

SOUTH-EASTERN LONG-EARED BAT, *Nyctophilus corbeni*

South-eastern long eared bats occur in a range of inland woodlands. Their distribution is quite large, but the animals themselves are rare and thus little is known about them. It is assumed that they roost under bark and in the crevices on trees. These long eared bats are larger than other species, weighing between 11g and 21g. The females are the larger of the two sexes. They are brown in colour, with a relatively broad jaw and skull. The bats are insectivorous, so they feed on beetles, bugs, and moths. They catch their food both in flight, and by foraging on the ground.

SQUIRREL GLIDER, *Petaurus norfolcensis*

The Squirrel glider is a nocturnal, wrist-winged gliding possum only found in Australia. It has a large, but sparse distribution down the eastern coast of Australia where it inhabits mature forests. It requires tree hollows for refuge and nest sites. These gliders usually weigh about 230g, they have a long body and a longer tail which is bushy and also curls around branches for grip, similar to ring-tailed possums. They have a gliding membrane from their 5th toe to the back of their foot, this allows them to glide up to 50m from tree to tree, and they steer with their tail. Their diet is seasonal, but usually consists of acacia gum and eucalypt sap extracted from trees, as well as invertebrates, pollen and nectar.

LIST OF BALLARAT REGION THREATENED BIRD SPECIES

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

AUSTRALIAN PAINTED SNIPE, *Rostratula Australis*

The Australian Painted Snipe is a critically endangered species of wading bird. These stocky birds inhabit wetlands across Victoria featuring tussocks of grass and other shrubs which they use for nesting, along with exposed mud. The population of the Painted Snipe has been in decline since the 1950's, although exact numbers are not known. The adult female is more colourful than her male counterpart, with a chestnut coloured head, white accents and metallic green back and wings. This species is mainly active at dusk and dawn, feeding on vegetation, molluscs and invertebrate insects.

REGENT HONEYEATER, *Anthochaera phrygia*

The Regent Honeyeater is a critically endangered, small song bird with a wingspan of only 30cms. It has an extremely patchy distribution, usually occurring in small groups of 2-4 birds. These birds have specific breeding areas, and during the breeding season the adults form pairs to build a nest and raise their chicks. The Regent Honeyeater's feathers are mainly black, and heavily adorned with yellow on their belly, wings, and tail. This species mainly feeds on nectar, and occasionally will consume insects. They forage in large trees among native woodlands and dry forests during the day and nest in the canopy of the same area come nightfall.

ENDANGERED

AUSTRALASIAN BITTERN, *Botaurus poiciloptilus*

The Australasian Bittern is a water-dwelling, endangered heron-like bird. It inhabits a variety of marshes and wetlands around Coastal Victoria and in the Murray River region, thus its endangered status is mostly due to habitat destruction. The Bittern nests in dense areas of wetland vegetation, building concealed nests of grass and reeds. They are generally a territorial and solitary bird, pairing only to raise chicks. Their feathers reflect their environment, being a patterned light and dark brown; they use their appearance to camouflage into their surroundings. This Bittern feeds on almost anything they can catch, from small birds, to insects, fish and frogs. They usually feed at dusk and dawn, but during the day is also common.

AUSTRALIAN LITTLE BITTERN, *Ixobrychus dubius*

The Australian Little Bittern, also known as the Black-backed Bittern, is the smallest of the herons. Like the Australasian Bittern, they inhabit densely overgrown wetlands and thus their endangered classification is due to similar reasons of habitat destruction and human interference. The Little Bittern only grows to around 30cm high, the adult males are generally larger and more elaborately coloured with black feathers covering the head and top of the body, and chestnut feathers on their underside. The females of the species are a duller brown, with streaks of black. These birds are solitary and secretive; therefore they are rarely seen and poorly documented. It is known that they are most active at dusk and during the night where they hunt for invertebrates and small vertebrates such as frogs and fish. They are a patient hunter, spending time stalking their prey through the vegetation before striking with their bill.

BARKING OWL, *Ninox connivens connivens*

The Barking Owl is a medium sized Hawk-owl, meaning it doesn't have a heart shaped face. It is an endangered species in Australia, and it is estimated that there are only 50 pairs left in Victoria, and the population is declining. It lives mostly on the edges of woodlands made up of large eucalyptus or paperbark trees, the owls use these sites for hollow log nesting and also the abundance of prey. These birds are grey-brown with white wing spots and large yellow eyes, giving them a stereotypical 'owl-like' appearance. In a mating season, a pair will raise one brood, where the female incubates the eggs and the male is in charge of hunting to feed his family. The young remain dependent on their parents for several months, where they learn to hunt during the night for small mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects. They often hunt over open water ways during the first few hours of the night and pre-dawn, where they catch prey on-the-wing or from exposed perches on the edge of the forest.

BLUE-BILLED DUCK, *Oxyura australis*

The Blue-Billed duck is an endangered species of water bird endemic to Australia. It is an almost wholly aquatic bird, rarely leaving the water. It lives in large open areas of deep fresh water such as dams and lakes. When congregating on these bodies of water, up to several hundred individuals gather to feed. Their population is in decline due to habitat destruction. As the name implies, the males of the species have a distinctive light blue bill, along with chestnut coloured plumage, and a lighter belly area. The females are less ornate, with a brown bill and darker coloured feathers. During the breeding season, the birds will pair up to raise young. They nest in areas over water that are densely covered with rushes, and other water plants to provide protection for the chicks. The Blue-Billed Duck hunts for aquatic insects such as flies, dragon flies and their larvae. They have been known to also feed on a variety of plants to supplement their diet.

BUSH STONE-CURLEW, *Burhinus grallarius*

The Bush-Stone Curlew, also known as the Bush Thick-knee, is a nocturnal, ground-dwelling bird. It is found throughout Australia in grassy woodland and farmland, they camouflage well into their bush environment due to grey streaked feathers and upper parts which disguise them in tall grass. It is an endangered species due to predation by invasive species, particularly foxes which hunt them and their young. The Curlew stands at around 60cms and when disturbed they crouch down or freeze, rather than taking flight. Branches and fallen logs are essential for the birds in terms of both camouflage, and nesting. They also use their 'untidy' environment to forage on insects during the night, while keeping an eye out for other nocturnal predators.

CURLEW SANDPIPER, *Calidris ferruginea*

The Curlew Sandpiper is an endangered species of wading bird in Victoria. These birds occur globally, with breeding grounds as far north as the Arctic. While they are not a globally endangered population, their declining levels in Australia are an important indicator of other bird species that share a coastal or wetland habitat. The Curlew Sandpiper is a small, slim bird, with chestnut coloured feathers on the underside and a darker head and back. Their feathers have white tips, which give them a pale streaked appearance. Their main habitat is intertidal mudflats in sheltered coastal areas. They live in these areas as they forage at the edge of the water for invertebrates such as molluscs, worms and crustaceans.

FRECKLED DUCK, *Stictonetta naevosa*

The Freckled Duck is a species of water bird native to southern Australia. It is an endangered species in Victoria and occurs in large, well-vegetated swamps where it uses the reeds and rushes as cover for nesting and feeding. As the name implies, it is dark in colour with fine white freckle-like spots covering its feathers. During the breeding season, the males of this species have a bright red bill, whereas the females remains a grey-brown colour. They nest between October and December, building nests from twigs and down feathers. The females are responsible for both incubating the young, and raising the chicks once they have hatched. Because of this, their habitat is important as they feed on algae, seeds and aquatic grasses that are abundant in native swamps.

RED-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO, *Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne*

The Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoo is one of Victoria's more famous endangered bird species. The population present in Victoria is genetically isolated – to the extent where they are now classified as a subspecies. They are a large, conspicuous, and noisy cockatoo. The males of the species have a black plumage with a bright red tail band, females are slightly different with fine yellow spots and bars throughout their dark coloured feathers. They require a very specific habitat for feeding and nesting, namely, paperbark trees for their flowers, fruit and seeds, and big, old eucalypt trees with hollow sites for nesting. Although in captivity, they will take a variety of fruits, nuts and seeds, they have a preference for paperbark and thrive on it. Hence their low population numbers in the region.

SWIFT PARROT, *Lathamus discolor*

The Swift Parrot is a species endemic to south-eastern Australia, they breed only in Tasmania, and migrates north to mainland Australia in autumn. It undertakes the longest migration of any parrot species. It lives in dry woodlands in Victoria, commonly around the slopes of the Great Dividing Range. It is a brightly coloured parrot, mainly green with dark-blue patches, some yellow on the throat and a distinct red face. It is a medium sized parrot with a streamlined body made for long stretches of flight. They appear in large flocks, anywhere from 30 to 1000 birds where food is abundant. This species feeds mostly on nectar from eucalypt trees, but they will also take insects, seeds and fruit.