

Wildlife Toolkit

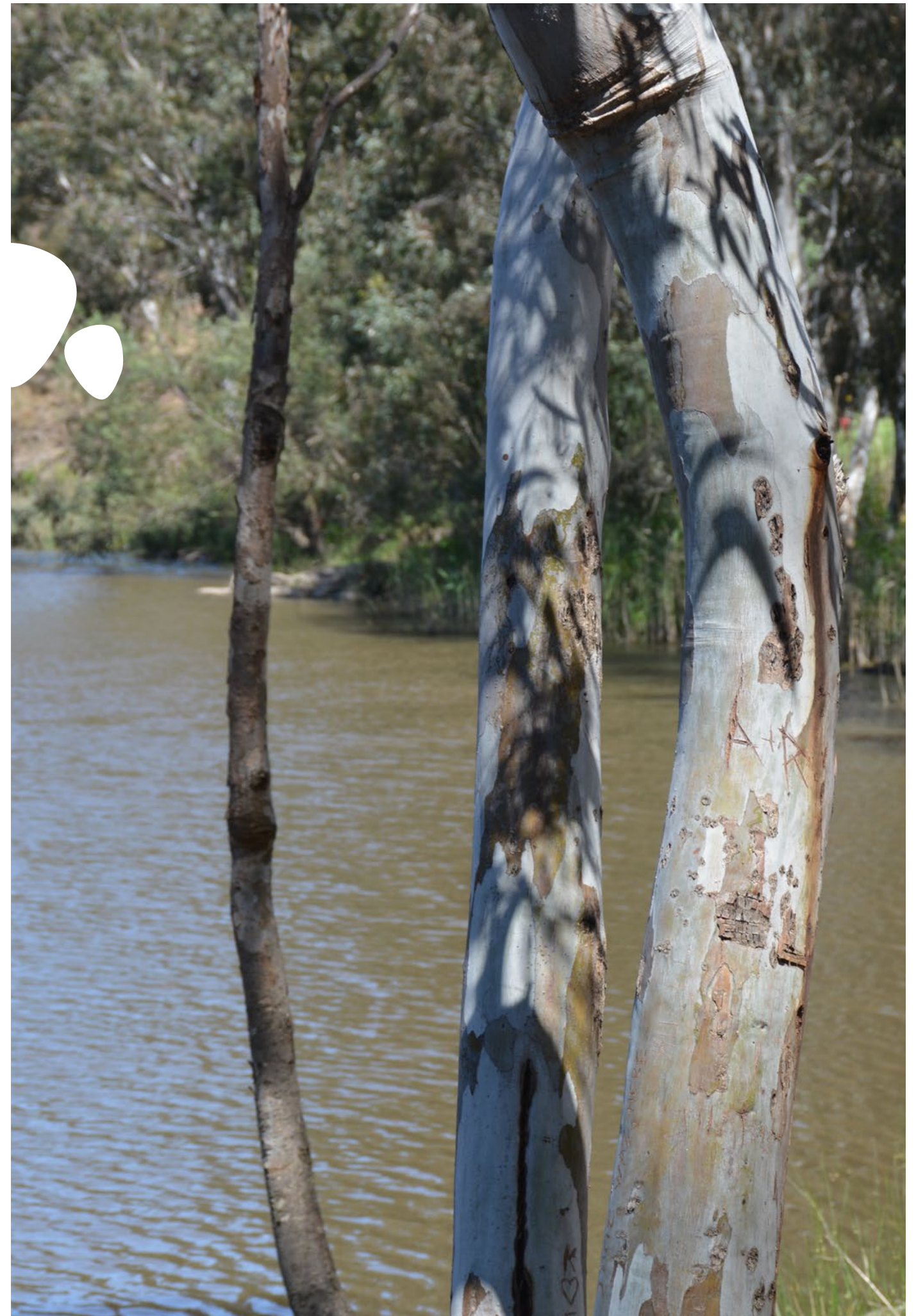
Yarra Riverkeeper Association



Acknowledgment of Country



The Yarra Riverkeeper Association acknowledges that the Yarra Catchment is the traditional land and waters of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nation. We pay our respect to Elders who have cared for country since time began, to the Elders who are healing country today, and to the emerging Elders, who continue the journey of enriching culture. We acknowledge that the river now called the Yarra is traditionally known as the Birrarung and that name has never ceased to be the name of the river.





Introduction

Australia's wildlife plays a key role in maintaining the health of ecosystems surrounding and involving the Yarra River. Observing wildlife from a distance can be an enjoyable way to grow a deeper understanding and connection to animals and the environment. However, it is important to remember to allow wildlife to remain wild; this means that we should not feed, or disturb them.

This toolkit can help you to engage with your local wildlife in a way that helps you grow a relationship with the environment, while not encouraging people to in any way reduce the quality of life for our wild friends.

Wildlife and Ecosystems

Enhancing the health of wildlife and the ecosystems they inhabit is of the utmost importance to creating resilience in the environment. Improving biodiversity is the key to improving the resilience of ecosystems surrounding the Yarra River. By protecting and enhancing wildlife, greater levels of biodiversity can be achieved in and around the Yarra River creating greater propensity for naturally occurring self-maintenance.

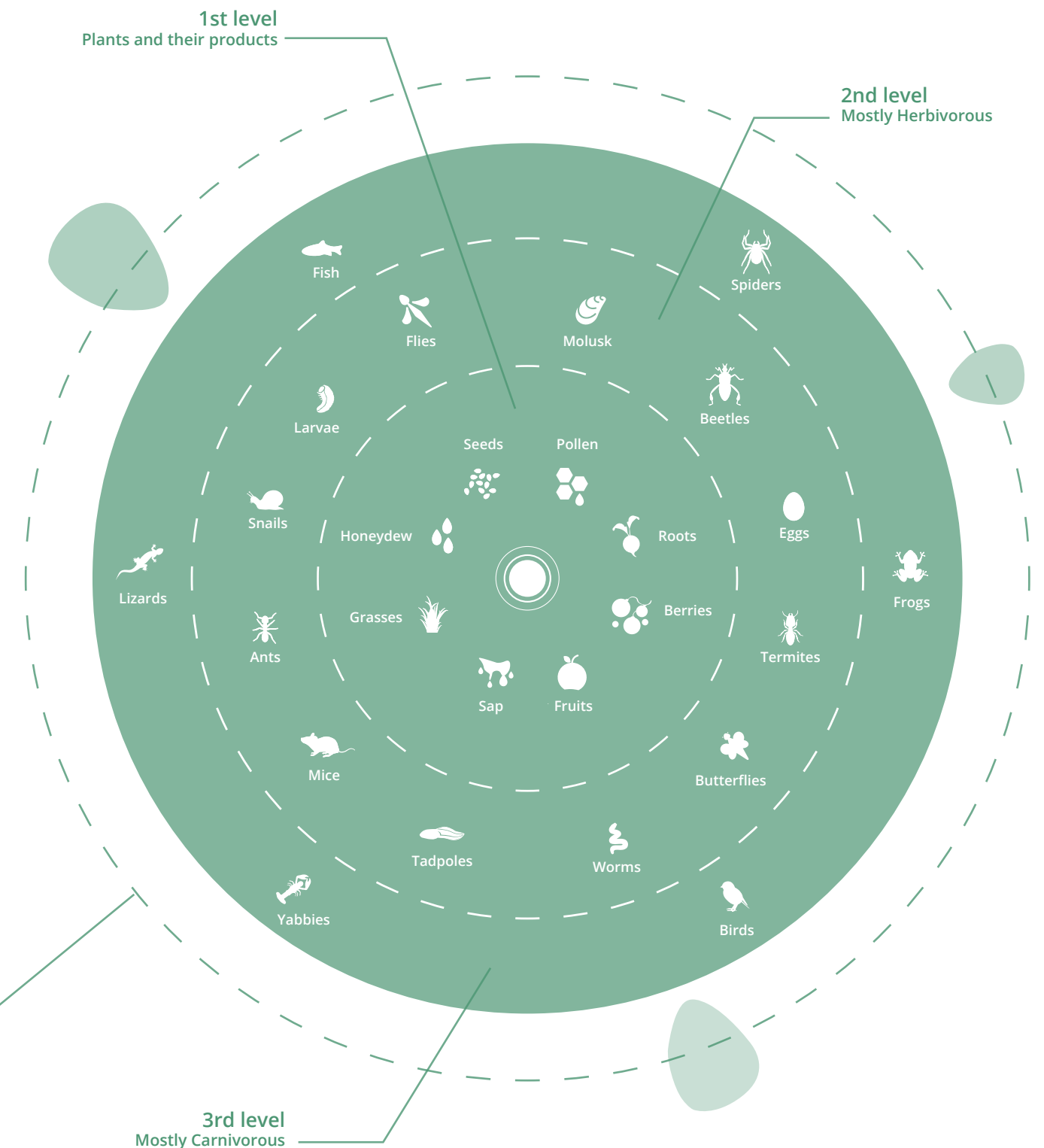
The ecosystem services and amenity of a landscape can be significantly improved by actively working to conserve and protect the health of the ecosystems and communities which it supports. Healthy ecosystems in positive feedback loops

can then contribute to many services that support natural maintenance of the system through increasing nutrient cycling potential, natural management of invasive plants and animals and pollination.

Humans also benefit from enhancing ecosystem services. Many of the services provided by nature enhance our quality of human life through proving a number of key benefits. These can range from services to production derived from increased pollination and increased soil carbon, to cultural enhancement provided by the beauty of a landscape where people are able to live and engage in recreational activities.

Diets

All of the wildlife you will see in this toolkit have a diet consisting of the following animals, insects and plants.



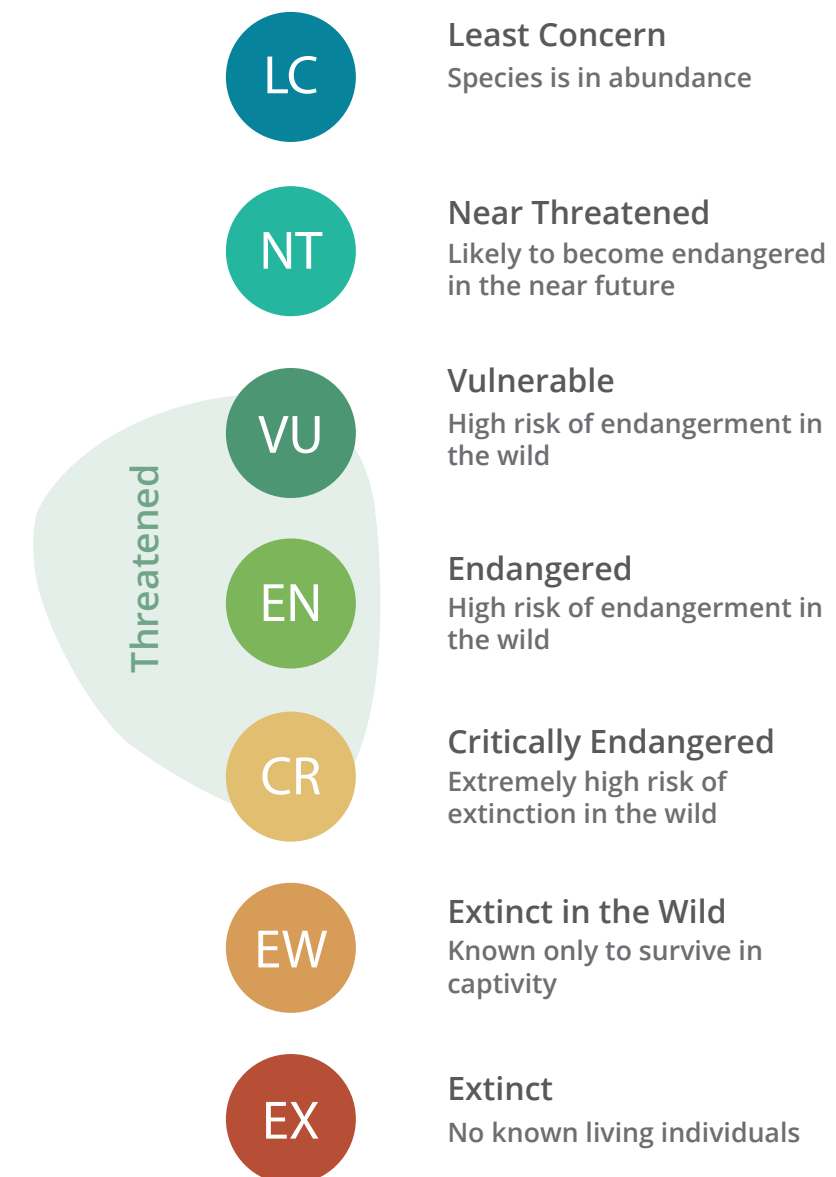
Conservation Status

The conservation status of a species is based on the abundance of individuals within a given species. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List is the most commonly used method for defining this value. It is a tiered system ranging from Least Concern to Extinct. The values prescribed by the IUCN Red List for different species can be used to understand population dynamics and the relative need for support between species.

Why is monitoring the conservation status of a species important? We are currently experiencing the 6th mass extinction event in Earth's history, animals are dying out extremely rapidly across the entire planet. The natural world relies upon balance throughout the ecosystems that it supports to maintain self-sufficient function which provides benefits to humans. One species going missing from a food web can undermine this balance and bring down an ecosystem. Each and every species has

intangible value beyond their own existence based on this need for balance and this is why knowing and understanding when and how to conserve becomes of the utmost importance to ecological restoration and environmental care.

How can we help to conserve animals? One hugely important tool for supporting wildlife is supporting natural habitats for animals. Human domination of landscapes has created a situation where habitat fragmentation and destruction is leading to large numbers of animals dying and broad spread genetic bottlenecking. Being a responsible consumer is also an important contribution that people can make towards protecting the future of wildlife around the world. Many common products contain substances such as palm oil among many others that rely on exploitation of the environment and wildlife is often a casualty of exploitative behaviour.





Gallery of Wildlife

Wildlife

	Common Name	Scientific Name
p12	Red Wattlebird	Anthochaera carunculata
	Blue Tongue Lizard	Malva parviflora L.
	Kookaburra	Dacelo novaeguineae
	Platypus	Ornithorhynchus anatinus
p14	Grey-headed Flying Fox	Pteropus poliocephalus
	Pacific Black Duck	Anas superciliosa
	Sulphur-crested cockatoo	Cacatua galerita
	Pobblebonk Frog	Limnodynastes dumerilii
p16	Short-beaked Echidna	Tachyglossus aculeatus
	Tiger Snake	Notechis scutatus
	Growling Grass Frog	Litoria raniformis
	Pied Cormorant	Phalacrocorax varius
p18	Sugar Glider	Petaurus breviceps
	Helmeted Honeyeater	Lichenostomus melanops
	Leadbeater Possum	Gymnobelideus leadberteri
	Common Wombat	Vombatus ursinus

Diet



Red Wattlebird

Anthochaera carunculata



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Olive-brown on its back and grey-yellow on its belly
- 2 Black facemask with bright yellow tufts around the ears and throat
- 3 Slightly downturned bill

Open dry forests predominantly around eucalypts and often near water

Breeding Season

- July – December
- Raise two broods per season
- Female incubates egg but males do so too
- Pinkish eggs with pale brown and lavender spots

Diet



Blue-tongued Lizard

Malva parviflora L.



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Broad, triangular head
- 2 Grey-brown smooth scales across their body with a pale underside
- 3 Blue tongue

Can be found in most environments all around Australia including coastal, inland and urbanised areas

Breeding Season

- Mating season, September - November
- Birthing season usually between December - January
- Give birth to an average of 10 live young but can be up to 25 offspring

Diet



Photo Anthony Despotellis

Laughing Kookaburra

Dacelo novaeguineae



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Body is off-white on the belly, brown on back and wings
- 2 Tail is broadly barred brown and black with light tip
- 3 White head with dark-brown eye stripe and pointed bill

Any areas where there are suitable and sufficient trees

Breeding Season

- Through summer months starting in October
- Generally lay broods of three in roughly two day intervals

Diet



Platypus

Ornithorhynchus anatinus



Native

NT

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Bird-like bill
- 2 Body covered in dense brown fur
- 3 Webbed feet
- 4 Broad flat tail

In ground burrows often roughly a foot above the water level.

Breeding Season

- Is a monotreme a subspecies of mammal which lays eggs
- June – October breeding season
- Male takes no part in raising young

Diet



Photo
Corentin Massuyeau



Grey-headed Flying Fox

Pteropus poliocephalus



Native

VU

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Dark grey body and grey head, separated by a red-brown collar
- 2 Wingspans may reach up to 1m
- 3 Fur along the legs all the way to the ankle



Found in a variety of habitats including rainforests, woodlands and swamps

Breeding Season

- March - May
- Breeding usually takes place during the day
- Females usually produce one offspring per year

Diet



Photo
Anthony Despotellis



Pacific Black Duck

Anas superciliosa



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Brown feathers with lighter edging across the body and upper wings
- 2 Flight feathers have a green shine
- 3 Have a light head with a dark stripe across each eye and over head



In almost all Australian waterways. They are very common along rivers and streams such as the Yarra

Breeding Season

- Mating coincides with the availability of sufficient food and water
- Two broods are raised per year with relatively high birthing rates, but relatively low survival rates

Diet



Photo
Anthony Despotellis



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Cacatua galerita



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Sulphur (yellow) crest on top of its head
- 2 White body
- 3 44-55cm in length



Variety of timbered habitats, are common around human settlements, often stay in the same location all year round

Breeding Season

- August - January in the south-east and May - September farther north
- Eggs incubated by both male and female

Diet



Photo
Avril Thomas



Pobblebonk Frog

Limnodynastes dumerilii



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Distinctive "bonk" call
- 2 Blue colouration on flank
- 3 Pale mid-dorsal stripe



Found in a variety of habitats including woodlands, rainforests, grassy areas and more developed landscapes such as farmland

Breeding Season

- Breeding season from August - April
- Eggs are laid in clutch of up to 4000 eggs at a time

Diet



Short-beaked Echidna
Tachyglossus aculeatus



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Sharp spines covering its back
- 2 Short legs
- 3 Protruding snout

Breeding Season

- Is a monotreme a subspecies of mammal which lays eggs
- Lays one egg per brood

Found in forests and woodlands, heath, grasslands and arid environments all around Australia including Tasmania

Diet



Photo Stephen Zozaya

Tiger Snake
Notechis scutatus



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Often pale with dark banded stripes like a tiger
- 2 Typically grow up to 1.2m long
- 3 Pale yellow-orange underside

Breeding Season

- Give birth to 20-30 live young
- Breeding season usually takes place in the warmer months of spring

found near water in coastal areas, wetlands and creeks

Diet



Photo David Alldridge

Growling Grass Frog
Litoria raniformis



Native

EN

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Mottled green and bronze colour on top and pale underside
- 2 Have a pale brown-bronze stripe running from eye to thigh on either side
- 3 Brown bumps on top

Breeding Season

- Begins in August
- Eggs are around October - November
- Up to 4000 eggs are laid and hatch into tadpoles
- Tadpoles become frogs in 12-15 months

Areas where water is slow moving or still and plenty of vegetation for coverage. Also artificial bodies of water like dams and irrigation channels

Diet



Photo Sid Mosdell

Pied Cormorant
Phalacrocorax varius



Native

LC

Distinguishing Features

- 1 Grows to roughly 65-85cm in height
- 2 Black and white feathers on their back and wings
- 3 A yellow eye patch and bright blue eye ring
- 4 Have a large grey bill

Breeding Season

- Breed in colonies of monogamous pairs
- Both parents build the nest and incubate the eggs
- Lay clutches of 2-5 eggs once a year

Found in coastal areas as well as inland close to waterways and lakes. Drawn to areas that provide suitable roosting areas

Diet



Photo
San Diego Zoo

Sugar Glider

Petaurus breviceps



Distinguishing Features

- 1 Roughly 20-30cm in length
- 2 Blue grey in colour, black stripe running from nose down back
- 3 Have a light underside
- 4 Gliding membrane between front and rear legs

Have a broad range of suitable habitats, including rainforests, sclerophyll forests and acacia scrubs, however, have a preference for eucalypt and acacia trees

Breeding Season

- Sugar Gliders are polyestrous*
- Give birth most commonly to two joeys at a time
- Generally give birth from June – November

Diet



Photo
Kim Wormald

Helmeted Honeyeater

Lichenostomus melanops



Distinguishing Features

- 1 Olive-brown on its back and grey-yellow on its belly
- 2 Black facemask with bright yellow tufts around the ears and throat
- 3 Slightly downturned bill

Open dry forests predominantly around eucalypts and often near water

Breeding Season

- July – March breeding season
- Average chicks raised to independence (40 days) is 1.5 per couple

Diet



Photo
National Geographic

Leadbeater Possum

Gymnobelideus leadberteri



Distinguishing Features

- 1 15-17cm body length; 14-18cm tail length
- 2 Grey-brown body with a pale underside and a dark mid-dorsal stripe
- 3 No gliding membrane

found in small pockets of alpine ash, mountain ash and snow gum forests in the central highlands of Victoria.

Breeding Season

- May breed twice a year with the most common breeding period being during the summer/spring time
- Leadbeaters possums are polyoestrous*

Diet



Common Wombat

Vombatus ursinus



Distinguishing Features

- 1 Short, stocky, barrel-shaped
- 2 Short, brown fur

Mainly found in temperate, forested areas often in mountainous zones

Breeding Season

- Breeding occurs all year round although generally only one off-spring is produced each year

Pets, Leads and Wildlife Safety

Going out for a walk and engaging with your surroundings is a great way to build a relationship and connection with the Yarra River and its inhabitants. However, mindfulness and respect for the ecosystem and environment should always be at the forefront of our thoughts during time spent in and around natural ecosystems.

A common mistake that people make when going for a walk and spending time outside is acting with the assumption that their pets can be allowed off-lead at all times. While our dogs may love the freedom to run

around at the park and down at the river without a lead on, our wildlife also love the freedom to exist in their natural habitat without excessive predation from domesticated animals.

Dogs and other pets account for huge numbers of wildlife injuries and deaths. But, it's not all bad news, there are plenty of areas where you can safely allow your pets to run off-lead where it is safe for wildlife and for pets. YRKA urges everyone to be aware of where and when they allow their pets to be off-lead and to please obey the signage that indicates the need for leads.

Reporting Injured Wildlife

Caring for our wildlife also means taking on the responsibility to act when you see an injured animal. Wildlife Victoria provide a reporting and response mechanism that will lead to better outcomes and safer interactions for wildlife and the public so YRKA urges anyone who comes across injured animal to contact Wildlife Victoria either by phone or through online reporting on their website.

Wildlife Victoria online report:

www.wildlifevictoria.org.au/wildlife-information/report-a-wildlife-emergency

**WILDLIFE
VICTORIA**
ON CALL TO HELP
03 8400 7300

Appendix

Common Terms

Biodiversity: the variety of animal and plant life in a given area or habitat of interest (maintaining high levels of biodiversity are important to maintaining resilience)

Conservation status: is a tiered, indication tool for the current population health for a species

Ecosystem: a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment

Ecosystem Services: the many and variable benefits provided to humans by the environment

Resilience: the capacity of an ecosystem to absorb disturbances

Habitat: the natural home or environment of an animal, plant or any other organism

Introduced: an organism that is not native to the place or area where it is considered introduced and has been accidentally or deliberately transported to the new location by human activity.

Native: a species that normally lives and thrives in a particular ecosystem

Wildlife: a general term for all wild animals that have not been domesticated or tamed and are usually living in a natural environment

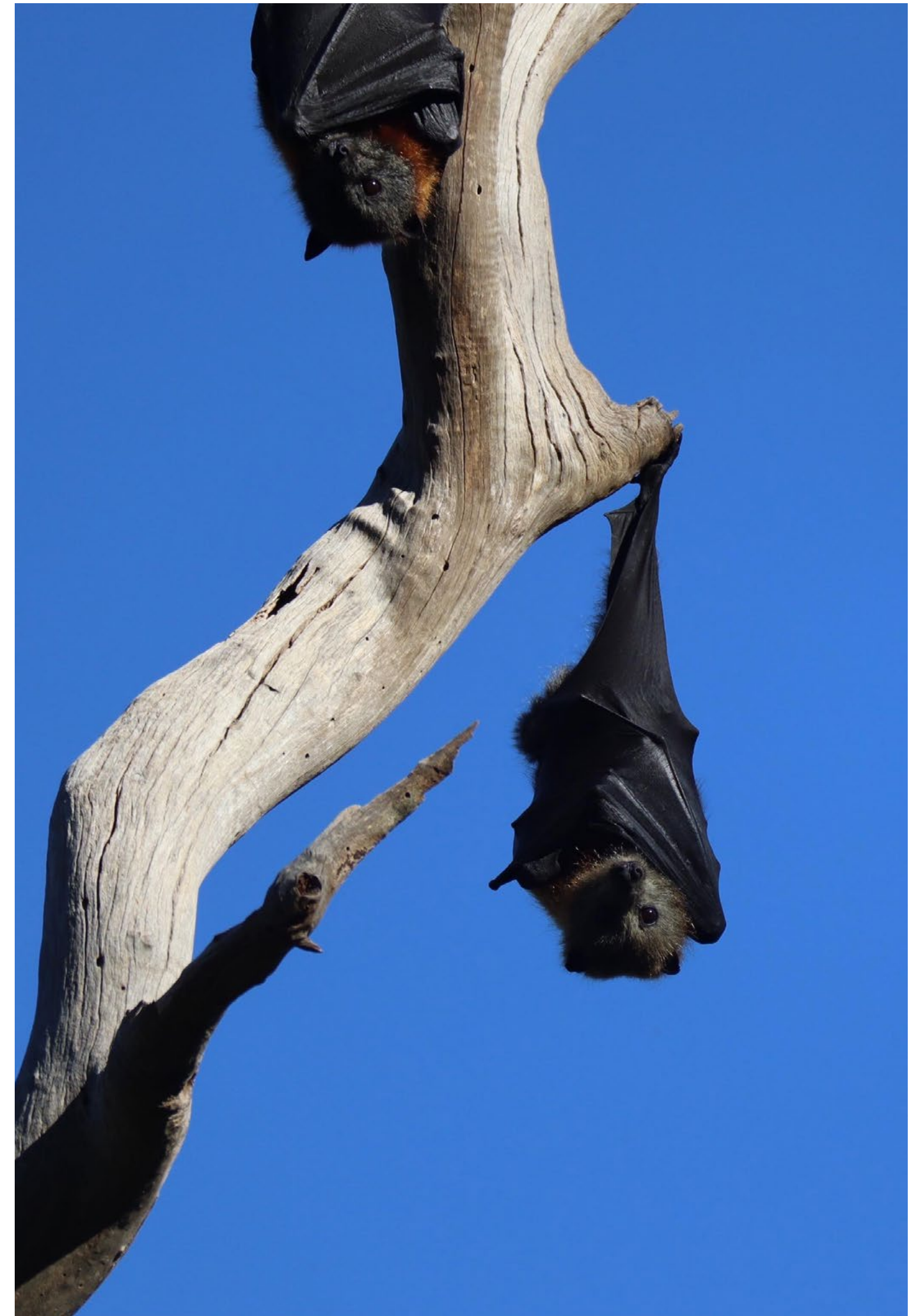


Photo
Corentin Massuyeau



Photo
Anthony Despotellis

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