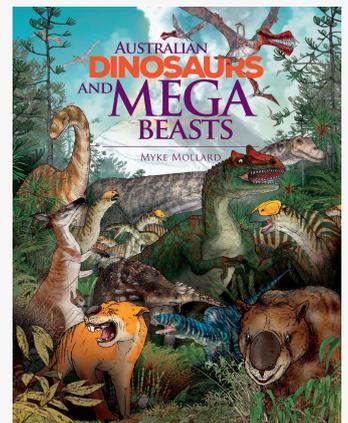
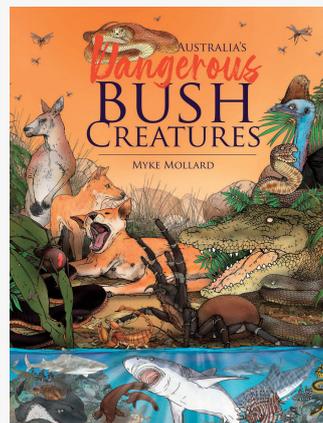
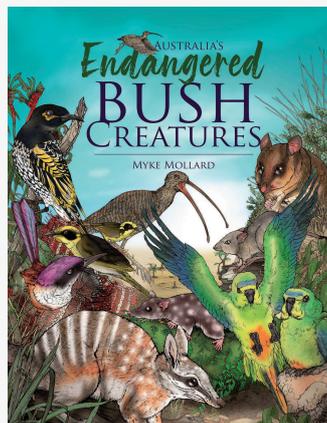
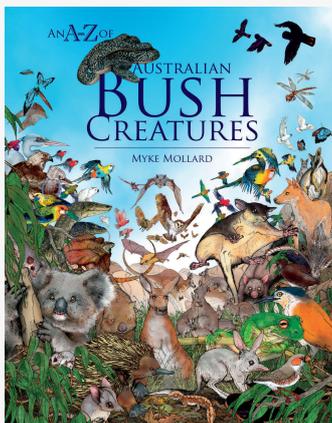


ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Myke Mollard is a children's educator, illustrator, author, and designer. He began his career in graphic design, branding management and producing commercials for TV.

He later found outlets for his passion for educating kids about the world around them, both in person in classroom and online settings, and via his books which he fully writes and illustrates himself. Myke wants to inspire the next generation to make better choices and to find creative solutions to safeguard our natural environment.

Other books by Myke Mollard include A-Z of Australian Bush Creatures, Australia's Endangered Bush Creatures, Australia's Dangerous Bush Creatures, and Australian Dinosaurs and Mega Beasts.



Ask students:

- What can you tell about Myke Mollard from this book?

Some students may be fascinated by the illustrations in this book. Encourage them to research how one can become a biological illustrator. See also www.woodslanepress.com.au/blogs/new-titles/myke-mollard-s-artistic-journey-to-bush-creatures where Myke recounts his own artistic journey.



CONVENTIONS OF NONFICTION

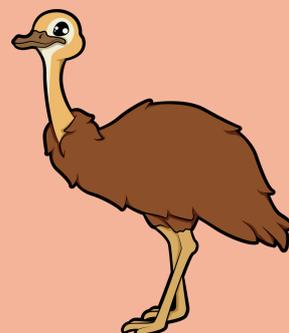
Discuss conventions of nonfiction (table of contents, glossary, index, page numbers, photographs/pictures, diagrams, and labels).

- Ask students to list the conventions used in this book.
- Challenge them to create an index and glossary for this book.

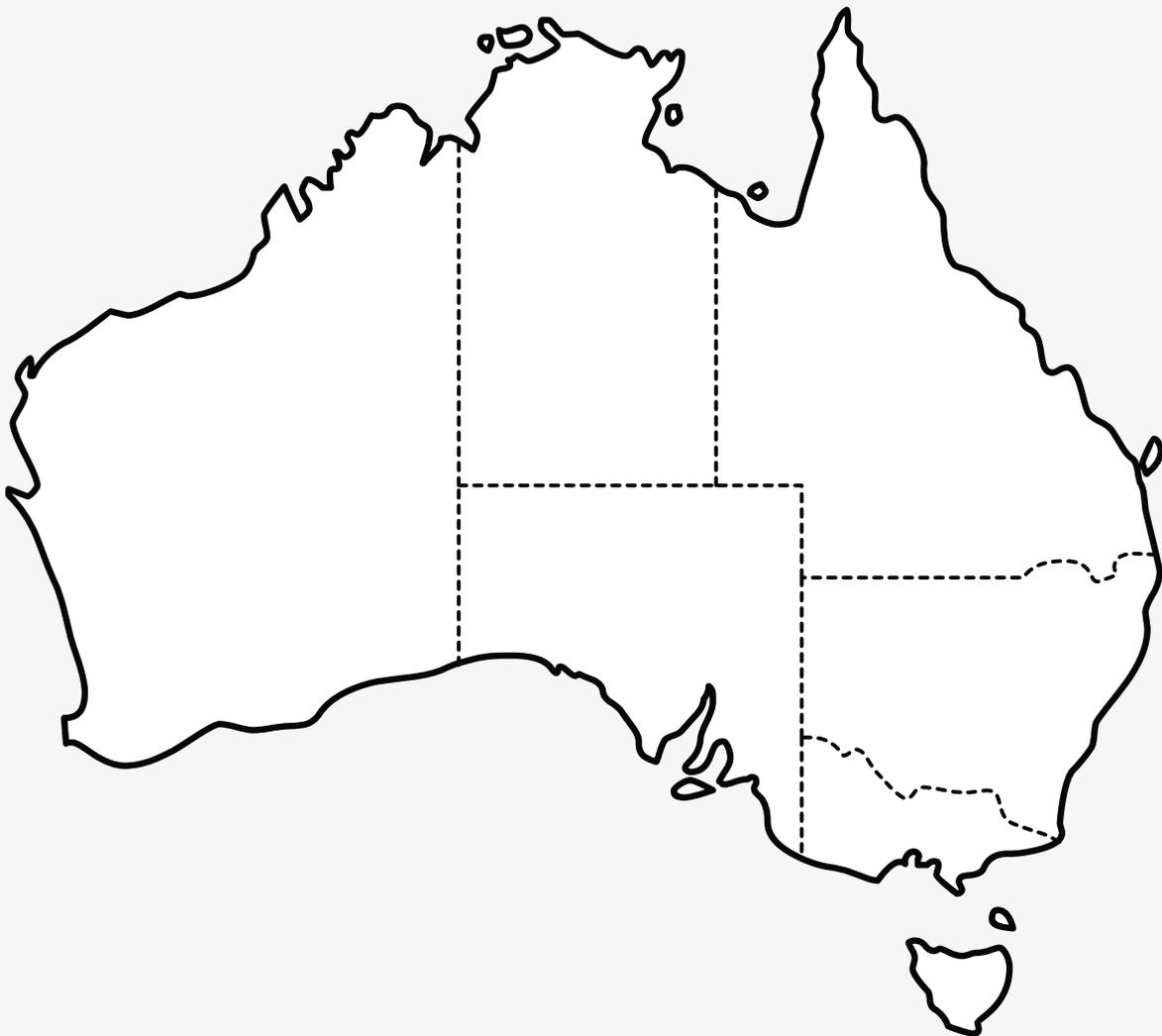
FACT FILES

Have students work in groups to use information from the book to create files of incredible facts about the following birds:

- Blue Fairy Wren
- Noisy Miner
- Tawny Frogmouth
- Peregrine Falcon
- Wattlebird
- Kookaburra
- Noisy Friarbird
- King Parrot
- Blue Bonnet
- Eastern Whipbird
- Satin-blue Bowerbird
- Gang-gang Cockatoo
- Powerful Owl
- Ringneck Parrot
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
- Brolga
- Blue-faced Honeyeater
- Cassowary
- Brush Turkey
- Spangled Drongo
- Sarus Crane
- Magpie
- Budgerigar
- Rufous Whistler
- Piping Shrike
- Wedge-tailed Eagle
- Galah
- Emu
- Gouldian Finch
- Black Swan

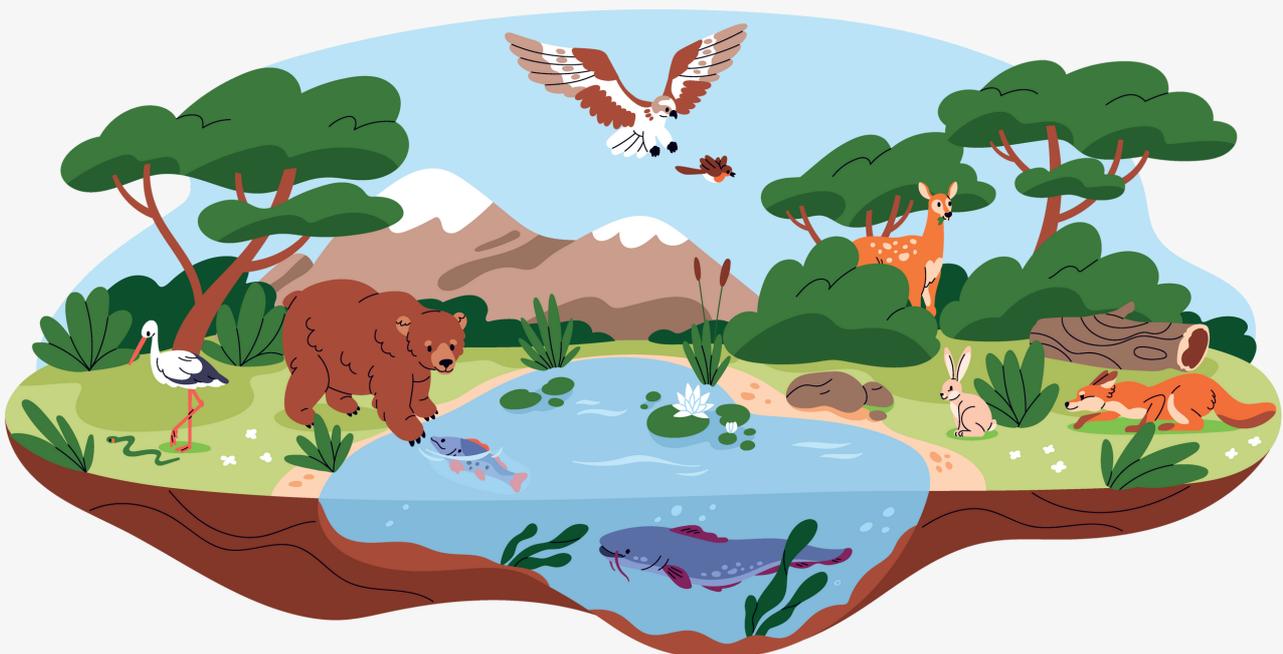


- What other birds are mentioned in the text? Have students each choose one to research in depth and present their finding to the class.
- On a large map of Australia, have children pin illustrations of birds covered in this book to where they are commonly found.
- Create a classroom bird collage and have students identify and label each bird.



WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things – plants, animals, and microorganisms – and the different genetic information they contain, and the varied ecosystems they form. All species, including humans, rely on other species to live and we need a variety of healthy ecosystems to support the life of all species. As we know so little about the interconnectedness and relationships between different systems, it is impossible to be sure if we can afford to lose a species without any adverse impact on its ecosystem. It may help to have students think of this like a pyramid of oranges, all balancing on each other. Could they pick one orange to remove from the pile and know with confidence that no other oranges would fall?



Biodiversity is important for the survival of humanity. The CSIRO describes five core values that humans place on biodiversity:

Economic - biodiversity provides humans with raw materials for consumption and production. Many livelihoods, such as those of farmers, fishers, and timber workers, are dependent on biodiversity.

Ecological life support - biodiversity provides functioning ecosystems that supply oxygen, clean air and water, pollination of plants, pest control, wastewater treatment and many ecosystem services.

Recreational - many recreational pursuits rely on our unique biodiversity, such as birdwatching, hiking, camping and fishing. Our tourism industry also depends on biodiversity.

Cultural - Australian culture is closely connected to biodiversity through the expression of identity, spirituality and aesthetic appreciation. Indigenous Australians have strong connections and obligations to biodiversity arising from spiritual beliefs about animals and plants.

Scientific - biodiversity represents a wealth of systematic ecological data that help us to understand the natural world and its origins.

Any loss or deterioration in the condition of biodiversity can compromise human wellbeing. For example, many species and different microbes have provided astounding advances in medical research. The zebrafish, for example, has an incredible ability to recover fully from a severed spinal cord. Research so far has shown this ability may be present in human genes but is currently inhibited. Who knows what species might provide valuable knowledge in the future?

Albert Einstein said:

'Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.'

Have students debate Einstein's point of view.

- Ask: What are the biggest threats to our backyard birds? Together create a list of threats, starting with domestic cats, urban foxes, habitat loss, imported invasive species like the Indian Mynah.
- Ask: What can we do to help? Together, create a list of ways we might help, starting with planting native shrubs, grasses and flowering plants, keeping cats indoors, offering birds food, a safe place to hunt and forage, and shelter with plenty of building resources to make nests and raise their young.

GO BIRDWATCHING

Bird watching is a relaxing, fulfilling activity and a great way to get kids outdoors.



- Share the tools provided on pages 40 and 41.
- Encourage students to identify local birds and to find out what they eat. Are they grain and seed browsers? Insectivorous? Nectar seekers? After fruits and berries? Or do they like worms and grubs? Do they need well-established trees or like small shrubs? Could they make mud nests in the eaves of a roof?

CREATE A BIRD-FRIENDLY GARDEN

- Share pages 24 and 25 for making a bird-friendly garden.
- Ask: Why are backyards so important? Birds see our gardens as natural supermarkets, potential homes for nesting and places for socialising and finding suitable partners.
- Bring birds to your own backyard or school garden by building them a bird box. The best thing about bird boxes is that they're reusable, so you can clean them up and use them again! And it is a great way to involve students' parents and families. The following free resources are available online and they offer instructions on how to build simple bird boxes:
 - www.birdgap.com/diy-nesting-boxes-birds
 - www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Bird-Box

Create a simple bird feeder to attract birds.

See www.thesprucecrafts.com/diy-bird-feeder-ideas-4159491 for some great ideas and free resources.



- Based on the information provided on these sites, challenge students to write procedural texts for building a bird feeder and bird box. Then have them compose an email to go out to parents, attaching their procedural texts and asking if anyone might be able to spare some time to help with construction.



- Birds need food, fun, social areas and places to cool off and bathe. Ponds are great, as are insects, flowering plants, tree hollows and leaf-free branches for birds to perch on, hunt and socialise. See www.apieceofrainbow.com/diy-pond-garden-patio for simple ideas for building a pond in your garden.
- Ask: Why should we not use rat poison and garden pesticides? Have students create informative posters using persuasive text to warn people of the adverse effects on birds of us using rat poisons and the like.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE MANAGED PARKS AND WETLANDS?

- Every bird has an important place in nature, and this sometimes goes unnoticed or is undiscovered until it's too late.
- Ask: What birds are endangered now? Have students report back to the class with their findings.
- The Shark Bay region alone has 230 species and 35% of all Australian bird species live or frequent this region, including internationally protected migratory bird species. Challenge students to create PowerPoint presentations on Shark Bay.

STEAM

- Ask: What makes birds unique in the animal kingdom? Students are likely to list beaks, feathers, wings, laying eggs, or walking on two legs. While all of these are important elements of bird anatomy, only one of them sets birds apart from all other living creatures. Birds are the only living creatures with feathers. Feathers are essential for both temperature regulation and flight. They insulate the body and help maintain a high body temperature.



- Feathers are vital to birds for many reasons. Most importantly, birds use their feathers to help them fly. Feathers are made of a lightweight material called keratin. It's the same material our hair and fingernails are made of. Keratin allows feathers to be lightweight, but also flexible and rigid enough to withstand flight.
- Birds use two things to make themselves fly: lift and thrust. When air quickly moves across a bird's wings, it creates a difference in pressure between the top and bottom of the wing, causing the wing (and the bird) to rise or lift. The second thing that makes birds fly is thrust. To get that fast-moving air on the top of their wings, birds flap them. As they push their wings down creating thrust, the air speeds up, and lift takes place. Share the following site with students and have them each create their own bird flyer to consolidate their understanding of these principles:

www.leftbraincraftbrain.com/how-to-make-a-bird-flyer.



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by Myke Mollard

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