

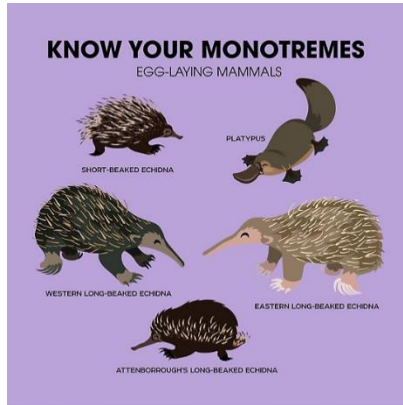
KO: Australia's **biodiversity** is under threat.

What are biomes? Describe the biomes in Australia.

Australia is home to many animals that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. They evolved in Australia but could not migrate anywhere else because the continent was surrounded by ocean. Four out of five animals that live in Australia only can be found there.

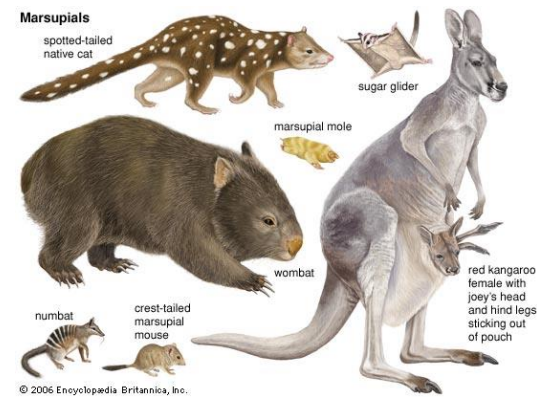
Key Vocabulary

- Biodiversity
- Migrate
- Evolve
- Marsupial
- Mammal
- Invasive species
- urbanisation



Among the animal species that can only be found in Australia are the monotremes, which are mammals that lay eggs! The platypus and two species of echidna are the world's only egg-laying mammals, so called monotremes.

Australia has almost 400 mammal species and about 140 species of marsupials. Marsupials are animals that carry their young in their pouches.



Half of the birds that live in Australia, can only be found there. Among the typical Australian bird species are the kookaburras, the emu and the rainbow lorikeet, an especially colourful parrot which has a red beak and a multicolour plumage.

As Tasmania is separated from the mainland, there are some species of animals that can only be found in this state. The Tasmanian devil is a marsupial is native to Tasmania, however, their populations are under threat due to a natural cancer they are susceptible to. Previously, the Tasmanian Tiger or thylacine was also native to Tasmania, however, they are now extinct due to hunting, the introduction of dogs and human settlement.

Use this website to find out more information about different Australian animals.

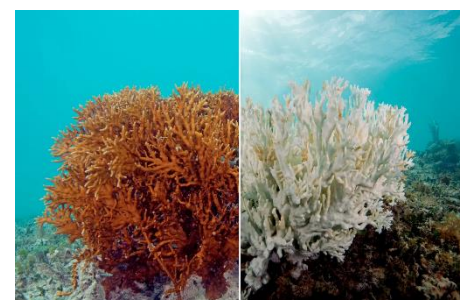
<https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/animals-in-australia.html>

The Great Barrier Reef

- The Great Barrier Reef is a popular tourist destination with around 2 million visitors every year.
- The Great Barrier Reef is the largest coral reef system in the world. It is around 2,600km in length.
- It is found in the Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland.
- The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest living structure.
- It is made up of around 2,900 individual reefs and 900 islands.
- Marine animals called coral play an important role in the formation of the Great Barrier Reef. The Great Barrier Reef is also home to a wide range of life, including fish, sea turtle, giant clams etc.
- Over 1500 different species of fish live in the Great Barrier Reef.
- Whales, dolphins and dugong can also be seen in the Great Barrier Reef.

Climate change is perhaps the biggest threat to the Great Barrier Reef.

Warmer ocean temperatures put stress on coral and lead to coral bleaching. This means the coral lose their natural colour and become a white-greyish colour.



Y5 Geography – Australia – Lesson 5

The British brought rabbits, an animal that was not native to Australia and therefore had no predators. The rabbit population exploded, and this 'invasive species' caused huge damage to crops and had a negative impact on the abundance of natural resources. Once they'd eaten all the small shrubs and plants, the rabbits would move onto small trees, eating the bark and the leaves. Rabbits also caused erosion as they eat the plants in the topsoil, leaving the land exposed to wind and rain, their burrows also cause erosion.



Rabbit-proof fences were built in 1901 to try to keep rabbits out of Western Australia. In 1907, the fence was 1,139 miles long, the longest unbroken fence in the world. In order to inspect the fences, buggies pulled along by camels were used. The fences were partially effective, but in the 1950s a disease that kills rabbits was introduced which proved to be a more effective control on rabbit populations. It is now illegal to own a pet rabbit in Queensland.

Another interesting invasive species to look at are cane toads. Kangaroos, despite being a native animal are also considered pests in some parts of Australia as they destroy farmland and crops. Apart from invasive species, the other major threats to biodiversity are climate change and urbanisation.



Australia is the only country that eats animals depicted on their coat of arms, the Emu and the Kangaroo are both eaten on occasions!

Imagine you own a farm in Australia in 1901. Finish this sentence: Rabbits are...

TASK: Describe how rabbits were an **invasive species in Australia.**

Step for Depth: Sometimes ecosystems can be described as 'fragile'. What do you think this means?