

Ringwood Inspectorate

Volume 10

Nature NOTES

No 8

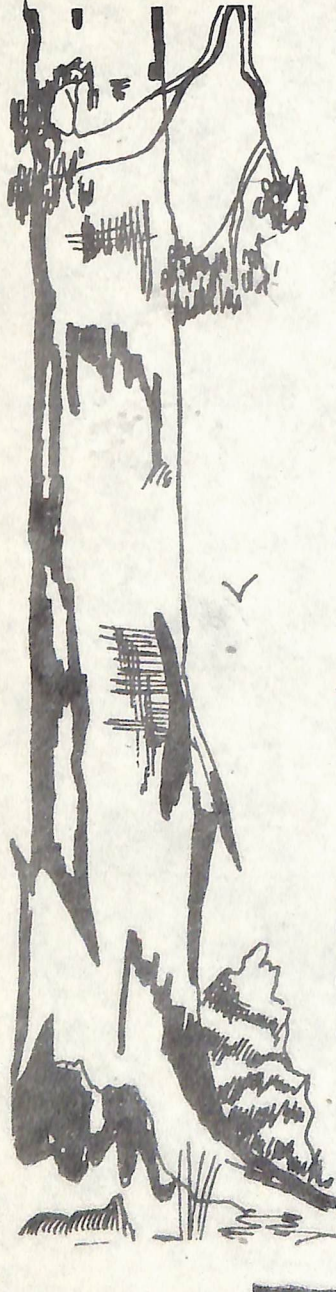


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A Letter to Girls & Boys..



Dear Girls and Boys,
This time last year we were hoping for good rains so that our water storages would be full and ready for the long, hot summer. Unfortunately, there was very little rain and the summer was extremely hot and long. Do you remember ?

One of the things that I noticed in the late spring and during the dry summer, was the magnificence of the flowers on many of our native trees and shrubs - obviously they liked it hot and dry. Did you notice this too ?

It would be a good exercise to take special notice from now on, of the budding and blooming progress of many of our eucalypts, as well as other natives. If you do this, I am sure you will make a great number of interesting discoveries.

Are all the buds the same size ? Do they vary much in shape ? Are there any particular insects showing interest in the flowers ? If so, why ? These are just some of the questions you might try to answer. Don't forget to make notes and drawings !

H.J.Lawry



A Study in Black & White Index

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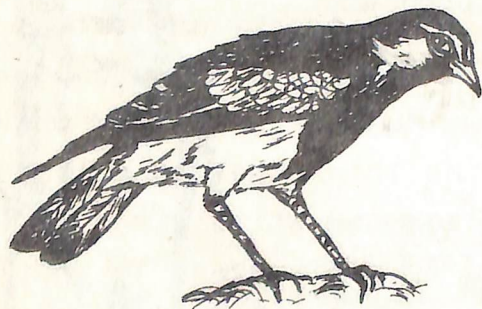
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H.J.Lawry
Registered at the G.P.O
For transmission as a
periodical. CATEGORY B.

Have you noticed that all black and white birds tend to be cheeky and rather fearless ? I had an encounter with a Mudlark recently which made me think that an article on black and white birds would be of interest to you, so I started to write one. While doing so, I discovered that Mr. Delacca had written just such an article a few years ago. That saved me some work didn't it ? Here now is Mr. Delacca's "Study In Black and White" Ed.

AUSTRALIA has long been noted the world over for the unique quality of its native birds and mammals. In the forefront of the feathered fauna there is a distinctive group which have always shown up because of the contrast of their black and white covering. The birds in this group are different in so many ways to the more brightly coloured species among our birdlife.

Without exception they appear to have adapted themselves very well to encroaching civilization. Their motto seems to be: "If you can't beat them, join them." And so we see the magpie, mudlark and willy wagtail as very common sights in our city streets.

Perhaps one of the main reasons for them getting on so well with man is the tremendous amount of good that they do for us. The mudlark likes nothing better than a feed of pondsnails - the host to the notorious sheep killer liver fluke; so no pondsnails - no liver fluke.



Mudlark.

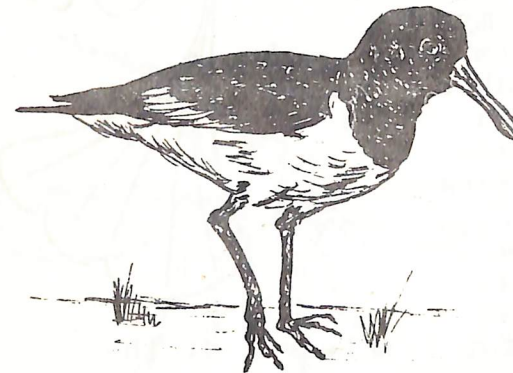
These birds have found camouflage unnecessary - in fact they seem to have adopted a quite aggressive attitude to anything that invades their domain. The female of the species is just as handsome as her mate and incidentally, have you learned how to tell the female from the male mudlark? Look for the apron under the chin. Who usually wears the apron at home? There is nothing silent about these pied songsters, from the melodious carolling

This section has not been included this month because of time pressures. It is hoped that it will be possible to print two letters in the next issue. Ed.

Drop a Line

of the magpie to the sedate "Sweet Pretty Creature" of Willy Wagtail.

Most girls and boys are pretty familiar with the magpies, even if only from a football viewpoint. Most, in the outer suburbs at any rate, have noted the peculiar aerial antics of the mudlark or peewee. And of course the Willy wagtail is the favourite of many girls and boys, especially our cousins in the country.



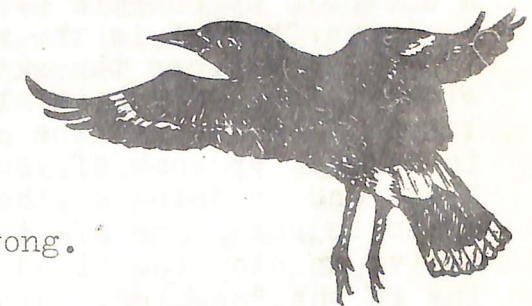
Pied Oystercatcher.



Pied Butcherbird.

How many of you have listened breathlessly to the glorious singing of the pied butcher bird? You will have to travel north from Melbourne to do so but you will find it worthwhile, especially on an early autumn morning. Can you find out why butcher birds are so named?

I have had many reports recently of large black birds with white patches on wings and tail, frequenting school food bins and council rubbish dumps. This bird, a winter visitor to our cities and towns, is the Pied Currawong. The Periwinkle book "Common City Birds" by Graeme Chapman will tell you all about this cheeky raider.

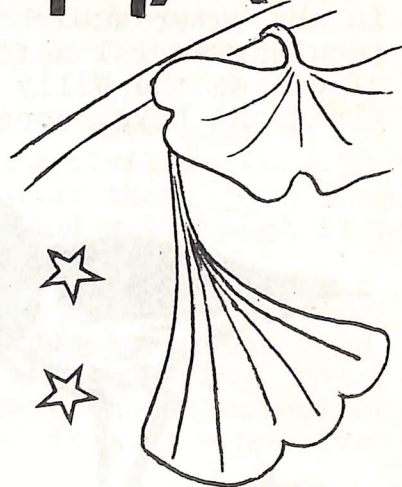


Pied Currawong.

THIS 'N THAT

⊕ One of Australia's yachts in the recent Admiral's Cup series sailed under the unusual name of Gingko. Do you know what a gingko is? I didn't until some years ago someone gave me one to plant in my garden.

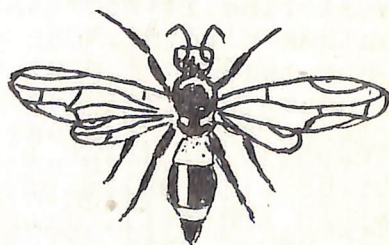
The gingko is a remarkable tree. It is regarded now as a living fossil' as it has lived unchanged for millions of years, or longer than any other living tree. It is often called the Maidenhair tree, because its fan-like leaves resemble the Maidenhair fern. Watch out for this native of Eastern Asia, won't you.



● Leaves of the
Gingko

⊕ Have you ever thought about the difference between a bite and a sting from an insect? The sting of the bee or wasp is carried in the insect's tail. It is connected to a poison gland and works like a doctor's hypodermic needle.

One "biter" is the mosquito which pierces the skin with its beak which is also a tiny hollow needle. The object is to suck up some of your blood and in doing so, the mosquito injects some of its saliva to stop the blood clotting in the "needle". This is what causes the irritation. Un-



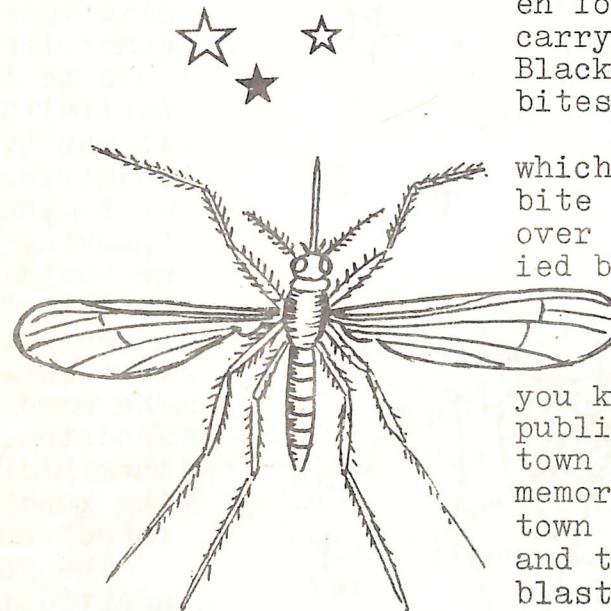
● A Stinger. Wasp

L. J. DELACCA ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



less you are allergic it is better to be stung than bitten for biting insects can carry disease. The terrible Black Death was spread by the bites of fleas carried by rats.

Make up lists of insects which sting and those which bite and see if you can discover which diseases are carried by which biter.



A Biter. Mosquito

Speaking of insects, did you know that there is a public hall in a Queensland town which was built as a memorial to an insect? The town in question is Boonarga and the insect is the Gactoblastis. Introduced from South America to eradicate prickly pear, this insect did its job so well, that 60 million acres of cattle land are now free of prickly pear.

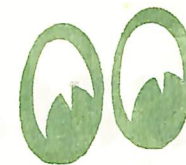
See what else you can discover about this amazing "foreign" insect which has been adopted as our own.

What is prickly pear? Find out about the work of the C.S.I.R.O. What other insects are used to help man?



Things To Look For—

at Home



* Have you seen dewdrops on a spider's web this year?
What kind of a morning was it?
Why is this kind of morning best?
Were the spiders' webs all the same in shape or did you find some different ones?





* Have you found clumps of mistletoe in your area?
If you look carefully you may find that the seeds are ripe and ready for spreading.
How is this done? Have you squeezed a mistletoe seed?
What other kinds of mistletoe have you found besides the drooping mistletoe?
What trees are affected?



Sticky seeds
of
mistletoe.



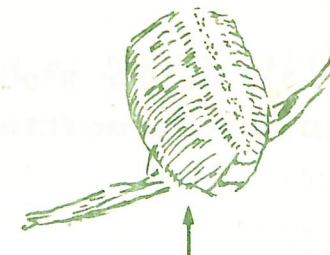
* The green praying mantis is common in our gardens. It is also found in many overseas countries, and I have not been able to find out if it is an Australian insect or whether it was brought here from other countries.

Do you know why the word "praying" is used? I guess we could almost use the word "preying" too because this insect preys on other insects - particularly bees. The word mantid is sometimes used too. I have often seen them hiding on a flower waiting ready to grab any unwary insect which pays a visit.

The fore-legs are well adapted for holding their prey as there are many spines which interlock and hold the trapped insect until it is eaten.



Green Mantis.



* We often see the egg-case, but do we recognise it? It is hard and brown and often attached to fence posts where it soon blends with its background.



* The Pin-Cushion Hakea (*Hakea laurina*) is a very well known and beautiful shrub from Western Australia. It grows very well in Melbourne. Have you one in your garden?



★ STARTING POINT ...

Another common article with many uses is a piece of string.

What is string?

How is it made?

Name some unusual pieces of string.

How is string used in your house ?

Which industries would use the most string ?

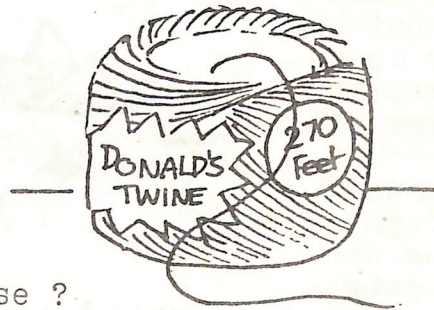
What kind of knots can you make ? Try some on your rope and string. Are there any special knots used for tying ? Which ones would be best for these people - a mountain climber, a sailor, a fisherman, a camper



Collect samples of string, thread, cord, twine and rope.

Most shops don't use string today. What has taken its place ?

How would you join two pieces of string together ?



... A PIECE OF STRING



THINGS TO DO.

● Make a rope figure or animal. Work out a simple figure that will stand up.

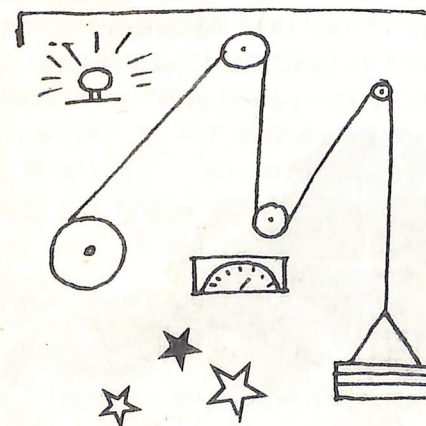
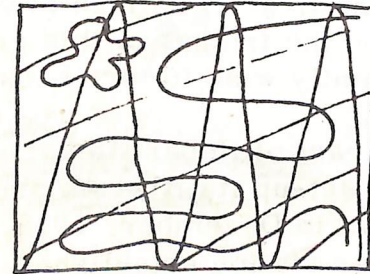
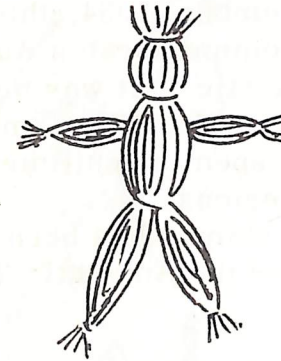
● Can you stretch a piece of string ? Does it shrink ? Will it burn ?

● Soak a piece of string in starch or glue with paint added for colour. Pull it out of the glue through your fingers and place it on a sheet of cardboard to make an interesting pattern or design.

● How can you break string without a sharp knife or a pair of scissors ?

● Design a device called a 'String Tester'

● Can you discover what was used for string by man in primitive times?



THERE'S A STORY IN A STAMP



Issued on 17th November, 1954, this blue-black stamp commemorates Australia's interest in the Antarctic. It was designed by Mrs Phillip Law, wife of the famous Australian who has spent much time exploring the Antarctic Regions. Since 1967 a set of stamps has been issued especially for the Antarctic Territory.

CAPTAIN COOK was the first white man to visit the Antarctic. Although he only touched on the fringes of this great mass of land and ice, Cook was sufficiently wise to turn back before he was trapped in the pack ice.

About 1000 miles south east of Hobart lies Macquarie Island. In 1911, Australia set-up its first Antarctic station there. This station closed down in December, 1915. Not till 29th December, 1947 was another station established. This station was built at Heard Island. Since then Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition - A. N. A. R. E. - stations have been established at Macquarie Island (1948), Mawson (1954), Davis (1957), and Wilkes (1957). Heard Island station closed down in 1955. These stations carry out scientific research.



Some of the WILDLIFE as shown on the stamp:



PENGUINS

The Rockhopper or Crested Penguin, as drawn here, makes its breeding ground in the colder areas of the sub-antarctic. Penguins breed in large colonies - many thousands living together. In the water they are wonderful swimmers, but they have enemies in the vicious Killer Whales and seals.

SEALS

The seal shown on the stamp is called an Elephant Seal or Sea Elephant. These large creatures live on Macquarie Island which has been declared a Sanctuary for these beasts. Many hunters were killing off the seals to gain the natural oils.

They are so called because of the trunk-like extension on the noses of the males. Old male bulls may attain a length of twenty-two feet and weigh over three tons!

Waddling clumsily on the land this huge animal swims with effortless ease and grace in the water. Nevertheless, he, too, has an enemy in the Killer Whale.

His thirty or more wives give him the large task of protecting them all from other males and natural enemies!

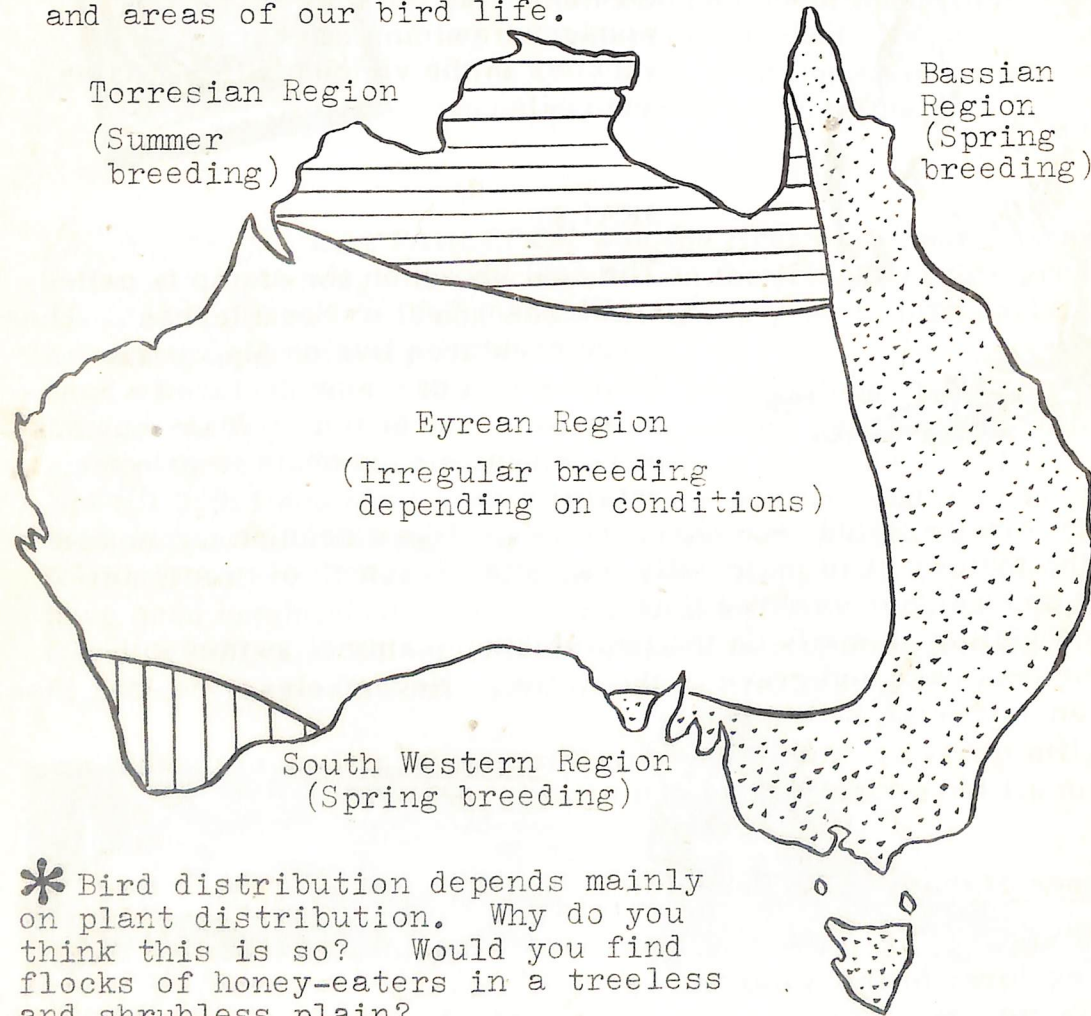
Names of the ANARE Research Stations:

- **MAWSON - Sir Douglas Mawson was a famous Australian explorer of the Antarctic regions.
- **DAVIS - Captain John King Davis commanded many Australian exploration ships.
- **WILKES was an American who led an expedition in 1838-40.

October Is Bird Month BIRD NOTES

* Did you know that 532 species of birds breed in Australia, although over 600 species are found here?

This map gives you an idea of the breeding seasons and areas of our bird life.



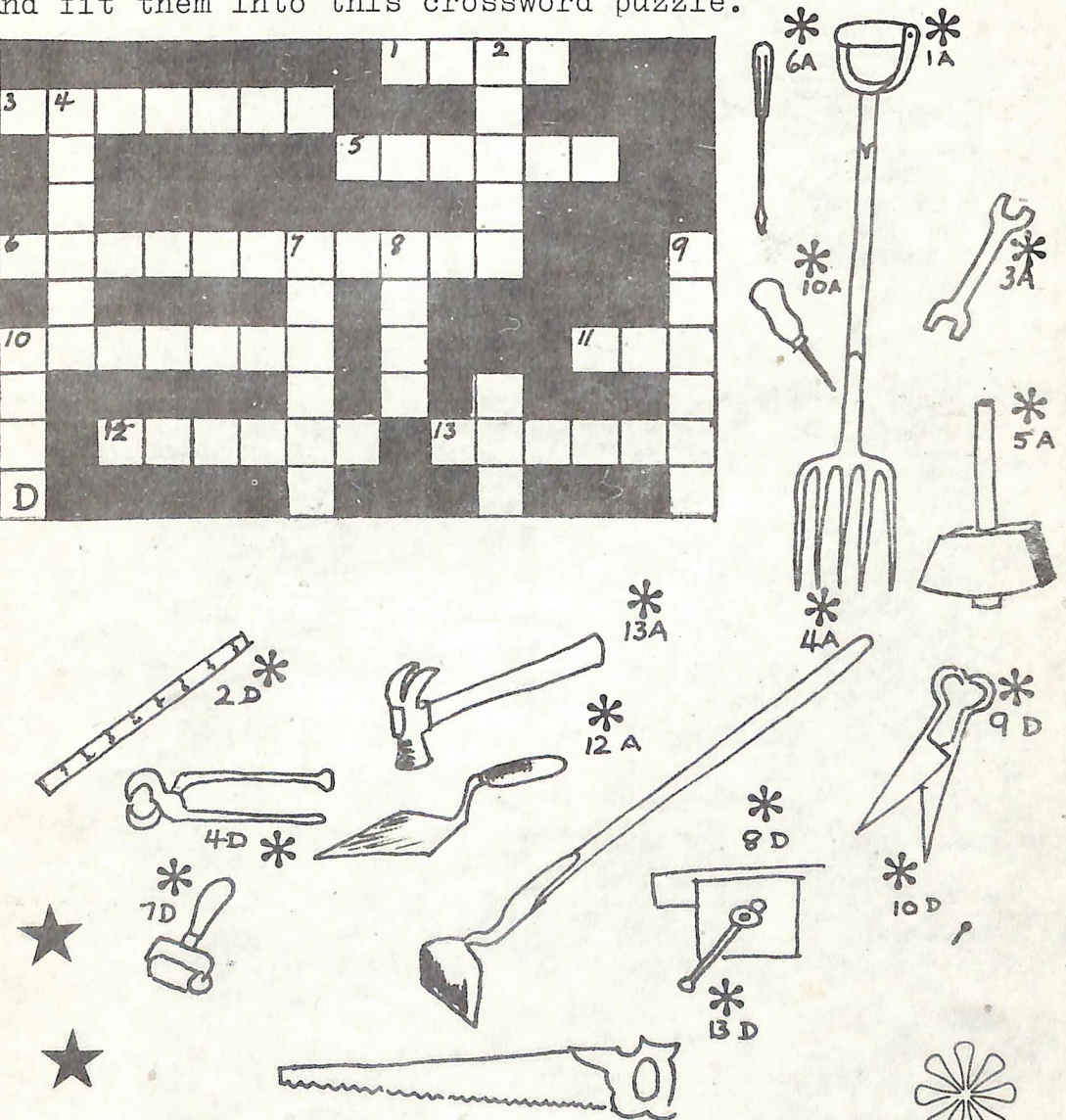
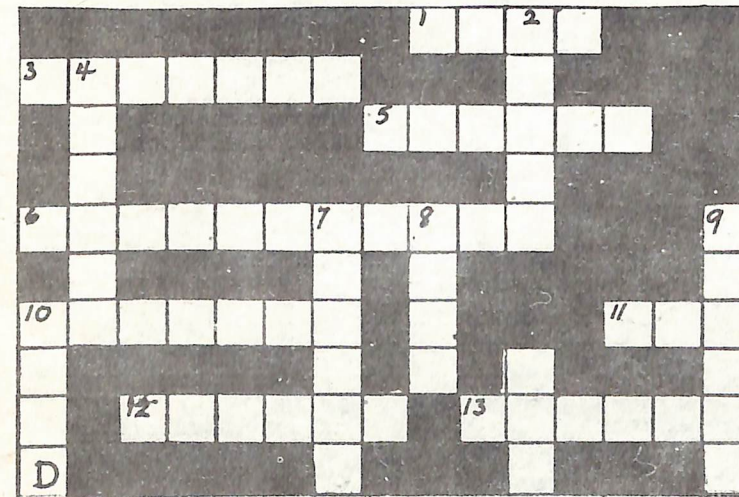
* Bird distribution depends mainly on plant distribution. Why do you think this is so? Would you find flocks of honey-eaters in a treeless and shrubless plain?

* Australia has less species of birds than many other countries, e.g. South America has 2,700

TOOLS



See if you can discover the names of these tools and fit them into this crossword puzzle.



(Adapted from Peal Picture Crosswords)

Name the two creatures
below. Answers are at the
bottom of the page.



PUNZLES

Can you name
these flowers?
They are all
Victorian.



1.



2.



3.



4.

Frilled lizard.
Nankeen Night Heron.
Flowers
Hakea, banksia, she-oak
Running postman.

