



AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE



AN ENGLISH PROJECT BY CLASS 4A
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Journey of the Coastal Kooris by Ron Fötter
Authentic Australian Aboriginal art ©Tobwabbas Art

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BIRD EATING TARANTULA

BY FRANZISKA CZEPL

English name: *Bird eating tarantula*

German name: *Goliath-Vogelspinne*

I have chosen the bird eating tarantula because its name sounds very interesting and there are some amazing facts about it I wish I had never heard.

This spider has a **hairy body** that is either rust-coloured or maroon



(*rostfarben oder kastanienbraun*). Its **legs** are **28 cm** and its body is **12 cm** long, that's why it is the **biggest tarantula** (*Vogelspinne*) **in the world**.



A fun fact is that the **females** are **stronger than the males**, the females can reach a weight of 200 grams and their average lifespan is 15 to 25 years, but the males just can live up to 3 to 6 years. Luckily a bite of them **cannot kill a human** because the poison is not harmful to us but their **biting claws** can be **2.5 cm** long, and if they had to, they would bite a human too. A cocoon of one of these spiders

contains 100 to 150 eggs. When they hatch (*schlüpfen*), they already measure almost 2 centimetres, which is as big as a grown garden spider.

These spiders did not get their name for no reason. On the one hand, it is because they are so big, and on the other hand, they **can eat a whole bird**, which they are famous for. However, the bird eating tarantula does not hunt birds specifically. Normally, it feeds on **insects, smaller spiders, bird chicks** and **little mammals**.

These spiders **make holes in the ground** and hide there when it gets hot. Another interesting fact is that they **do not make nets** like the other spiders, they wait until their prey is in the right position to be killed. Unfortunately, these spiders are very **hard to breed**, so it is difficult to keep them alive.

BLUE-RINGED OCTOPUS

BY RUPERT LEITNER

English name: *Blue-ringed octopus*

German name: *Blaugeringelter Krake*

The size of a blue-ringed octopus ranges from **10 to 20 centimetres**. There are **three different species** of this venomous creature: the blue-ringed octopus, the southern blue-ringed octopus and the blue-line octopus.



This small but **lethal** animal lives **across the Pacific and the Indian Ocean**, from Japan to Australia. Its **most widely known predator** is the **moray eel** (*Muräne*), but in turn, octopi are the enemies of the moray eel, so they **are each other's enemy**. If they are together, one of them has to end up dead in one way or another.



I have chosen the blue-ringed octopus because I think it is very interesting that they can **change their skin color** and it is also amazing how **venomous** they are. It takes a maximum of **two hours** after a bite **to get paralysis** (*Lähmungen*) in the chest muscles and in the diaphragm (*Zwerchfell*), which leads to **respiratory arrest** (*Atemstillstand*).

If this animal **feels disturbed** (*gestört*) it changes its skin color and **the blue rings appear**, so if you should ever see a little octopus with bright blue rings on its body and its eight arms you should get away as quickly as you can, as there is **no medicine against the poison**.



BULL SHARK

BY GREGOR SCHARINGER

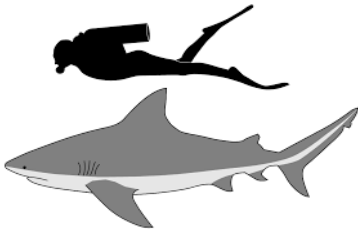
English name: *Bull shark*

German name: *Bullenhai*

Bull sharks are **large, stout** (*kräftig*) **predators** found in **tropical and subtropical waters** around the world, typically **close to coastlines**. Their name is inspired by their **stocky appearance** and **blunt, rounded snout**, as well as their relatively **aggressive** behaviour.



While most sharks are limited to marine habitats, bull sharks can live in **either freshwater or saltwater**. That's because they are capable of **osmoregulation**, a process in which the sharks can adjust the salt-to-water ratio in their bodies based on the water around them. They **retain salt** and **produce more diluted** (*verdünnt*) **urine** while they are **in freshwater**, then begin to **produce saltier urine** again when they are **back in the ocean**.



In 2012, scientists compared the bite strengths of 13 different sharks and found that an adult bull shark can close its jaws with about 6000 newtons of force at the back of its mouth and over 2000 newtons at the front. (In comparison, humans chew with a maximum force of 900 to 1300 newtons.) That means that the bull shark **has the strongest bite of all sharks**. Nobody knows exactly why it evolved such a **powerful mouth**, but it may have something to do with its **diet**: The bull shark is **not a picky eater**. Although it prefers **fish**, it can also **eat other shark species**, marine mammals, birds, and



turtles. So basically, bull sharks **eat everything** from **oysters to turtles to other bull sharks**, and their herculean jaws might make it easier to **tear** through a wide range of **shells** (*Panzer*), **scales** (*Schuppen*), and **skins**.

CASSOWARY

BY DOMINIK FELLNER

English name: *Cassowary*

German name: *Kasuar*

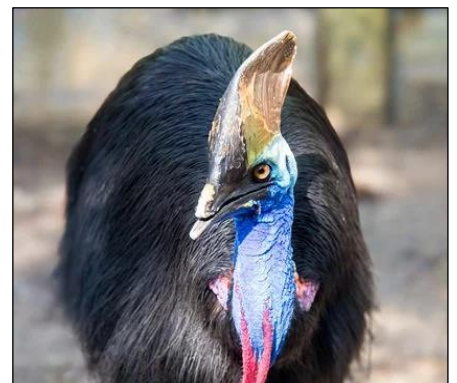
I have chosen this animal because it is a fantastic bird. Its strong legs help it to make a **standing jump over your head**. When they get angry, cassowaries jump into the air and **kick you with their legs** so hard that your ribs break. Sometimes they hit you with their **long and sharp claws** and accidentally slash you. This is why they are called **the most dangerous bird in the world**. If you should meet one, then remember that running away does not help because they can **run up to 50 kilometres per hour** and they are also **great swimmers**.



Cassowaries have played a role in the everyday life of the native people for centuries. For one thing, they are hunted for their **meat**, which is considered (*erachtet*) very **tasty**. The **feathers** serve as **ornaments** (*Schmuck*), and even the bare quills (*Kiele*) of the flight feathers can still be used as nose and lip sticks. In the past, the **claws** were used as **arrowheads** (*Pfeilspitzen*) and the leg bones were used to make tools and weapons. Today, young birds are repeatedly captured and raised in order to eat them later.

It is also interesting that the **males hatch** (*brüten*) the eggs weighing up to 650 grams and then take care of the offspring (*Jungvögel*).

Apart from man (*abgesehen vom Menschen*), the cassowary has **no natural enemies** (*natürliche Feinde*). However, reintroduced (*ausgewilderte*) **dogs** can become a threat (*Gefahr*) and **crocodiles** and **snakes** might also be dangerous for young cassowaries.



COCKATOO

BY FRANCES DEUTSCH

English name: *Cockatoo*

German name: *Kakadu*

I have chosen the cockatoo because it is a **cute** and funny bird. Its **beak** (*Schnabel*) is **curved**. The **most striking feature** of the cockatoo is its **crest** (*Schopf*) **of feathers**, which is either flat or ruffled (*gesträubt*), depending on how excited it is. Cockatoos have parrot's feet, with two middle toes forward and the two outer toes backward. They have **short legs** and **strong claws**, and they often use their **strong beak** as a third limb when climbing through branches. They generally have long broad wings and can **fly very fast**.



There are **twenty species** of cockatoo. By the way, the **name “cockatoo”** comes from the Malay language and **means “pincers”** (*Kneifzange*). Cockatoos are between **30 and 66 cm long**. In general, they are **white** with a **yellow crest** but they can also have other colours. Cockatoos can live **ten to sixty years**. They are native to Indonesia and Australia. All species are generally very **sociable**, they sleep, feed and travel **in flocks** (*in Schwärmen*). These vary in size depending on the availability of food. In times of plenty the flocks are smaller. Cockatoos normally eat what they find on the ground, for example **seeds, roots, fruits, flowers** and **insects**.

Cockatoos are **cave breeders** (*Höhlenbrüter*). Their clutch usually consists of **2-4 eggs** and the eggs are incubated (*bebrütet*) by both parents. The incubation period lasts 18-20 days. The eggs and nestlings face many dangers.

CONE SNAIL

BY MATTHÄUS GRUBAUER

English name: *Cone snail*

German name: *Kegelschnecke*

To be honest, I chose the cone snail because all the other interesting animals had already been chosen by my classmates... but let's see what this creature is like, what it looks like and what its distinctive features are. This little fellow is literally a **snail under water**, and guess what, it is **venomous**. But let's be honest, what is not poisonous or dangerous in Australia? Right, almost nothing, even this little snail is lethal. There are **1000 types** of cone snails around the world and **70** of them live in Australia.

Cone snails are **nocturnal** (*nachaktiv*) animals, so they usually hide in the sand during the day. You can find them in shallow waters or in ponds. The shell with its beautiful pattern is the reason why it is a popular collectible (*Sammlerstück*). Especially children like them.



The cone snail **can kill a human** with its dangerous **venom**. It uses a nerve poison called **conotoxine**. In 1993, 16 people died because of the cone snail. The venom can cause **paralysis** (*Lähmung*) of any kind, **lack of coordination**, **loss of vision** and/or **hearing**, and in some cases **respiratory**

arrest (*Atemstillstand*) and death. The injured person should be **sedated immediately** and, if possible, a **pressure bandage** should be applied.

What I find interesting is that the poison is **used as a painkiller**, a so-called **analgesic** (*Analgetikum, Schmerzmittel*). For example, it is used as a **replacement** for morphine.

DEATH ADDER

BY SAMUEL BRANDSTETTER

English name: *Death adder*

German name: *Todesotter*

Hi, my name is Samuel and today I am going to tell you something about the death adder. I chose to write about this animal because it is **one of the most dangerous snakes** in the entire world. It is fascinating how strong its venom is. Luckily, there has been a cure since 1958, which has lead to the decline (*Rückgang*) of deaths caused by the venom. Needless to say, you need help immediately after you got bitten by this kind of snake.

The death adder has a **broad, triangular** (*dreieckig*) **head** and a grey body with a cream or pink belly. Some snakes have red, brown or black bands on their backs.



The poison of the death adder can **paralyse** (*lähmen*) **and kill a human** within 6 hours. Luckily, this snake is very rare and can only be found in some areas of Australia. Although it does **not attack humans**, its poison should not be underestimated (*unterschätzt*).

The death adder is a **clever** and **cunning** (*hinterlistig*) hunter. It **covers itself** with leaves and moves its tail near its head in order to attract prey (*Beute*). For this reason, one should be especially careful in areas with a lot of bushes as it offers the snake a lot of hiding possibilities. This type of snake **eats small birds and rats** but unlike other snakes they do not choke down their prey immediately. In contrast, death adder snakes take small bites of their prey in a span of two or three days.

Unfortunately, their natural habitat is shrinking very fast and that's why this species is becoming more and more **rare**.

DINGO

BY MAGDALENA BABLER-FRANZ

English name: *Dingo*

German name: *Dingo*



The dingo is an Australian **wild dog**. It is an animal introduced by Asian seafarers (*Seefahrer*) about 4,000 years ago.

The dingo has a head and body size of around 120 centimetres and weighs 13 to 20 kilograms. These animals can **run about 60 kilometres per hour**, **jump** two metres high and **climb** trees successfully. In the wilderness they reach an age of 3 to 5 years, some have been recorded living up to 10 years. In captivity (*Gefangenschaft*), they live much longer, about 14 to 16 years. Dingoes are the **largest land carnivores** (*Landraubtiere*) in Australia and are considered **apex predators** (*an der Spitze der Nahrungskette*). They will search widely for **any food they find**. They eat **small mammals, animals, fruit, grains** and also food that has been discarded (*weggeworfen*) by campers. Dingoes normally do not eat or attack humans.



Dingo babies are called **pups**, which I think sounds very cute. Dingo females are called **Tingoes**. Because dingoes belong to the **wolf family**, they do similar things, like living in groups. There is also a hierarchy, so the roles are clearly divided, only one animal is the **leader**.

When a dingo attacks you, stand still at your full height and fold your arms across your chest. Face the dingo, then calmly go back. If you are with another person, stand back to back and confidently call for help. Wait until the dingo is gone before you continue on your way. **Do not run** or wave your arms!

I have chosen the dingo because I think they look lovely and harmless. I love dogs and wolves. And I think dingoes look as if you could just pet and cuddle them. Unfortunately, you can't.

EMU

BY PATRIK PIRKLBAUER

English name: *Emu*

German name: *Emu*

There is no particular reason why I have chosen the emu for this research project. It is the **second tallest bird in the world** and the tallest that you can find in Australia. It can look a bit scary with its **red or orange eyes** and the **black and white plumage** (*Gefieder*).



Emus grow between **1.6 and 1.9 metres in height**, weigh between **30 and 45 kilograms** and they have **very strong legs**. They have **three-toed feet** like all ratites (*Laufvögel*) and they **cannot fly**, although they have wings. They can run incredibly **fast** – up to **50 kilometres per hour** – and can run great distances if necessary.

Emus are **nomadic**, which means that they do not stay in one place for very long. They prefer **eucalyptus forests** and **open plantations**, but rarely dry plains or even deserts, which they only visit after heavy rains.

Younger emus usually eat **caterpillars** (*Raupen*), **grasshoppers** and **other invertebrates** (*Wirbellose*), while older emus mainly eat **fruits, berries, seeds, flowers** and **fresh grass**.

An interesting fact is that emus have **two sets of eyelids** (*Augenlider*), one for blinking and the other for keeping the dust out.



Only the males incubate (*ausbrüten*) the chicks, which hatch after 2 months. After that they raise them for about half a year. The average lifespan is **10 to 20 years**.

GOANNA

BY ELDIN HAMZIC

English name: *Goanna*

German name: *Waran*

I have always been highly interested in exotic animals and that is the reason why I chose the goanna for this research project. The most inspiring fact about this reptile is that in the **Aboriginal culture**, the goanna is a **creator spirit** (*Schöpfergeist*) in dreamtime stories. Like other animals that are central to life, they also hold a **totemic status**, form part of ceremony and feature in many **parables** (*Parabel, Gleichnis*), for example in stories about how to behave or how and when to hunt.



There are about **70 known species** of the goanna and almost 25 of them can be found in Australia (the other ones live in Southeast Asia). Their skin is usually **camouflaged** with stripes or dots on their body, but there are also some desert species which are very brightly covered with a beautiful yellow and red pattern. A female goanna can lay between **five and six eggs**. Most goannas lay them in their nest or in a **burrow**, but there are also some interesting species that **lay their eggs in termite nests** which provide good protection against attackers and besides, the termites are nutritious food for the babies. A male goanna can grow up to **2.5 metres** and can **weight 79 to 91 kilograms**. Another interesting fact is that they are part of an **ancient lineage** (*alte Abstammung*) that evolved in the **northern hemisphere** during the **Cretaceous period** (*Kreidezeit*) – about **90 million** years ago!

Goannas can **run, swim** and **climb perfectly**, so they live on **trees**, in **swamps** and in many other places, which is probably the reason why they survived the past.



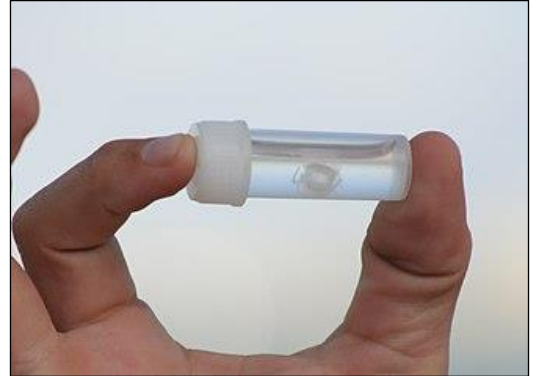
IRUKANDJI JELLYFISH

BY TOBIAS RAML

English name: *Irukandji jellyfish*

German name: *Irukandji-Qualle*

I have chosen the **Irukandji jellyfish** because it is the **second-deadliest** jellyfish in the world, just after the box jellyfish. It is only **1 to 2 cm long**, but nevertheless it is extremely venomous. It has **4 tentacles**, which can be up to **1 metre long**. This species of jellyfish was identified by **Jack Barnes** in 1964.



Although the Irukandji is extremely poisonous and there is still **no anti-venom** available, only 3 people have died so far. The sting causes the so-called **Irukandji-syndrome**, which is a **highly painful poisoning**, because you get **muscle cramps** and extremely **heavy pains** in your back, chest, stomach, or head. In the worst case you develop pulmonary edema (*Lungenödem*), which you can die of. If you get stung by an Irukandji jellyfish, putting **magnesium sulphate** (*Magnesiumsulfat*) on your skin is a very popular first aid measure (*Erste-Hilfe-Maßnahme*). Luckily this kind of jellyfish can only be found in the **northern waters of Australia** and even there it is pretty **rare**.

Irukandji jellyfish have the ability to fire stingers from the tips of their tentacles and inject **venom**. Unlike most jellyfish, which have **stingers** (*Giftstacheln*) only on their tentacles, the Irukandji also has stingers on its bell.



Biologists have yet to discover the purpose of this unique characteristic. It is believed that this helps the animal catch its food.

Another impressive feature is that this jellyfish has **24 eyes**, it lives for **only six months** and has its **stomach in its head**.

KOALA

BY JAKOB PÜHRINGER

English name: *Koala*

German name: *Koala*

I have chosen the koala because it is an interesting animal. Maybe you think koalas are bears but in fact they are **marsupials** (*Beuteltiere*).

Koalas are found in the eucalyptus forests of eastern Australia. They have **grey fur** with a **cream-coloured chest**, and strong, **clawed feet** that are perfect for **living in the branches** (*Äste*) of trees.



Koalas measure about **60 to 85 centimetres** and weigh about **14 kilograms**. It is almost unbelievable that they eat around **one kilogram of eucalyptus** leaves in a day! They are

fussy (*wählerisch*), too, and will select the most nutritious and tastiest leaves from the trees where they live. Koalas do not drink very often because they get nearly all their water from the eucalyptus leaves they eat. Koalas do not have much energy – if they are not eating, they are dozing in the branches of the trees. Believe it or not, but koalas sleep around **18 hours** a day! They have a **very small brain**, it is just **0.2%** of their bodyweight. 40% of their cranial cavity is filled with water but apparently these animals don't care...

Sadly, **koala numbers are on the decline**. Their numbers have been falling continuously for years due to **deforestation** (*Abholzung der Wälder*) and disease. Then, Australia was ravaged (*verwüstet*) by the worst **bushfire** season the country has ever seen. Tragically, nearly 3 billion animals, many found nowhere else in the world, died. Many struggling **Australian species**, like koalas, have now been pushed even further towards the brink of extinction (*am Rand des Aussterbens*). The good news is that there is hope to turn this around.

KOOKABURRA

BY VITUS MAY-PRAMMER

English name: *Kookaburra*

German name: *Jägerlied, Lachender Hans*

The kookaburra is the tallest bird in the family of the **kingfishers** and it is one of Australia's **most recognizable** birds.



Kookaburras are **most common in eastern Australia**. They live in trees and build nests like the birds we know in Austria. They are **nocturnal** animals, which means that they are active at night, but they are also awake during the day. These birds do not sleep much, in fact they do not even need more than **one hour of sleep per day**. I think this is fascinating.

Kookaburras have **a strong beak** (*Schnabel*) and a rather big head. They have small feet with very **sharp claws**. Their eyes are commonly brown and sometimes green. These birds can make special noises that **sound like laughing**, that's why they are also called "Lachender Hans" in German. Their wings are brown and a bit white on top and the bottom is mainly white. The top of their beak is black and the bottom white.

Kookaburras feed on **meat**. They catch **mice, insects, snakes, little fish, worms** and **small reptiles**. Sometimes they steal eggs from smaller birds. They hit bigger prey on rocks or break their necks, which is quite brutal, I think.

The kookaburra is one of Australia's **most famous** birds. Luckily, these birds are **not endangered**. There is an **Australian coin** known as the "Silver Kookaburra" that has been minted (*geprägt*) annually since 1990. One of the most famous **Australian children's songs** is about the kookaburra. It was written in 1932 and goes like this, "*Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree / Merry, merry king of the bush is he [...]*".



PLATYPUS

BY TRISTAN SENGSTBRATL

English name: *Platypus*

German name: *Schnabeltier*



I have chosen the platypus because it is a truly **unique** animal. You might not know the brown creature with a **duck's beak** and **four paddle feet**. Amazingly, platypus are **egg-laying mammals**. They are also known as "living fossils", because they have hardly changed over a long time. 100,000 years ago, they looked exactly as they do today.

The body of the platypus is **flattened and streamlined**, it has certain similarities with a flat-built beaver and has a comparatively wide, flat tail. The body and tail are covered with brown, water-repellent fur.

Platypus live in small **burrows** in rivers, billabongs (*Seitenarme von Flüssen*), ponds, and shallow lakes with steep banks in **eastern Australia** and **Tasmania**. The platypus is a **loner** that only meets with others when it is looking for a partner. Males have a **poisonous sting** that is used to attack other males when **fighting for a female partner**. The poison is **not deadly for humans** but still can cause pain that lasts as long as four months.

When they are hunting under water, platypus **close their eyes and ears**. They eat other animals, such as **worms, insects, or shrimps**. They find their prey – whether it swims, hides in the mud or dwells under stones – by tracking it down with the help of their **beak**. Like an antenna, it perceives **electrical**



signals from other animals via receptors. In addition, there are several tactile bodies on the beak that **detect wave movements** in the water. Platypus put their prey in their **cheek pouches** (*Wagentaschen*). They have **no teeth**, so they grind (*zermahlen*) the food with the help of **horn plates**.

QUOKKA

BY MATTHIAS PIRKLBAUER

English name: *Quokka*

German name: *Kurzschwanzkänguru*



I have chosen the quokka because it just looks so cheerful and cute that you can't help but like it. Some people call the quokka "**the happiest animal in the world**", and if you look at the picture on the left, I think we can all agree to that. The reason why it seems that the quokka is always smiling is that the corners of its mouth (*Mundwinkel*) are pulled up, so if a quokka opens its mouth, it is bound to smile. 😊

The quokka is **40 to 55 cm tall** and usually eats things like **grass** and other **plants**. Their favourite food is a plant called guichenotia ledifolia, which has small purple flowers and oily leaves. If quokkas have enough of those leaves to eat, they can survive without water for quite a long time.

You could say that quokkas are very **sociable** because they **usually live in groups of 25 to as many as 150 animals!** When asked whether the quokka is dangerous, most people would probably say something like "no, just look at this cute little thing, this could never be



dangerous". And that isn't completely wrong, but it isn't entirely true either. Quokkas are usually quite relaxed and not aggressive at all, but if they are harassed by tourists taking a selfie or something like that, they might aggress them. Every year, people are hospitalised after being "attacked" by a quokka.

However, you cannot really say the people were "attacked", because in fact the quokka just **defends** itself. You want to know how you can get hurt by a quokka? Above all, they can scratch you with their **sharp claws**, bite you or even kick you with their legs. A fact that makes quokkas very likeable to me is that they like to **sleep during the day** because it is too hot.

QUOLL

BY SONJA LENGAUER

English name: Quoll

German name: Beutelmarder



I have chosen the quoll because it is a cute and furry little **marsupial** (*Beuteltier*) with lovely white spots all over its body but at the same time it is also a **carnivorous predator** (*fleischfressender Jäger*) with **sharp teeth** and **sharp claws**, which it uses for hunting.

Quolls are sometimes referred to as 'native cats' or 'tiger cats'. There are **six species of quoll**, four of which are found in Australia and two of which are native to New Guinea. Their Latin name *Dasyurus* means '**hairy tail**', which describes it pretty well. Adult quolls are **medium-sized** (between 25 and 75 cm long) and have exceptionally **long tails** that grow up to 35 cm in length. They are generally **brown, black, or fawn** (*hellbraun*) with **white spots**, bright **pink noses** and a **long snout** (*Schnauze*). Females develop a **pouch** (*Beutel*) for their young. They do not grow very old – the average lifespan is two to five years.



Quolls live alone in burrows (*Erdhöhlen*), rocks, and tree logs (*Baumstämme*). They are **solitary, nocturnal** animals, which means that they hunt alone and are active at night and sleep during the day. Even though they are normally seen on the ground, they can also climb trees in order to hunt. They **eat insects, smaller mammals, lizards, reptiles, frogs, small birds, and bird's eggs**. Unfortunately, their population has decreased drastically over the years. Out of the six species of quolls, four are near threatened (*potenziell gefährdet*) and two are **endangered** (*vom Aussterben bedroht*). However, efforts are being made to revive (*wiederbeleben*) their population.

RED KANGAROO

BY KATHARINA TEUFER

English name: *Red kangaroo*
German name: *Rotes Riesenkänguru*



I have chosen the red kangaroo because of its looks, its martial arts and in particular because of its size. It is the biggest **marsupial** (*Beuteltier*) alive today, and one of the most striking (*auffallend*) of all kangaroos.

Red kangaroos live in the **arid** (*trocken*) **regions of Australia** and prefer open habitats with some trees for shade. The male is much bigger and more powerful than the female and is typically **reddish-brown** in coloration, while females are more **bluish-gray**.

Red kangaroos gather in groups of about 10 members, called **mobs**. There are usually the females and their young, with one or a few males in the group. They are mostly **active at twilight** and **at night** because during the day it is too hot for them. They warn themselves by **stamping their feet**. At this sign the young will hop back into the pouch (*Beutel*) of their mother to be safe. Red kangaroos are also **good swimmers** and often flee into waters if threatened (*bedroht*) by a predator (*Raubtier*).



Red kangaroos are **herbivores** (*Pflanzenfresser*) and eat plants, they also like herbage (*Kräuter*) and flowering plants.

When the males compete for a female partner, they hit at one other using their forepaws and kick out with their feet in **boxing matches**.

Females usually give birth to a single young. When born, the **joey** (*junges Känguru*) **climbs** its way up through its mother's fur and **into her pouch**, where it stays attached to a teat (*Zitze*) for 70 days. It first puts its head out of the pouch after 150 days and comes out for short periods after 190 days. A female carries her joey in her pouch for around 235 days.

SALTWATER CROCODILE

BY ISABEL HÖLLER

English name: *Saltwater crocodile, "Saltie"*

German name: *Salzwasserkrokodil*

Saltwater crocodiles, or "**salties**", as Australians call them, have an **enormous range**, populating the brackish (*leicht salzig*) and freshwater regions of eastern India, Southeast Asia, and northern Australia. They are **excellent swimmers** and have often been spotted far out at sea.



The saltwater crocodile is recognized as the **largest** living species of **reptile**. An adult will reach lengths of up to **5.2 metres** with some exceptional individuals becoming larger than this. The **eyes and nostrils** of the saltwater crocodile sit **on top of its head** so that these protrude (*herausragen*) from the water while the rest of the animal's body is safely hidden below the water's surface.

Saltwater crocodiles are **carnivores**. They prey upon almost anything they can get their teeth on. As a hatchling (*Schlüpfling, frisch geschlüpft*) they will feed mainly upon **small fish, frogs and insects**. As they grow into adults they will eat **snakes and lizards, crabs, fish, bats, birds and mammals**.

Saltwater crocodiles have **long lifespans**, with many living to **more than 65 years**, longer than any other crocodile species. There have been several



reports of crocodiles living to be over a century, but this has never been verified in the wild.

They are known to be **fantastic swimmers** and can **travel long distances** by sea, sometimes as much as 900 kilometres.

TASMANIAN DEVIL

BY MILEA SCHÜRZ

English name: *Tasmanian devil*

German name: *Tasmanischer Teufel, Beutelteufel*

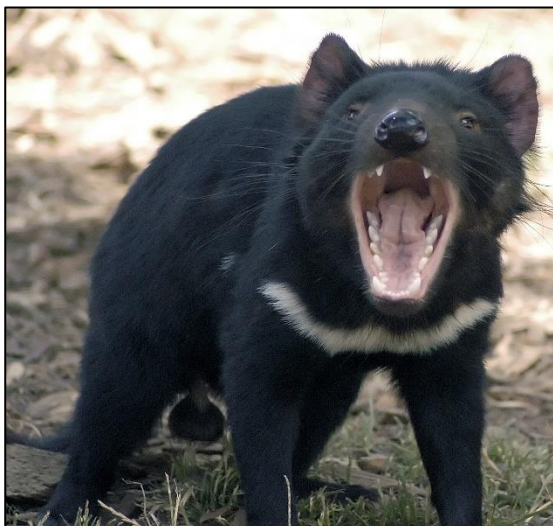
Tasmanian devils are the **largest carnivorous** (meat eating) **marsupials in the world**. Adult Tasmanian devils are usually about the **size of a small dog** – they are about 60 cm tall and weigh about 8 kilograms. They have brown or black fur and look



really cute, but they are actually dangerous. Their sharp teeth and strong, muscular jaws can deliver **one of the most powerful bites** of any mammal on Earth. They are voracious (*gierig*) eaters and will **consume everything** – including **hair, organs, and bones**.

Tasmanian devils have **a lifespan of about 5 years**. They spend most of their time in hollow logs (*hohle Baumstämme*), caves (*Höhlen*) or burrows (*Erdbauten*). They live on a large Australian island called Tasmania. In fact, **Tasmania is the only place where they are found in the wild**.

The Tasmanian devil has some weird characteristics. Its most famous characteristic is its **aggressive** personality. When threatened, a devil will



lunge at (*sich stürzen auf*) its attacker, **shriek** (*kreischen*), **howl** (*jaulen*), **bare its teeth** (*Zähne fletschen*), and often spin around in circles. But tragically a **disease** called devil facial tumor disease (DFTD) has killed thousands of these fascinating animals. Scientists are working hard to find a way to stop the spread of this disease before it wipes the species out.

THORNY DEVIL

BY LORENA KUNZE

English name: *Thorny devil*
German name: *Wüstenteufel*

I have chosen the thorny devil because it is one of the **rarest reptiles** of Australia and has a lot of incredible skills that rendered me speechless.



The thorny devil is a species of lizard native to Australia. It grows up to **21 cm** in total length and can live for **15 to 20 years**. The females are larger than the males. Most specimens are coloured in different shades of desert browns and tans. These colours change from pale colours during warm weather to darker colours during cold weather. The fairly small, orange-red lizard is unmistakable because of its body completely covered with **spikes** (*Stacheln*).

Where do thorny devils live? Their range covers most of arid (*trocken, ausgedörrt*) Australia – large parts of **Western Australia**, the southern half of the **Northern Territory**, **South Australia** and **western Queensland**. They live in dry sand country, spinifex grasslands and scrub (*Gestrüpp*).

The thorny devil has **furrows** (*Furchen*) all over its body for drinking. In this way, the lizard can use the morning **dew** (*Morgentau*) of the cold desert nights, or it can drink by, for example, dipping a leg in the water. It is also remarkable how these animals move: tail lifted, they walk along with **slow, jerky** (*ruckartig*)



movements backwards and forwards. This is to confuse predators when they are spotted in the open. It looks a bit like they are drunk. ☺

The thorny devil looks really threatening at first sight, but it is **completely harmless** and **not poisonous** at all.

TIGER SHARK

BY PHILIPP SCHAUER

English name: *Tiger shark*

German name: *Tigerhai*

I have chosen the tiger shark because it is a big, heavy, and dangerous shark with a lot of **sharp** teeth, which it uses for hunting.

The tiger shark is one of the largest **representatives** of all sharks and reaches body lengths of up to **five and a half metres**. The **male adult**



can weigh over **600 kilograms**, which is quite heavy for a shark. There are only three types of sharks that weigh more. Tiger sharks can probably live for **50 years**. After a gestation period (*Tragezeit*) of about 13 to 16 months, the females only have **offspring every two to three years**.

The tiger shark is found in many different kinds of marine habitats, but it usually prefers murky (*trüb*) waters in **coastal areas**.

The body of the tiger shark is **elongated**, its **snout comparatively** short, flat, **broad**, and **angular** (*eckig*). Its skin is grey, and the name comes from the **tabby** (*gefleckt*) **pattern** of the young animals, which **fades** with age and is only very **indistinct** or no longer present in old age. The clear pattern of the young animals probably has a **camouflage function** (*Tarnfunktion*), because they usually stay near the riverbank.



Tiger sharks attack humans when they are aggressive, or when people swim noticeably in the water. Their favourite prey, however, are **fish, rays, seals, seabirds, sea snakes, dugongs** (*Seekühe*), **crabs, lobsters, jellyfish, and sea turtles**.

TRAPDOOR SPIDER

BY MATHEO POINTNER

English name: *Trapdoor spider*

German name: *Falltürspinne*

I have chosen the trapdoor spider because I think it is a very interesting animal.

Trapdoor spiders are found across **eastern and southern Australia**, including Tasmania.

You often encounter them when you move rocks or dig holes in the ground.

Trapdoor spiders are around **2.5 centimetres** long on average, however, they can reach a length of 4 centimetres. Their legs are **relatively short**. These spiders have a special row of **teeth adapted for digging**. They have powerful jaws (*Kiefer*) and **sharp fangs** (*Fangzähne*). They have **eight eyes**, one pair in the middle and three on each side. They are usually brown in colour, ranging from **yellowish brown to reddish brown or black**.

Trapdoor spiders do not have a web like other spiders do. Instead, they construct **burrows** (*Erdhöhlen*) **with a cork-like trapdoor** made of soil (*Erde*), vegetation and silk (*Seide*). Such a burrow is around 30 centimetres deep and 5 centimetres wide.

The spider detects its prey by vibrations and when it comes close enough, the spider **jumps out of its burrow** and captures it. Female trapdoor spiders never travel far from their burrows. Their enemies are **wasps, scorpions** and **humans**. If a wasp finds the burrow it will quickly get inside and sting the spider. The only way to save itself is for the spider to hold the door with its



fangs. If the spider is not killed like that, it lives about **5 to 20 years**.

The bite of this spider is **not dangerous to humans**, because it is not poisonous. Trapdoor spiders are **not aggressive** and rarely bite, but if they do, it can be quite **painful** and cause a swelling.



WOMBAT

BY CELINA-SOPHIE STÜTZ

English name: *Wombat*

German name: *Wombat, Beutelmaus*

I have chosen the wombat because it is so sweet with its **button eyes** and because of the fluffy-looking fur which is actually **prickly** (*borstig*). The coat is short to medium in length and can be **brown, grey, or black** depending on the species. It can grow to 120 centimetres but most of the time it grows shorter. It weighs about **40 kilograms** and looks similar to a **raccoon** (*Waschbär*) or a **badger** (*Dachs*). Its body is corpulent, the head is large and the legs are short and strong. In general, wombats can live up to **five years**.



You can find wombats in **southern and eastern Australia**, in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. Wombats build **burrows** (*Wohnhöhlen*) in the ground. Like those of moles, these burrow systems can be very complex.

Preferably (*Vorzugsweise*) in the evening, wombats spend between three and eight hours **grazing**. They eat **grass**, notably young shoots (*junge Triebe*), as well as **herbaceous plants** (*Kräuterpflanzen*) and **mosses**, rarely also **roots** (*Wurzeln*) of shrubs (*Sträucher*) and trees, and **mushrooms**.

Wombats are **loners** (*Einzelgänger*). However, the tunnel systems of several **burrows** can be connected with each other, so that colonies with several animals arise. Another interesting fact is that these little fellows can **run as fast as a human being**. All in all, the wombat is a very interesting **marsupial** (*Beuteltier*), in my opinion.

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