaimus flaviventris*)

White-striped Freetail Bat (*Tardaria australis*)

Large Forest Bat (*Vesperdelus darlingtoni*)

Southern Forest Bat (*Vespadelus regulus*)

Little Forest Bat (*Vespadelus vulturnus*)



Lesser Long-eared Bat **Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU)  
James Booth via natureshare.org.au



Gould's Wattled Bat **Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU)  
James Booth via natureshare.org.au

# Reptiles



*Amphibolurus muricatus***Jacky Dragon or Tree Dragon****Common**

The Jacky Dragon is pale grey to dark brown above. It has a series of large black angular patches along the middle of its back bordered by a pale grey stripe from neck to tail. The pale stripe may be broken into rounded rectangular shapes or diamond shapes. Body length is around 10cm with a long tapering tail. Jacky Dragons have a bright yellow mouth lining. They can often be seen during the day basking on logs or fallen branches. They feed on insects.

**Habitat:** Wide range of habitats from dry forests, woodland, heathland and coastal scrub.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Cats, dogs and foxes.



**Photo credit:** Ricardo Simao

*Austrelaps***Lowland Copperhead Snake****Common**

The Lowland Copperhead Snake is variable in colour ranging from light-grey, reddish-brown to black. Paler individuals often have a darker colour on the neck and a dark narrow line down the back. They grow up to 1.2m long. Although they are venomous, bites are uncommon as the species is not aggressive. Lowland Copperhead Snakes feed mainly on frogs, lizards and other snakes and range of small vertebrates.

**Habitat:** Wetter areas such as streams, marshes and swamps.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, vehicle collisions, bird netting on the ground and human attack.



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
Pauline McCarthy via [natureshare.org.au](http://natureshare.org.au)



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
James Booth via natureshare.org.au

### *Chelodina longicollis*

## Common Long-necked Turtle

### Common in Victoria

The Common Long-necked Turtle shell grows up to 25cm long. It has variable colour from brown to black on the upper shell and pale yellow underneath with black lines. It has a long thin neck and a slightly flattened head with eyes on the side of the head. Common Long-necked Turtles prey upon crustaceans, as well as aquatic bugs, tadpoles, frogs and small fish.

**Habitat:** Swamps, billabongs and slow-moving rivers or creeks.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Vehicle collisions. Cats, dogs and foxes. Pet trade.



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
Wendy Moore via natureshare.org.au

### *Christinus marmoratus*

## Marbled Gecko

### Common

The Marbled Gecko is a small, soft-bellied lizard that grows up to 56mm long, excluding tail. It has a flattened body with large toe-pads and is active at night. The Marbled Gecko varies from grey to light-brown above, with a fine network of darker markings giving a marbled appearance. They feed on a variety of insects and can accumulate fat stores in their tail, to be used when food is scarce.

**Habitat:** Drier forests and woodlands. The Marbled Gecko mainly lives in trees, hiding under the bark of trees, fallen timber or logs during the day, but it also lives in rocky areas.

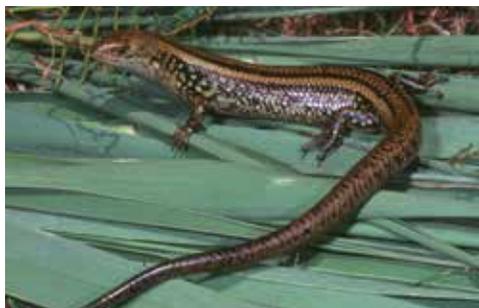
**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Removal of fallen timber for firewood. Cats, dogs and foxes.

*Lissolepis coventryi***Swamp Skink****Vulnerable in Victoria**

The Swamp Skink is a medium-sized skink growing up to 10cm long excluding the long thick tail. Upper body is usually olive-green, with prominent black stripes along its sides, from shoulder to base of tail. It has a cream stripe along the upper lip. They feed on a wide variety of small invertebrates such as spiders, beetles, moths and bugs, as well as plant material.

**Habitat:** The Swamp Skink is only found in swampy areas with tea-trees and sedges, and some coastal marshes.

**Threats:** Habitat loss through swamp drainage. Cats, dogs and foxes.



**Photo credit:** Nick Clemann

*Drysdalia coronoides***White-lipped Snake****Common**

The White-lipped Snake is a small species of snake that grows up to 40cm long. It has a distinct white stripe along the upper lip. Colour varies from brick-red, through to olive-green or dark grey on the head and back with a salmon-pink belly. White-lipped Snakes feed on small skinks and occasionally frogs. The White-lipped Snake is venomous, and while generally not considered dangerous, should be treated with caution.

**Habitat:** Wetter areas within forests, woodland and heathland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, vehicle collisions and human attack.



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
James Booth via natureshare.org.au



Photo credit: Ricardo Simao

### *Notechis scutatus*

## Eastern Tiger Snake

### **Common**

The Eastern Tiger Snake is variable in colour from brown, olive, grey to black. The most usual pattern is alternating light and dark bands, but this is not always the case. The belly is cream, yellow, olive-green or grey. They grow up to 1.2m long. Eastern Tiger Snakes mainly feed on frogs, but will also eat other small vertebrates. Extremely venomous.

**Habitat:** Found in a wide range of habitats from wet swamps to dry forests and woodlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, vehicle collisions, bird netting on the ground and human attack.



Blotched Blue-tongue (Photo credit: (CC BY 2.5 AU) James Booth via naturesshare.org.au)

### *Tiliqua nigrolutea/scincoides*

## Blotched and Eastern Blue-tongue Lizard

### **Common (Blotched Blue-tongue locally rare)**

Blue-tongue Lizards are large skinks that grow up to 30cm long excluding the tail. Their head is quite distinct from their body, their legs and tail are relatively short. The Blotched Blue-tongue has a dark-grey to black back with light patches or blotches. The Eastern Blue-tongue has a paler background with several darker cross bars on the back. Both species have a vivid blue tongue. Blue-tongue Lizards feed on slow-moving prey such as snails and beetles, as well as fruit and flowers.

**Habitat:** wide range of open habitats from grasslands, woodlands, forests, heathland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, vehicle collisions, cats, dogs and foxes, snail pellets.

## Skinks

Skinks represent that largest family of Australian lizards. Typically, they grow to around 8 to 10cm in length and are usually brown or grey and can have different markings or stripes depending on the species. Skinks have the ability to drop their tail when feeling threatened, leaving the wriggling tail piece behind while the skink escapes. A sleek body and quick reflexes makes them excellent hunters of insects such as moths, crickets and cockroaches.

**Habitat:** Skinks occupy a wide range of habitats from forest, woodland, coastal scrub, heathland, grassland and saltmarsh.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats, dogs and foxes. Pesticides in ingested insects.

### Frankston skinks

Eastern Three-lined Skink (*Bassiana duperreyi*)

Delicate Skink (*Lampropholis delicata*)

Garden Skink (*Lampropholis guichenoti*)

Bougainville's Skink (*Lerista bougainvillii*)

Swamp Skink (*Lissolepis coventryi*)

Metallic Skink (*Niveoscincus metallicus*)

Weasel Skink (*Saproscincus mustelinus*)

Blotched Blue-tongue Lizard  
(*Tiliqua nigrolutea*)

Eastern Blue-tongue Lizard  
(*Tiliqua scincoides*)



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
James Booth via natureshare.org.au



Delicate Skink (**Photo credit:** CC BY 2.5 AU )  
James Booth via natureshare.org.au

# Frogs

Visit the Frogs of Victoria website where you can listen to frog calls to help you identify your local frogs. [frogs.org.au/frogs/of/Victoria/](https://frogs.org.au/frogs/of/Victoria/)



*Crinia signifera*

## Eastern Common Froglet

### **Common**

The Eastern Common Froglet is a small brown or grey frog with variable markings that grows up to 30mm long. It has a dark triangular marking on the upper lip and darker bands on the legs. There is a small white spot at the base of each arm. The underside is a similar colour to the back but may be mottled with white spots. Eastern Common Froglets feed on small insects such as mosquitoes and flies.

**Habitat:** Most habitats that have slow-moving streams and wetlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss including wetland drainage. Chytrid fungus. Poor water quality. Prolonged drought. Cats, dogs and foxes. Introduced fish such as Eastern Gambusia that eat tadpoles. Pesticides.



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
James Booth via natureshare.org.au

*Limnodynastes dumerili*

## Pobblebonk

### **Common**

The Pobblebonk is also known as the Eastern Banjo Frog because of its loud, distinctive 'bonk' call. It is a large species that grows up to 85mm long. Pobblebonks are variable in colour and pattern and may be plain, spotted or striped. The skin on the back may be warty. They have a distinctive gland on each hind leg and a pale raised stripe from below the eye to the top of the front leg. Pobblebonks are a burrowing frog which uses its front and back legs to dig itself backwards into soft mud. They feed on insects, worms and spiders.

**Habitat:** Pobblebonks are found across a wide range of habitats that contain slow-moving streams and wetlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss including wetland drainage. Chytrid fungus. Poor water quality. Prolonged drought. Cats, dogs and foxes. Introduced fish such as Eastern Gambusia that eat tadpoles. Pesticides.



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
James Booth via natureshare.org.au



Photo credit: Ian Moodie

### *Limnodynastes peronii*

## Striped Marsh Frog

#### **Common**

The Striped Marsh Frog grows up to 75mm long and is pale fawn to golden-brown with alternating dark-brown to black stripes on its back. A distinctive pale yellow stripe runs down the middle of its back. It has a black mask from the nostril, through the eye to the shoulder. Striped Marsh Frogs feed on small insects and any animal they can fit in their mouth including smaller frogs, birds and mice.

**Habitat:** A wide range of habitats that contain slow-moving streams and wetlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss including wetland drainage. Chytrid fungus. Poor water quality. Prolonged drought. Cats, dogs and foxes. Introduced fish such as Eastern Gambusia that eat tadpoles. Pesticides.



Photo credit: (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
Russell Best via natureshare.org.au

### *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*

## Spotted Marsh Frog

#### **Common in Victoria but locally rare**

The Spotted Marsh Frog grows to 45mm long, is light-brown to olive-green with large, irregular green or brown spots. There is often a thin cream or yellow stripe from the snout to vent. The underside is white. Spotted Marsh Frogs also have a distinctive golden iris if you get close enough! They mainly eat insects and spiders.

**Habitat:** A wide range of habitats that contain slow-moving streams and wetlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss including wetland drainage. Chytrid fungus. Poor water quality. Prolonged drought. Cats, dogs and foxes. Introduced fish such as Eastern Gambusia that eat tadpoles. Pesticides.

*Litoria ewingi*

## Southern Brown Tree Frog

### **Common**

The Southern Brown Tree Frog grows up to 45mm long. It is a brown frog with a board darker band from the eyes down most of the back. It has a dark band from the nostril, through the eye, to the shoulder. A pale white stripe runs from the mouth to the arm. The back of the thighs are red. They feed on small insects such as mosquitoes, moths and flies.

**Habitat:** In low damp vegetation and around slow-moving streams and wetland in forest, grasslands and heathland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss including wetland drainage. Chytrid fungus. Poor water quality. Prolonged drought. Cats, dogs and foxes. Introduced fish such as Eastern Gambusia that eat tadpoles. Pesticides.



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James Booth via natureshare.org.au

*Pseudophryne semimarmorata*

## Southern Toadlet

### **Vulnerable in Victoria**

The Southern Toadlet, also known as the Marbled Toadlet is a small frog that grows up to 35mm. It is dark-brown to olive-green above and has prominent band of black and white marbling on the belly against an orange background. They feed on small insects such as mosquitoes, moths and flies.

**Habitat:** A variety of damp habitats in eucalypt forests, woodland and grassland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Cats, dogs and foxes. Chytrid fungus. Climate changes impacting on the success of the breeding season. Males start calling after the first autumn rains and stop calling when nights get below 10°C. Study of the climatic records has found that there have been a number of years since 2010 in which the arrival of autumn rains has been late and night time temperatures have dropped below 10°C. Under these conditions the success of the breeding season has been limited.



**Photo credit:** Malcolm Legg

# Bushland Birds



*Acanthiza pusilla*

### **Brown Thornbill**

**Common**

The Brown Thornbill is a small bird that grows up to 10cm. It is brown to olive-brown above and paler below. The breast and throat are grey with darker streaks. The rump is reddish-brown and the tail grey. Brown Thornbills mainly feed on insects but may sometimes eat seed, nectar or fruit.

**Habitat:** Found in a variety of habitats where there is dense cover including forest, woodland, scrubland, heathland and along water courses.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.



**Photo credit:** Ian Moodie

*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*

### **Eastern Spinebill**

**Common in Victoria but locally rare**

The Eastern Spinebill is a small honeyeater with a long curved bill. It grows up to 16cm. The upper body is dark-brown with a black crown. The lower body is rufous-buff. Throat white with a black border and rufous patch in the centre. Eastern Spinebills feed on nectar and small insects.

**Habitat:** Forest and woodland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.



**Photo credit:** Ian Moodie



**Photo credit:** Raf Heriot

*Eopsaltria australis*

### **Eastern Yellow Robin**

#### **Common in Victoria but locally rare**

The Eastern Yellow Robin has a grey head and back, and yellow underparts with an olive-yellow rump. They grow up to 16cm. Young Eastern Yellow Robins are rufous-brown. They feed on insects and spiders.

**Habitat:** Forest and woodlands with a thick understorey.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.



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*Lathamus discolor*

### **Swift Parrot**

#### **Endangered**

The Swift Parrot is a slim, streamlined parrot that grows up to 26cm long. The body is mainly bright-green, with a dark-blue patch on the crown. The forehead to throat is red, as is the tail, and there is a red patch on the shoulder. The Swift Parrot breeds in Tasmania in spring-summer and migrates to Victoria during winter before continuing on to Queensland and South Australia. Having suitable habitat in Frankston City enables them to rest and refuel as an important stopover after crossing Bass Strait. They feed on eucalypt nectar as well as some seeds and flowers.

**Habitat:** Forest and woodlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. The clearing of native forest has been identified as the major reason for species decline.

*Hirundo neoxena*

## Welcome Swallow

### Common

The Welcome Swallow is metallic blue-black above, light-grey below and rust on the forehead, throat and upper breast. It grows to 15cm and has a long, forked tail. Welcome Swallows feed on a variety of insects usually caught in flight. The prey is guided into the bird's wide, open mouth with the help of bristles bordering the bill.

**Habitat:** Common in many habitats except dense forests.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.



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Chris Lindorff via natureshare.org.au

*Malurus cyaneus*

## Superb Fairy-wren

### Common

Adult male Superb Fairy-wrens have rich blue and black plumage on the head and throat. The belly is grey-white. Females and young are mostly brown above with a dull-red area around the eyes, and a pale lower body. Superb Fairy-wrens feed on small insects and spiders and are usually seen in small social groups.

**Habitat:** Most habitats with dense low cover.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.



**Photo credit:** Amy Motherwell



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
Pauline McCarthy via natureshare.org.au

### *Pachycephala pectoralis*

## Golden Whistler

#### **Common**

The adult male Golden Whistler is bright-yellow on the underside, olive-green on the back and wings. The head is black with a yellow collar, and the throat is white with a black border. Females are grey above and paler below. Golden Whistlers feed on small insects and spiders and some berries.

**Habitat:** Dense woodland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation.  
C Predation by cats.



### *Pardalotus punctatus*

## Spotted Pardalote

#### **Common**

The head, wings and tail of the Spotted Pardalote are black with small white spots. The face and neck are grey and the eyebrow is white. Males have a yellow throat and red rump. Females are similar but have less distinctive markings. They grow up to 9cm. Spotted Pardalotes feed on insects and sugary sap from leaves and psyllids (tiny native sap-sucking insect).

**Habitat:** Forest and woodland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation.  
Predation by cats.

*Phaps chalcoptera*

### Common Bronzewing

#### **Common in Victoria but locally rare**

Common Bronzewings are heavily-built pigeons that grow up to 36cm. They have distinctive metallic patches of blue, red and green on the wings. There is a white line above and below the eye. The male has a pale-yellow to white forehead and pink breast. Common Bronzewings feed on the ground in small groups eating seeds, fruit and plant material.

**Habitat:** Most habitats.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats, dogs and foxes.



*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*

### New Holland Honeyeater

#### **Common**

The New Holland Honeyeater is mostly black and white, with a large yellow wing patch and yellow sides on the tail. It has a white ring around the eye. This very active honeyeater grows to 18cm. New Holland Honeyeaters mainly feed on the nectar of flowers. Other food items include fruit, insects and spiders.

**Habitat:** Heath, forest and woodland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.





*Platycercus eximius*

### Eastern Rosella

#### **Common**

The Eastern Rosella is a medium-sized parrot that grows up to 30cm. It has a red head, neck and breast, with yellowish to greenish upper parts, blue shoulders and distinctive white cheek patches. It has a yellow underbody, a blue-green rump and a red undertail. The Eastern Rosella eats seeds, fruits, buds, flowers, nectar and insects.

**Habitat:** Woodland, open forests, timbered watercourses, scrublands and grassland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats. Pet trade. Competition for nest hollows with introduced birds such as Common Starlings.



*Rhipidura fuliginosa*

### Grey Fantail

#### **Common**

The Grey Fantail is grey above, with white eyebrow, throat and tail edge. The tail is fan-shaped. It grows up to 15cm. It is a very active bird that performs aerial twists and turns as it chases flying insects.

**Habitat:** Forest, woodland, scrubland and timbered watercourses.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.

*Sericornis frontalis*

### White-browed Scrubwren

#### **Common**

The White-browed Scrubwren is dark olive-brown above, with greyish chest. It has a white eyebrow above the eye, and another white line below the eye. Between these lines is a black eye patch. The underside is grey with reddish tinge. The eye is light cream. White-browed Scrubwrens grow up to 12cm. They feed on small insects in leaf litter.

**Habitat:** Open forest, woodland and heathland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.



*Trichoglossus haematodus*

### Rainbow Lorikeet

#### **Common**

The Rainbow Lorikeet is a brightly coloured parrot that grows to 28cm. They have a bright-red beak, blue head and belly, green wings, tail and back and an orange-yellow breast. Rainbow Lorikeets mainly feed on flowers, nectar and fruit. The lorikeet has a brush on the end of its tongue to help with sipping up nectar and pollen.

**Habitat:** Open forest, woodland, heathland and timbered watercourses.

**Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation. Predation by cats.. Pet trade. Competition for nest hollows with introduced birds such as Common Starlings.



# Birds of Prey



*Accipiter fasciatus*

## Australian or Brown Goshawk

### **Common**

The Australian Goshawk has a powdery-grey to brown head, back and tail, and reddish-brown and white barred front. The legs and toes are yellow. Females grow up to 50cm and males to 40cm. The Australian Goshawk feeds on small mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs and occasionally insects, and sometimes carrion (dead animals).

**Habitat:** Forest, woodland and along watercourses.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Collision with overhead powerlines, fences and vehicles while eating road kill.



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Thomas Nataprawira via natureshare.org.au

*Aquila audax*

## Wedge-tailed Eagle

### **Common in Victoria but locally rare**

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is a large brown eagle with long-feathered legs and a diamond or wedge shaped tail. The tail shape is prominent when seen soaring. It grows to about 1m long with wingspan of up to 2.5m. The Wedge-tailed Eagle feeds on rodents, rabbits, small marsupials and birds.

**Habitat:** Found in wide range of territory from forest, woodland to open plains.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Deliberate persecution. Secondary poisoning from eating poisoned rabbits. Collision with overhead powerlines, fences and vehicles while eating road kill.



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**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
Pauline McCarthy via natureshare

### *Circus approximans*

## Swamp Harrier

### **Common in Victoria but locally rare**

The Swamp Harrier has a brown back and wings. The male is greyer brown and has pale belly and chest streaked with brown, the female has reddish-brown chest and belly. The tail is long and broad with dark bars and paler in the male. It has an indistinct brown face mask. The legs, feet and eyes are yellow. Females are larger than males and grow to about 58cm long. Swamp Harriers feed on birds, eggs, insects, frogs, reptiles, small mammals.

**Habitat:** Wetlands, swamps and grasslands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss.



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Chris Lindorff via natureshare.org.au

### *Elanus axillaris*

## Black-shouldered Kite

### **Common**

The Black-shouldered Kite is pale grey above, with a white head, underside and tail. The shoulders are black, and the wings have black tips. It has a red eye and yellow nostrils, legs and feet. It is often seen hovering with feet hanging down. The Black-shouldered Kite grows up to 36cm and has a wing span of 80cm–100cm. It feeds on rodents and insects such as grasshoppers.

**Habitat:** Grassy woodland and grasslands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss.

*Falco berigora*

## **Brown Falcon**

### **Rare**

The Brown Falcon is variable in colour and can be dark brown or lighter brown above, with pale brown or cream underside. The side of the face is lighter brown or creamy brown with a small vertical dark streak below the eye, and another small dark streak behind the eye. The underside of the wings and tail are pale brown with darker streaks. Females are larger than males growing to 50cm long. The Brown Falcon feeds on small mammals, reptiles and insects.

**Habitat:** Grassland and open woodland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Collision with overhead powerlines, fences and vehicles while eating road kill.



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Chris Clarke via [natureshare.org.au](http://natureshare.org.au)

*Falco cenchroides*

## **Nankeen or Australian Kestrel**

### **Common**

The Nankeen Kestrel is a small hawk that grows to 35cm long. The upper parts are mostly rufous, with some dark streaking. The wings are tipped with black. The underside are pale-buff, streaked with black. The Nankeen Kestrel feeds on small mammals, reptiles, small birds and insects.

**Habitat:** Open grasslands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss.



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*Falco longipennis*

### Little Falcon or Australian Hobby

#### Common

The Australian Hobby is a small, slim falcon that grows to 35cm, with a wingspan of 90cm. It has a long square-cut tail and blunt wing tips. It has a black hood, cream or buff half collar, blueish-grey upper wings and a fawn front with black streaks. The eye-ring is pale-blue. The Australian Hobby feeds on small birds, bats and flying insects.

**Habitat:** Open woodlands, grasslands with trees and timbered wetlands and watercourses.

**Threats:** Habitat loss.



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Russell Best via [natureshare.org.au](http://natureshare.org.au)

*Ninox novaeseelandiae*

### Southern Boobook or Mopoke Owl

#### Rare

The Southern Boobook Owl is the smallest owl that grows to 36cm. It is dark brown above and rufous-brown below with white streaks and spots. The face has a brown disc and the eyes are large and yellow. Young Boobooks are whitish with dark brown faces. Southern Boobooks feed on small mammals such as mice and bats and flying insects.

**Habitat:** Forest, woodlands and grasslands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss, particularly of large trees with nesting hollows. Cats and rats are potential predators. Secondary poisoning from eating poisoned rats and mice.

*Ninox strenua*

## **Powerful Owl**

### **Endangered**

The Powerful Owl is a large owl that grows to 66cm. It is dark grey-brown above and white underneath with grey-brown v-shaped markings. The feet are dull-yellow with powerful, heavy claws. The Powerful Owls eyes are large and golden. It feeds on tree-dwelling mammals such as the Ringtail Possum and Sugar Glider. It will also take roosting birds and sometimes small ground-dwelling marsupials and rabbits.

**Habitat:** Forests and woodlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss, particularly large hollow-bearing trees for nesting. Reduced habitat also impacts the Powerful Owl in terms of a reduction of tree-dwelling marsupials to feed on.



**Photo credit:** Nick Bradshaw

*Podargus strigoides*

## **Tawny Frogmouth**

### **Common**

The Tawny Frogmouth is generally silver-grey, slightly paler below, streaked and mottled with black and fawn colouring. The tail is finely banded dark and light grey. The large eyes are yellow and the heavy bill is olive-grey to black. It grows up to 50cm long. During the day Tawny Frogmouths perch on tree branches camouflaged as they sleep. They are active at night feeding on predominantly insects, worms, snails and slugs but they will also eat frogs, reptiles, small birds and mammals if the opportunity arises.

**Habitat:** Forest, woodland, timbered watercourses.

**Threats:** Habitat loss, particularly of mature trees. Vehicle collisions while chasing insects illuminated in headlights. Cats, dogs and foxes when on the ground hunting. Secondary poisoning from eating poisoned rats and mice.



**Photo credit:** Amy Motherwell

# Waterway and Wetland Birds



*Acrocephalus stentoreus*

### Clamorous Reed-warbler

**Common in Victoria but locally rare**

Clamorous Reed-warbler grows to 20cm long. It has a plain olive-brown back and whitish underparts washed with brown. It has a faint fawn eyebrow and a sturdy pointed bill. The Clamorous Reed-warbler clings to reed-stems and forages on floating vegetation. It feeds on insects and other small invertebrates.

**Habitat:** Wetland reed beds.

**Threats:** Habitat particular draining of wetlands. Drought. Poor water quality.



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU)  
Thomas Nataprawira via natureshare.org.au

*Anas superciliosa*

### Pacific Black Duck

**Common**

The Pacific Black Duck is an average-sized duck that grows to 55cm long. The body is dark-brown with a pale face and throat. It has a distinctive black eye-stripe that stretches from the top of the bill through the eye. It has iridescent green patch on wing. The Pacific Black Duck feeds mainly on vegetation, particularly the seeds of aquatic plants. It will also eat crustaceans, molluscs and aquatic insects.

**Habitat:** Wetlands, ponds, lakes and tidal mudflats.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Drought. Poor water quality. Recreational shooting. Artificial feeding of processed food such as bread.



**Photo credit:** Raf Heriot



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU)  
Chris Clarke via natureshare.org.au

*Ardea modesta*

### Eastern Great Egret

**Common in Victoria but locally rare**

The Great Egret is a large white water bird with yellow bill that grows to 80cm tall. The neck is about one and a half times as long as the body. It has dark grey or black legs. The bill becomes very dark almost black in the breeding season, and the skin on face becomes greenish. The Great Egret also grows long plumes on its back during the breeding season. It eats molluscs, crustaceans, frogs and insects.

**Habitat:** Wetlands with shallow water, wet grasslands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Drought. Poor water quality.



*Egretta novaehollandiae*

### White-faced Heron

**Common**

The White-faced Heron grows to 65cm tall. It is a light blue-grey heron with a white face. Young birds have less white on the face. Adults have yellow legs and juveniles have greenish yellow legs. The White-faced Heron feeds on fish, insects and amphibians.

**Habitat:** Any habitat with water from wetlands, rock pools, tidal flats and wet grasslands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Poor water quality.

*Calidris acuminata*

### Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

#### **Migratory**

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is a brownish grey wading bird that grows to 21cm long. It has a reddish brown on top of the head and a white face with darker band through the eye. It is heavily marked with dark and light pattern. Migrates to Australia from August to March. The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper feeds on insects, crustaceans and molluscs.

**Habitat:** Coastal beaches, mudflats, wet grasslands, margins of freshwater wetlands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss of wetlands. Poor water quality. Climate change and severe weather.



*Calidris ruficollis*

### Red-necked Stint

#### **Migratory**

The Red-necked Stint is a small sandpiper that grows up to 16cm long. In non-breeding plumage, the upper parts are brown and grey-brown, with most feathers pale-edged, giving a mottled effect. There is a pale eye-stripe. The rump and tail are black and the outer tail-feathers and sides of rump white. The underparts are white with some grey on the sides of the breast. Eyes are dark brown. Bill and legs black. The Red-necked Stint arrives in Australia during summer for the non-breeding season. They feed on seeds, insects, small vertebrates, plants in saltmarshes, molluscs, snails and crustaceans.

**Habitat:** Coastal bays and inlets, shallow wetlands and swamps.

**Threats:** Habitat loss of wetlands. Poor water quality. Climate change and severe weather.



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*Chenonetta jubata*

## Australian Wood Duck

### Common

The Australian Wood Duck grows up to 45cm. It is light coloured with brown head. Pale grey with two dark stripes along the back. Speckled grey-brown chest. Females have two white stripes on the face. Males have a dark-brown head and black lower belly and undertail. The Australian Wood Duck feeds on grasses, other herbs and some insects.

**Habitat:** Grasslands, wetlands, open woodlands and coastal inlets.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Predation by cats, dogs and foxes.



**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
Chris Clarke via [natureshare.org.au](http://natureshare.org.au)

*Gallinago hardwickii*

## Latham's Snipe

### Migratory: Vulnerable

Latham's Snipe grows up to 33cm long. The bill is long and straight, legs short. The wings are short and pointed and the tail is long. The upper body is patterned with black, brown and white. There is a dark-brown cheek stripe and dark line through the eye. Latham's Snipe feeds on seeds and plant material, worms, spiders, insects and some molluscs. It arrives in Australia during summer for the non-breeding season.

**Habitat:** Wetlands, swamps and saltmarshes.

**Threats:** Habitat loss of wetlands. Drought. Poor water quality. Climate change and severe weather.

*Larus pacificus/ Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*

## Pacific and Silver Gull

### **Common**

The Pacific Gull is a large gull that grows up to 67cm. It has a white head and body with mainly black wings and a white tail with a broad black band near the end. It has a massive yellow bill tipped red. The legs are yellow. The Silver Gull grows to 43cm. It is white with silver-grey upper parts. White eye and red bill and legs. Both gulls forage for molluscs, fish and other marine animals. The Silver Gull in particular, has become a very successful scavenger.

**Habitat:** Coasts and islands. Inland near large expanses of water.

**Threats:** Dogs. Entanglement in fishing lines and nets. Ingesting plastic.

*Porphyrio porphyrio*

## Purple Swamphen

### **Common**

The Purple Swamphen is a large rail that grows up to 46cm. It is dusky black above, with a broad dark-blue collar, and dark-blue to purple below. As the Purple Swamphen walks, it flicks its tail up and down, revealing its white undertail. The bill is red, and the legs and feet orange-red. The Purple Swamphen feeds on the shoots of reeds and rushes, frogs and snails.

**Habitat:** Freshwater swamps, streams and marshes.

**Threats:** Habitat loss particularly draining of swamps and marshes. Drought. Poor water quality. Dogs and foxes.



Silver Gull



Pacific Gull





**Photo credit:** (CC BY 2.5 AU )  
Andrew Allen via [natureshare.org.au](http://natureshare.org.au)

*Chlidonias hybrida*  
**Whiskered Tern**

**Migratory: Common**

The Whiskered Tern grows up to 25cm and is often seen on inland wetlands. The non-breeding adult has pale-grey back and wings, white underside, mottled black cap on head, pink legs and dark bill. In the breeding season the cap is black, bill is red and chest darker-grey. The Whiskered Tern feeds on fish, frogs, crustaceans and insects. They feed on land and in the water.

**Habitat:** Freshwater wetlands, swamps, lakes and wet grassland.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Drought. Poor water quality. Climate change and severe weather.



*Vanellus miles*  
**Masked Lapwing**

**Common**

Masked Lapwing, or Spur-winged Plover, is a large, ground-dwelling bird that grows up to 38cm. It is mainly white below, with brown wings and back and black on the crown, hind neck and sides of the breast. Birds have large yellow wattles covering the face, and are equipped with a thorny spur that projects from the wrist on each wing. Masked Lapwings feed on insects and their larvae, and earthworms.

**Habitat:** Marshes, mudflats, beaches and grasslands.

**Threats:** Habitat loss. Cats, dogs, foxes and rats.

## Migratory Shorebirds

Around 50 migratory shorebirds undertake the longest known migration of any species, flying the length of the East Asian Australasian Flyway from the Arctic Circle, where they breed each year, to Australia for the southern summer.

This is an important time for migratory shorebirds to feed on invertebrates on the mudflats in coastal and inland wetlands, as it allows them to build reserves of fat for the long return journey to the northern hemisphere in the southern autumn.

The smallest migratory shorebird to visit Victoria is the Red-necked Stint that grows up to 15cm. In comparison, the Eastern Curlew is our largest migratory shorebird that grows up to 65cm.

Destruction and degradation of wetlands and intertidal habitats means migratory shorebirds have experienced population declines of up to 80% over the last 30 years. The conservation of wetlands which provide suitable habitat for breeding along the migratory route and at their non-breeding summer destinations in Victoria and elsewhere is critical to their survival and requires international cooperation. Edithvale-Seafood Wetlands is listed under the international RAMSAR Convention as a critical wetland for the protection of migratory wading birds.

People can help to conserve coastal habitats for these birds by being aware that they share the wetlands and beaches with these special birds. Keep your distance from the birds so that you don't disturb them, and ensure your dog is on a leash.

### Migratory visitors to Frankston

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)

Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)

Long-toed Stint (*Calidris subminuta*)

Double-banded Plover (*Charadrius bicinctus*)

Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)

Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*)

Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*)



**Photo credit:** Double-banded Plover  
(CC BY 2.5 AU ) Chris Clarke via natureshare.org.au



Red-kneed Dotterel



Pacific Golden Plover



**Photo credit:** Curlew Sandpiper (CC BY 2.5 AU) Chris Clarke via natureshare.org.au



Ruddy Turnstone **Photo Credit:** Ricardo Simao

# Fish



### *Galaxiella pusilla*

## Dwarf Galaxias

### **Endangered**

Dwarf Galaxias is Victoria's smallest freshwater fish growing to a maximum of 4cm long. It is transparent olive-amber in colour with black stripes on each side of the body and a silver belly. In the spawning season (August-September) males have a bright orange stripe between the middle and lower black stripes and females have a silvery-white stripe between the middle and lower dark stripes. Dwarf Galaxias can travel between streams and ponds if there is a thin layer of moving water at least 2mm deep. They feed on aquatic invertebrates.

**Habitat:** Vegetated margins of shallow, slow-moving coastal creeks, drains and swamps. Boggy Creek is important habitat to this species in the South-east region of Melbourne.

**Threats:** Habitat loss particularly wetland drainage and altered flow regimes. Drought. Predation and competition from introduced fish such as the Eastern Gambusia.



**Photo credit:** Rhys Coleman

### *Nannoperca australis*

## Southern Pygmy Perch

### **Common in Victoria but locally rare**

The Southern Pygmy Perch is a small freshwater fish that grows up to 65mm long. It has a brownish-green body with black blotches. There is a deep notch on its dorsal fin. The fins are usually clear, but breeding males in spring develop a bright-red colour towards the base of the fins as well as some black fin markings. The Southern Pygmy Perch feeds on small insects such as mosquitoes.

**Habitat:** Vegetated slow-moving or still waters.

**Threats:** Habitat loss particularly wetland drainage and altered flow regimes. Drought. Predation and competition from introduced fish such as the Eastern Gambusia.



**Photo credit:** Malcolm Legg

# Common name index

Section	Page
<b>Mammals</b>	
Agile Antechinus	16
Black-tailed Wallaby	21
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	17
Brush-tail possum (Common)	21
Common Dolphin	17
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	18
Feathertail Glider	16
Koala	19
Rakali	17
Microbats	22
Ringtail Possum	19
Short-beaked Echidna	20
Sugar Glider	18
Swamp Rat	20
<b>Reptiles</b>	
Blotched Blue-tongue Lizard	27
Common Long-necked Turtle	25
Eastern Blue-tongue Lizard	27
Jacky Dragon	24
Lowland Copperhead Snake	24
Marbled Gecko	25
Swamp Skink	26
Skinks	28
Tiger Snake	27
White-lipped Snake	26

## Frogs

Common Froglet (Eastern)	30
Pobblebonk	30
Southern Brown Tree Frog	32
Southern Toadlet	32
Spotted Marsh Frog	31
Striped Marsh Frog	31

## Bushland Birds

Brown Thornbill	34
Common Bronzewing	38
Eastern Rosella	39
Eastern Spinebill	34
Eastern Yellow Robin	35
Golden Whistler	37
Grey Fantail	39
New Holland Honeyeater	38
Rainbow Lorikeet	40
Spotted Pardalote	37
Superb Fairy-wren	36
Swift Parrot	35
Welcome Swallow	36
White-browed Scrubwren	40

## Birds of Prey

Australian Goshawk	42
Black-shouldered Kite	43
Brown Falcon	44
Little Falcon	45
Nankeen Kestrel	44

# Common name index

Section	Page
Powerful Owl	46
Southern Boobook Owl	45
Swamp Harrier	43
Tawny Frogmouth	46
Wedge-tailed Eagle	42
<b>Waterway and Wetland Birds</b>	
Australian Wood Duck	51
Clamorous Reed Warbler	48
Great Egret (Eastern)	49
Latham's Snipe	51
Masked Lapwing	53
Migratory Shorebirds	54
Pacific Black Duck	48
Pacific Gull	52
Purple Swamphen	52
Red-necked Stint	50
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	50
Silver Gull	52
Whiskered Tern	53
White-faced Heron	49
<b>Fish</b>	
Dwarf Galaxias	57
Southern Pygmy Perch	57





# Further reading

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Museums Victoria, (2006), Melbourne's Wildlife: A Field Guide to the Fauna of Greater Melbourne, CSIRO Publications, Collingwood, Victoria.

Frankston City Council Indigenous Plant Guide, (Frankston City Council publication).

Frankston City Council Invasive Species Guide, (Frankston City Council publication).

*Sustainable Gardening in Frankston City*, (Frankston City Council publication).

*Natural Reserves within the Frankston City*, (Frankston City Council publication).

## Useful websites

### **Frankston City Council**

[www.frankston.vic.gov.au](http://www.frankston.vic.gov.au)

### **Wildlife Victoria**

[wildlife.vic.gov.au](http://wildlife.vic.gov.au)

### **Atlas of Living Australia**

[ala.org.au](http://ala.org.au)

### **Birdlife Australia**

[birdlife.org.au](http://birdlife.org.au)

### **Birds in Backyards**

[birdsinboxyards.net](http://birdsinboxyards.net)

### **Frogs of Australia**

[frogs.org.au/frogs/of/Victoria](http://frogs.org.au/frogs/of/Victoria)

### **Melbourne Water Frog Census**

[melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/waterwatch-programs/frog-census](http://melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/waterwatch-programs/frog-census)

### **Dolphin Research Institute**

[dolphinresearch.org.au](http://dolphinresearch.org.au)

### **Natureshare**

[natureshare.org.au](http://natureshare.org.au)

### **SWIFFT**

[swifft.net.au/Learn](http://swifft.net.au/Learn)

### **Victorian Fisheries Authority**

[vfa.vic.gov.au](http://vfa.vic.gov.au)



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