

D'harawal

DREAMING STORIES

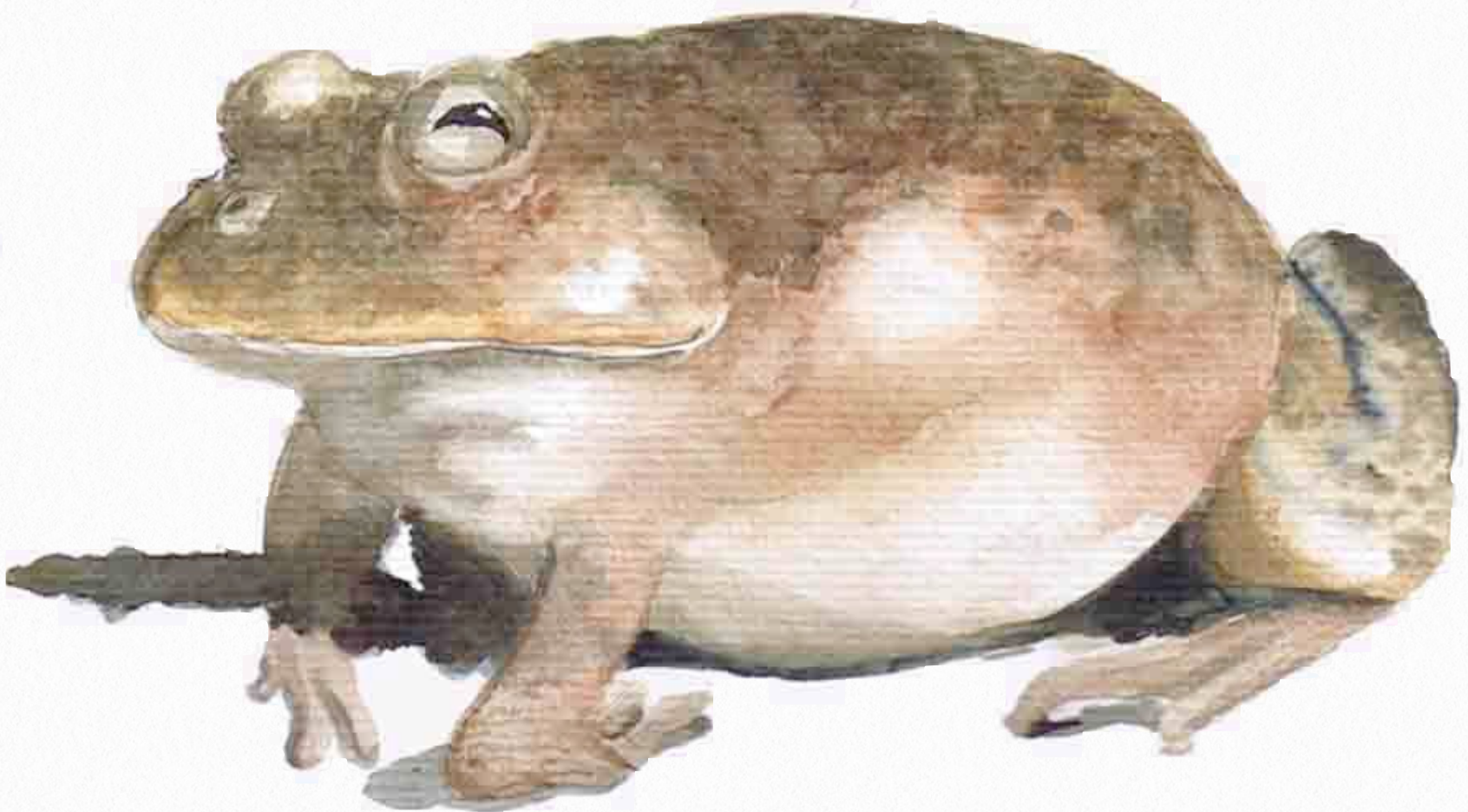
Frances Bodkin

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Illustrated by Lorraine Robertson

Gudgad

How the frogs came to be



Gudgad

How the Frogs Came to Be

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Foreword

Throughout the past two hundred years, society has come to regard the Koori Dreaming stories as something akin to the fairy stories they were told as children.

However, for thousands upon thousands of years, the stories in this book were used as a teaching tool to impart to the youngest members of the clans the laws which governed the cultural behaviour of clan members. The successive attempts to destroy the Koori culture and assimilate The People into the Euro-centric population were unsuccessful, and the Dreaming Stories were able to continue in their disguise as charming legends where animals became the heroes and the heroines.

Historians and anthropologists have studied the Koori culture since they first arrived on this continent, and have come to the conclusion that the D'harawal culture is dead. Of, course, this has been done without reference to the descendants of that culture, and without even asking the proper questions. The D'harawal culture is not dead, it is a strong, living, vital culture of the Sydney and South Coast regions that just had to go underground for a while to be able to survive. Now that the right questions have been asked, we have the key to unlock a vast wealth of knowledge of this part of the country in which we live.

It is difficult to explain to a society based on commerce fuelled by the profit motive, that D'harawal culture is not based on the ownership of tangible things like land and dwellings and possessions, but it does have a very strong sense of ownership of information. That information, particularly in story form, was not traded, but could be given, and given freely, but its ownership was respected, those stories were not told or passed on by those to whom they had been given, but the knowledge in them was used by the receiver whilst ever they walked in the Land of the D'harawals, This Land.

It is hoped that our present society is now mature enough to be able to accept the Koori Dreaming stories as they were, as they are, and as they were always destined to be; tools to teach the Children of The People about living with Earth, the Mother, in peace and harmony.

Each story contains several layers of knowledge, the first of which are the secrets. Which can only be passed on or discussed with persons of the same level of knowledge or higher than the story teller. These secrets are never told within a legend, but are remembered separately from the legend itself. These are very important components of any legend, and it is the knowledge of the secrets which determines the level of the person's worthiness to ownership of that story.

The next layer of knowledge within the stories was the law, or laws, to be obeyed. The laws of the stories were told and often repeated after the telling of each story, after which the laws were discussed and their application in life demonstrated in a variety of ways.

The third layer of knowledge contained in each story was the lessons which could be learned from the story and the lessons were taught to all members of the group as well as visitors. These lessons introduced Peoples to the means to live in harmony with each other, and the land and its resources.

In this series of D'harawal Law Legends, there are many lessons to be learned. The D'harawals believed that children learned better and more quickly when they were encouraged to work through a problem, rather than be told the answer. By sharing the stories of our ancestors with you, it is hoped that not only will you recognise and learn the lessons and laws of the Peoples of This Land, but you will also come to understand and respect the culture of The People and our feelings and relationship with the land.

The stories do not in themselves act as an instruction manual - rather they point the way and encourage The People to think, to learn and to live. It is hoped that by sharing our stories, you too may be able to think, to learn and to live in This Land.

With understanding and respect for each other we can learn to more easily share This Land and live together in peace and harmony.

Frances Bodkin

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A long time ago, the People of the Frog totem lived here, and for a long time they lived in peace with the other clans. But when the wise old leader died, he was replaced by a man called Gudgad, a large man, with bulging eyes.

Now, This Land was suffering a severe drought. It had not rained for a very long time, and the waterholes and creeks were beginning to dry up. Gudgad enjoyed being the leader of the Frog Clan, even during these bad times, but he was not satisfied. He wanted to be leader of all the D'harawal.

He sat down on a large log beside the waterhole, and thought about his dream of becoming leader.

He was not a good hunter, nor was he a great medicine man.

He was not even very clever.

But he was very, very greedy. And he was very, very cunning.

As Gudgad stared at the water rippling in the water hole, he thought of a way of becoming leader of all the D'harawal. Perhaps, he could even become leader of all the nations of This Land.

He stepped down off the log and swallowed all the water in the waterhole. He then went down to the creek and sucked all the water out of the creek.

He went to the lands of the Bubuk clan and swallowed all their water. Then he travelled to the lands of the Diruwan (Magpie) clan and did the same.

Each day he visited the lands of several different clans and swallowed all their water until he was so full he could barely make his way back to his own country.

But he did, and sat himself down on the log and waited.

Pretty soon, the People of the Marri'eh'gang (Tiger Cat) clan came and asked him to return their water.

Gudgad refused.

The People of the Guriwal (pigeon) Clan came and pleaded with him to give their water back.

Again Gudgad refused.

One by one, all the D'harawal clans called to the log in the dry waterhole and requested that he return their water.

Each time Gudgad refused.

Then the leaders of each clan met together to discuss ways to make Gudgad return the water to the creeks and waterholes. They decided to call a meeting with Gudgad and ask him what he wanted in exchange for the water.

Managa of the clan of the Eagle approached Gudgad first. "Gudgad, we need water for our children." She said. "What can we give you in return for our water? We have brought you the softest skins for you to lay on, and the sharpest spears for you to hunt with."

"I do not want anything." Gudgad replied. "I do not want soft skins. I do not want sharp spears. Go away. I do not want to talk with you."

Now, Managa was the most powerful of all the clan leaders, yet Gudgad dismissed her as if she were still a young child. Managa was very angry, but she held her anger in. She did not like anyone, particularly someone who was fat and ugly like Gudgad telling her to go away.

Wan'gali of the Bandicoot clan was next. He offered Gudgad all the fruits and seeds he and his clan could eat for the rest of their lives. But to no avail, Gudgad just told him to go away.

One by one, all the clan leaders approached Gudgad, offering him gifts, and one by one he told them all to go away.

Gudgad liked the feeling of power this gave him. He sat there, chuckling to himself, imagining how, when he became leader, all the clans would provide him with all the food and comfort he would ever need.

He looked over to where his own clan were sitting near the dry waterhole, looking thirsty and miserable, and this made him happy.

He remembered how they had treated him before he became leader. And he decided that he would not give back the water.

He liked the feeling of power, more than he liked the feeling of other people's gratitude. He called the clan leaders together and told them that he wanted to be leader of all the D'harawal nations.

Some of the clan leaders began to agree until Wiritjiribin, the Rememberer of the Lyrebird clan stepped forward.

"If we agree for this man to become leader of all the D'harawals, we will be disobeying our own laws." She said. "Each clan must have its own leader, and our laws and decisions are made by meetings of those leaders.

It is against the law to have one man make the decisions that affects our lives and the lives of our children."

Gudgad became very angry. "When I become leader of the D'harawals, you will be the first I will drive out of This Land."

The other clan leaders stared in horror at Gudgad. Then, without speaking they all moved away.

That night, all the Peoples of all the clans gathered in the Yandel'ora. There they discussed what they could do to make Gudgad give up the water.

It was late in the night when Gugara of the Kookaburra clan stepped forward to have his say. Gugara was very concerned. The children were thirsty and crying, and he had a kind heart.

He did not like to see any child cry, and earlier in the day he had made the children laugh until water flowed from their eyes.

“I think I know what to do.” He said. “But you must help me.” Then he told them his plan.

All members of all clans, even children, came down to the big log where Gudgad sat, his big eyes gleaming with pleasure, so sure was he that they were going to make him the leader of all the D’harawal.

Gugara came forward and sat down in front of Gudgad.

He preened his feathers for a minute or two, then ruffled his winged and cleared his throat.

Then Gugara began to laugh. And the rest of The People laughed with him.

Gugara laughed so hard that he awoke Wuri the Sun, who came up to see what all the noise was about.

For three days and three nights Gugara and The People laughed and laughed and laughed.

Suddenly, Gudgad began to chuckle. Then he began to laugh. And he laughed so much that he vomited up all the water he had stolen from the creeks and waterholes.

The People were overjoyed, and they danced around Gugara, singing his praises, whilst Gudgad slipped into the pond and hid himself in shame, with only his nostrils above the water surface.

Wuri, the Sun came down to see what all the laughing was about, and said that because it was a very pleasant way to awaken, she would like Gugara to awaken her every morning.

Gugara replied that he would be very pleased to awaken the Sun, and because she warmed his feathers so well, he would also laugh in the evening so that she would have pleasant dreams.

Now, that is the story of how Gugara earned the task of awakening Wuri the Sun every morning, and how he tells Wuri that it is time to go to bed.

And Gudgad, the Frog, to this day, sits in the water, grumbling over his bad luck, never realising that his downfall was caused by his own greed.

And that is why, when the Kookaburra laughs in the daytime, rain will come within three days, and water will return to the rivers and creeks.

Some information about the animals in the story:

Diruwun Dee-roo-wan

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE

Scientific Name: *Cracticus tibicen*

The Australian Magpie is black and white. Its nape, upper tail and shoulder are white in males, grey in females and the remainder of the body is black. The eye is chestnut brown.

Australian Magpies live in groups of up to 24 birds year round in a territory wherever there is a combination of trees and adjacent open areas, including parks and playing fields. This territory is actively defended and used for feeding, roosting and nesting.

They inhabit most of Australia, absent only from the densest forests and arid deserts.

The Australian Magpie walks along the ground searching for insects and their larvae. Birds will also take hand-outs from humans and although the Australian Magpie is generally quite tame, during the breeding season some individuals become aggressive towards any intruders which venture too close to their nest sites.

The nest is a platform of sticks and twigs with a small interior bowl lined with grass and hair, constructed in the outer branches of a tree, up to 15 m above the ground.

The Australian Magpie has one of the world's most complex bird songs. It is a loud musical flute-like song, often performed as a duet or by groups. An alternative name for the Australian Magpie is Flute Bird.

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>

Gudgad Good-gad

Frog

Frogs play a key role in many food webs, both as predators and as prey. By observing frog populations, we can get a good indication of the condition of the environment as frogs are sensitive to environmental change. Amphibians crawled from the water over 370 million years ago and were the first vertebrates to colonise the land. Australia has around 200 species of native amphibians, all of which are frogs, belonging to the order *Anura*.

Most are still dependent on water to complete their life cycle as they have a larval stage that lives in water. The word 'amphibian' actually means 'two lives' - one in water and one on land. Australia has around 200 species of native amphibians, all of which are frogs. About 37 of these are found in Sydney.

- See more at: <http://australianmuseum.net.au/frogs-class-amphibia#sthash.WvQtxEes.dpuf>

The story refers to *Cyclorana platycephala* (Günther, 1873), **Water-holding Frog**

Brief description: A moderate dull-grey to olive-grey frog with a flat head and small eyes. Upper skin smooth, belly white, toes fully webbed. A moderate-sized stout frog with a flat head and small eyes that point obliquely upwards. Skin dull-grey to olive-grey or grey with light green patches, especially on the head. Scattered fine dark flecks over upper surfaces; belly and lower surfaces white. Upper skin smooth, with a few low warts. Toes fully webbed. Length from nose to rear end up to 7.2 cm (females), 6.4 cm (males).

Biology : This is one of Australia's best known water-holding frogs. In dry periods, as surface waters disappear, it burrows into the ground into a waterproof cocoon-like chamber, lined with shed skin. Water is stored in the bladder or in pockets under the skin, and the frog can reduce its metabolic rate and stay in this chamber for dry periods up to years in length. This process is called aestivation. The water may constitute up to sixty per cent of the weight of the frog. Slight pressure can make the frog release this water without harming it, and there are documented accounts of Aboriginal people in that area finding these frogs by spotting identifying marks on the ground, or tapping the surface, and using them as a source of drinking water.

- Habitat: Grasslands, temporary swamps or pools, claypans, creeks and billabongs.
- Native status: Native to Australia.
- Maximum size (cm): 7.2
- Colours: Olive, green, Grey
- Distribution: Central Australia
- Habitat types: Terrestrial
- <http://bie.ala.org.au/species/Cyclorana+platycephala>

Gugara Goh-gah-rah

Laughing Kookaburra

Scientific name: *Dacelo*

The Kookaburra is instantly recognisable in both plumage and voice. It is generally off-white below, faintly barred with dark brown, and brown on the back and wings. The tail is more rufous, broadly barred with black. There is a conspicuous dark brown eye-stripe through the face. It is one of the larger members of the kingfisher family at 40 cm to 45 cm.

They are found throughout eastern Australia in most areas where there are suitable trees.

Laughing Kookaburras feed mostly on insects, worms and crustaceans, although small snakes, mammals, frogs and birds may also be eaten. Prey is seized by pouncing from a suitable perch. Small prey is eaten whole, but larger prey is killed by bashing it against the ground or tree branch.

The chuckling voice that gives this species its name is a common and familiar sound throughout the bird's range. The loud 'koo-koo-koo-koo-koo-kaa-kaa-kaa' is often sung in a chorus with other individuals. The Laughing Kookaburra also has a shorter 'kooooa', which is normally given when accompanied by other members of its family group. The Laughing Kookaburra is not really laughing when it makes its familiar call. The cackle of the Laughing Kookaburra is actually a territorial call to warn other birds to stay away.

Laughing Kookaburras are believed to pair for life. The Breeding Season extends from August to January. The nest is a bare chamber in a naturally occurring tree hollow or in a burrow excavated in an arboreal (tree-dwelling) termite mound. Both sexes share the incubation duties and both care for the young. Other Laughing Kookaburras, usually offspring of the previous one to two years, act as 'helpers' during the breeding season. Every bird in the group shares all parenting duties.

Laughing Kookaburras often become quite tame around humans and will readily accept scraps of meat. This 'pre-processed' food is still beaten against a perch before swallowing.

- See more at: <http://australianmuseum.net.au/Laughing-Kookaburra#sthash.13Jwmhsl.dpuf>

Guriwal

Crested Pigeon

When flying, a whistling sound is produced by the air passing over a modified primary feather on the Crested Pigeon's wing.

Scientific Name: *Ocyphaps lophotes*

Description: The Crested Pigeon is a stocky pigeon with a conspicuous thin black crest. Most of the plumage is grey-brown, becoming more pink on the underparts. The wings are barred with black, and are decorated with glossy green and purple patches. The head is grey, with a pinkish-red ring around the eye. If startled, this pigeon takes to the air with a characteristic whistling flight, and glides with down turned wings. The whistling sound is produced by the air passing over a modified primary feather on the wing. Upon landing, the pigeon swings its tail high in the air.

Similar species: The Crested Pigeon is one of only two Australian pigeons that possess an erect crest. The Spinifex Pigeon, *Geophaps plumifera*, markedly smaller (20 cm - 24 cm) than the Crested Pigeon, has cinnamon coloured plumage and a bright red facial patch. The much larger (40 cm - 46 cm) Topknot Pigeon, *Lopholaimus antarcticus*, has a shaggy, reddish brown drooping topknot.

The Crested Pigeon is native to Australia and is common throughout most of the mainland.

The Crested Pigeon is found in lightly wooded grasslands in both rural and urban areas. It is usually found in the vicinity of water, as it has to drink every day, and is absent from the denser forests.

Feeding: The Crested Pigeon's diet consists mostly of native seeds, as well as those of introduced crops and weeds. Some leaves and insects are also eaten. Feeding is in small to large groups, which also congregate to drink at waterholes. Birds arrive in nearby trees, and often sit for long periods before descending to drink. Drinking and feeding are most common in morning and evening, but can occur at any time.

Breeding: The Crested Pigeon builds a delicate nest of twigs, placed in a tree or dense bush. Both sexes share the incubation of the eggs, and both care for the young.

Breeding season: Usually September to March; can breed at any time

Clutch Size: 2

Incubation: 21 days

Nestling Period: 21 days

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/species/Ocyphaps-lophotes>

Murri'eh'gang

Tiger Cat

Scientific name: *Dasyurus maculatus*

The Spotted-tailed Quoll is the second largest carnivorous marsupial in Australia after the Tasmanian Devil.

There are four species of quolls in Australia and all have the characteristic pointed snout, well-developed canines and hairy tail. As their name suggests, the Spotted-tailed Quoll is the only species where the pattern of white spots on the body continues to the tail.

Size range: 35 cm - 75 cm

The Spotted-tailed Quoll is found in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

Habitat: Spotted-tailed Quolls live in forests and woodlands and heath.

Feeding and Diet: At night, this solitary animal hunts and feeds on a variety of prey including birds, medium-sized mammals and reptiles, which it attacks by biting the back of the skull or neck.

During the day, the Spotted-tailed Quoll shelters in caves, rock crevices or hollow logs.

Conservation Status: The Spotted-tailed Quoll population is seriously threatened throughout mainland Australia and these marsupials are rarely seen in Sydney. The introduction of feral animals such as foxes, cats and dogs, as well as diseases and the destruction of their forest habitats,

Mananga Mah-nan-gah

Wedge-tailed Eagle

Scientific Name: *Aquila audax*

The Wedge-tailed Eagle has long wings (wingspan 2.3 m), a characteristic long, wedge-shaped tail, and legs that are feathered all the way to the base of the toes. The bill is pale pink to cream, the eye brown to dark brown, and the feet off-white. Young Wedge-tailed Eagles are mid brown in colour with reddish-brown heads and wings. They become progressively blacker for at least the first ten years of their lives; adults are mostly dark blackish-brown. The only difference in plumage between the sexes is that a female adult is generally slightly paler than her mate. Females (4.2 kg - 5.3 kg) are also larger and heavier than males (3.2 kg up to 4.0

kg). Wedge-tailed Eagles are Australia's largest raptors (birds of prey). The Tasmanian subspecies (*Aquila audax fleayi*) is listed federally as endangered.

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is found throughout mainland Australia, Tasmania and southern New Guinea, from sea level to alpine regions in the mountains, but prefers wooded and forested land and open country, generally avoiding rainforest and coastal heaths. Eagles can be seen perched on trees or poles or soaring overhead to altitudes of up to 2000 m. Wedge-tailed Eagles build their nest in a prominent location with a good view of the surrounding countryside. It may be built in either a live or dead tree, but usually the tallest one in the territory. In some parts of Australia, where tall trees are absent, small trees, shrubs, cliff faces or even the ground may be used. The density of active nests depends on the abundance of prey and other resources. In most years, nests are usually 2.5 km - 4 km apart. If conditions are particularly good, the distances apart may be less than 1 km because the birds require smaller areas to find sufficient food.

Wedge-tailed Eagles eat both live prey and carrion. Their diet reflects the available prey, but the most important live items are rabbits and hares. Rabbits usually comprise about 30-70% of the diet. Other food items include lizards, birds (weighing over 100 g) and mammals (usually weighing over 500 g). Wedge-tailed Eagles will kill lambs, but these make up only a small percentage of their total prey.

Carrion is a major food source; roadkills and other carcasses are readily eaten. Many of the reports of predation on lambs result from birds scavenging already dead animals. Up to 20 birds may attend a carcass, although only two or three feed at any one time.

Wedge-tailed Eagles may hunt singly, in pairs or in larger groups. Working together, a group of eagles can attack and kill animals as large as adult kangaroos. This explains the scientific name of the Wedge-tailed Eagle which means 'bold eagle'. Under ideal conditions, an eagle can lift about 50% of its body weight. Often, eagles may cache food items on a branch near the nest area.

Wedge-tailed Eagles are monogamous and apparently mate for life. If one bird of a pair is killed, the survivor will find a new mate. Established breeding pairs are territorial and live in the one area throughout the year, defending around their nest sites from other Wedge-tailed Eagles. (They are also known on occasion to attack intruding model airplanes, hang gliders, gliders, fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.) Surrounding the territories are large home ranges in which the birds hunt for food but do not defend. There is usually overlap between the home ranges of two or more breeding pairs and of non-breeding birds.

The nest is a large structure of dead sticks, usually reused for years, often reaching considerable size. Nests 1.8 m across, 3 m deep and weighing about 400 kg are known. Nests have a shallow cup on the top, lined with fresh twigs and leaves. Sticks are added by a bird while it stands in the nest. If these sticks are dropped outside the nest, no effort is made to retrieve them. Piles of dropped sticks 1.8 m high have been recorded under the nest trees.

The timing of breeding may vary from location to location and from year to year according to the local availability of food. Both parents share in the duties of nest building, incubation and feeding of the young.

A clutch consists of white eggs measuring 73 mm x 59 mm with varying amounts of reddish brown spots and blotches. These are laid at intervals of two to four days. Incubation starts with the laying of the first egg. Because of the intervals between laying, the eggs do not hatch simultaneously. The first chick hatches larger than the second, which in turn is larger than the third. Survival rates of the chicks vary considerably depending on local conditions, including prey abundance and the amount of disturbance. A breeding pair usually rears only one young per clutch, although in a good year, two chicks may fledge in some nests. Because of the differences in size, the oldest and largest chick has the best chance of surviving. If food is scarce, it will kill and eat its smaller nest mates.

Chicks hatch covered with a white down. For the first five weeks or so, the adults must deliver food to their mouths. After this time they are able to recognise bits of food on the floor of the nest and can feed themselves. The young acquire their first feathers during the second week after hatching. If threatened by predators, the chicks lie flat in the nest, but will defend themselves if required. The adults, in contrast, make little defence of the young. The juveniles remain with the adults for about 11 weeks after leaving the nest. Young and non-breeding birds disperse, moving to wherever conditions are suitable. Juveniles are known to have moved over 850 km in a seven to eight month period.

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>

Wan'gali

Southern Brown Bandicoot

28 cm - 36 cm

They prefer scrubby habitats with plenty of low ground cover and shelter, particularly areas recovering from the effects of bushfire.

By day, the Southern Brown Bandicoot sleeps in a nest made from grasses and other plant material, and at night emerges to feed on a variety of insects, earthworms and plants.

They are solitary. Males and females establish home ranges, which vary considerably in size depending on the habitat and the individual.

The Southern Brown Bandicoot is listed as an endangered species in New South Wales and is known from only two areas - one population is found on the south coast and the other just north of Sydney.

- See more at: <http://australianmuseum.net.au/Southern-Brown-Bandicoot#sthash.BHZ9SVyd.dpuf>

Wiritjiribin wee-ree-chee-ree-been

Superb Lyrebird

Scientific Name: *Menura novaehollandiae*

The Superb Lyrebird looks like a large brown pheasant with rufous wings and black bill, legs and feet. The adult male has an ornate tail which he fans out during a mating display. The tails of females and young males are long, but lack the spectacular plumage. Females are smaller than males.

One other lyrebird found in Australia is Albert's Lyrebird, *M. alberti*, which is restricted to an area around the Border Ranges, on the Queensland-New South Wales border. This bird is redder in colour and the male's tail is less elaborate.

The Superb Lyrebird is found in the south-eastern Australian mainland and southern Tasmania.

It is a ground-dwelling species in moist forests, feeding on insects, spiders, worms and, occasionally, seeds. It finds food by scratching with its feet through the leaf-litter. Birds tend to forage alone, but females and young males may be seen feeding together.

They roost in trees at night and rarely move away from a home-range of about 10 km in diameter. The male secures a territory, attracting potential mates by singing and dancing on one of several mounds within it, while throwing the tail forward over the body and shaking it in display. He will mate with several females but the female alone builds the nest, incubates the eggs and cares for the young.

The Superb Lyrebird's song consists of expert mimicry - both natural and mechanical sounds imitated and joined together in a rousing medley. Sounds can include anything heard in the bird's immediate surroundings, such as chainsaws, car engines, dog barks and local native birds as well as other calls: a loud alarm shriek and a series of whistles and cackling notes that are used as territorial calls.

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>