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NATURE
NOTES

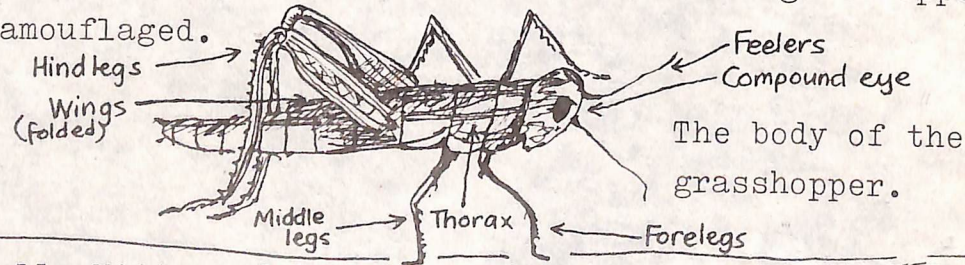
Write On! LETTERS

Well at least we can't complain about not receiving enough letters any more. Here are just a few of the many sent to us last month. Keep it up!

From Tim Corr, grade 6c, Ringwood East.

I would like to say some things about GRASSHOPPERS for Nature Notes. Grasshopper is the most common name given to jumping insects. They have long back legs and large thighs - which is why they can jump so far. Some can jump 10 times as high as themselves and over 20 times as long as themselves! If a boy could do this he would be able to jump over a classroom.

Grasshoppers have straight wings which are very powerful. They normally only fly short distances but can fly quite high in search for food. Most grasshoppers are camouflaged.



Michelle Mitten of Greensborough writes:

Could you please print something about shells because I am doing work on them at the moment.

I like all the cartoons you put in and the things about insects and plants. I like doing your puzzles with the hidden answers in the book.

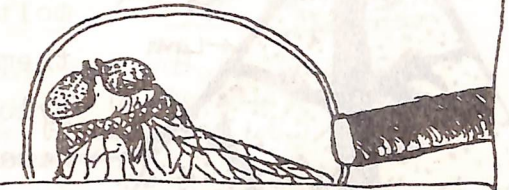


The biggest letter of the month award must go to Justin Higgs of Camden, New South Wales (who is only 8 years old!) He wrote us a very interesting 8 page letter about insects and medusa - complete with illustrations. Here is part of his letter:

In most places the fly is killed....



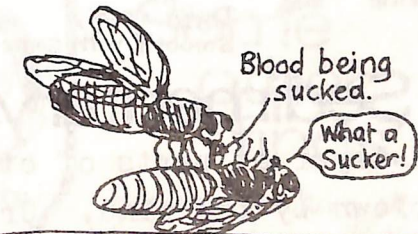
..but take a closer look and you will see they are not less beautiful than other insects.



Also they are interesting, especially the robber fly.



Here is how the Robber fly gets its food.

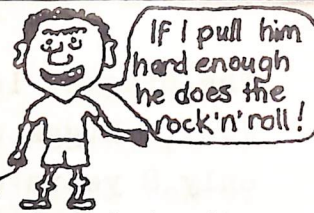


Richard Sparham of grade 4, Croydon, writes:
ABOUT YABBIES.

Some Yabbies are called Marrons in Western Australia. Yabbies can crawl over land. It is believed that their eggs are spread by waterbirds. They are like rabbits in that they burrow - and sometimes they cause damage to small dams. Yabbies can be caught in wire nets, baited with meat and attached to a string. When it is grabbed by the Yabby it is slowly drawn to the bank.

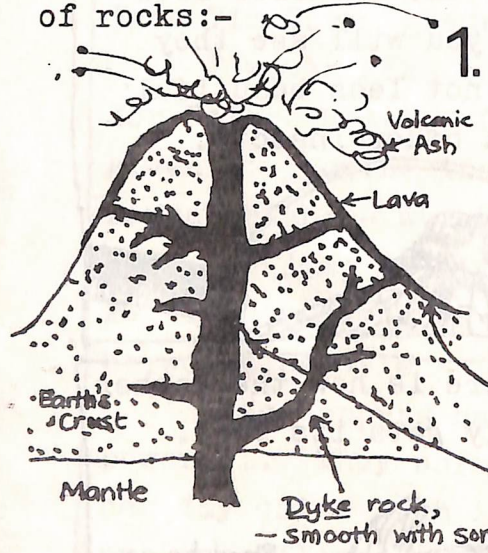


ROCKS



Just in case any of you have been 'sucked in' to the latest craze for 'PET ROCKS' (!?) we thought it would be good if you knew a little bit more about the 3 basic types of rocks:-

1. Igneous. (from ignis = fire)



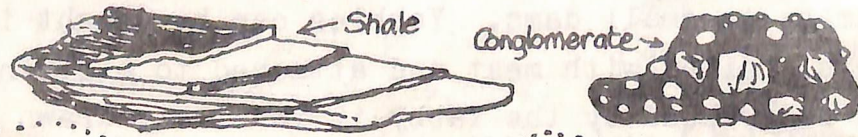
These rocks have solidified from molten lava and have crystals in them. Eg. Granite (used for the pylons of Sydney Harbor Bridge), Basalt (or 'bluestone') and Pumice (a very light rock with holes in it.)

Cools quickly and forms small crystals. Volcanic rock. Eg. Basalt.

Cools slowly — large crystals. Plutonic rock. Eg. Granite.

2. Sedimentary.

These rocks are made up of layer upon layer of parts of other rocks washed together by water or blown by the wind. Gradually they get harder and they may include fossils between their layers. Sedimentary rocks with lumps of other rocks in them are called Conglomerate (or 'Puddingstone') rocks. Fine mud and clay make up Shale, whilst shells (which you can still see if you look at limestone under a hand lens) make limestone and chalk — over thousands of years of course. Coal is a sedimentary rock made from plants which died millions of years ago.

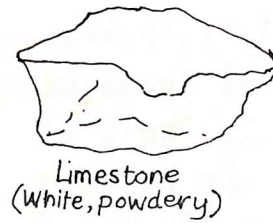


Page 4. RUBIES. ORE.

TIN

3. Altered or Metamorphic.

These rocks have been changed by heat or pressure. For example, Limestone under heat or pressure becomes Marble, and Shale under great pressure becomes Slate — that hard, grey, flakey rock that was used to write on like a blackboard by school children years ago.



Limestone (White, powdery)

becomes



Marble

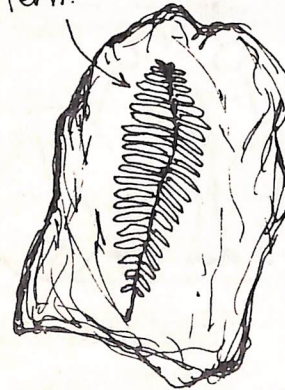
(Many colors, hard and with a beautiful veined ripple in it. Polishes well & is used in expensive buildings a lot.)



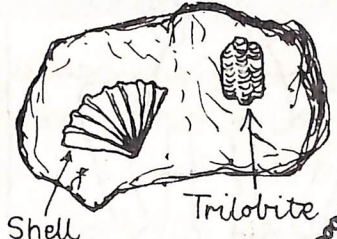
Marble columns and steps.

Fossils.

Dark "print" of a fern.



Most fossils are found in Sedimentary rocks. They are the remains of plants and animals trapped between two layers of rock.



Shell

Trilobite

Some other 'finds'.

Besides striking it rich by finding gold or gemstones, there are other things in the earth worth looking for. Eg....

Magnetite (black) (Magnetic rock)



Petrified wood (half-way between wood and rock.)



Crystals (such as in quartz)



AGATE

SAPPHIRES

DIAMONDS

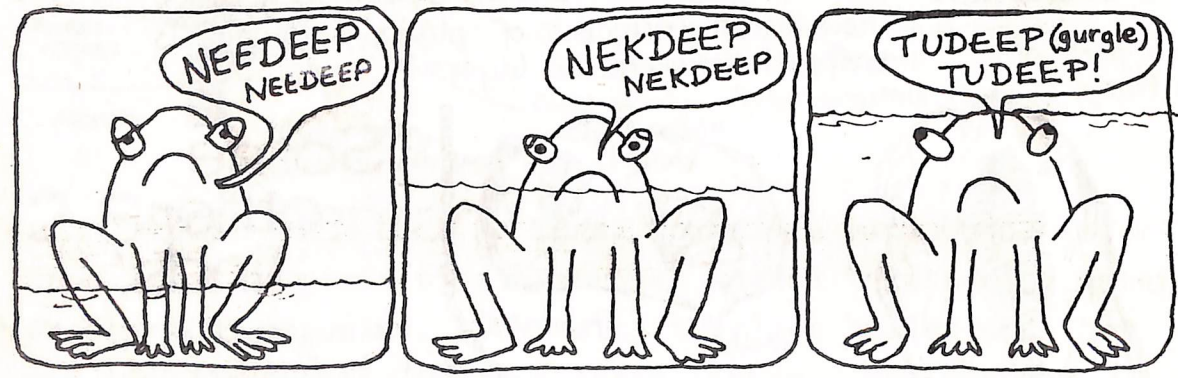


THIS 'N'

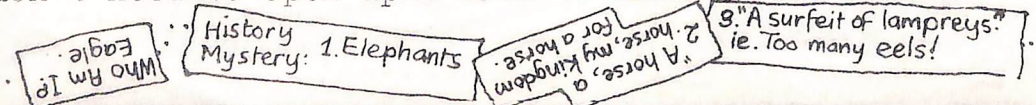
Have you ever tried singing with your mouth shut? Rather difficult I would think, but there is one group of animals that can manage this and they are the AMPHIBIANS - the frogs, toads and salamanders. Amphibians are animals that spend at least part of their lives in water and part on land.

Have you ever listened to a chorus of frogs? The loud bellow of the bullfrog, the high chirp of the cricket frog, or the groans, whistles, snores, barks, clicks, wheezes and grunts of the rest of the choir.

FROGS MAKE MANY DIFFERENT NOISES.....



Most of them make their sounds when air is passed back and forth from the mouth to the lungs. As it does so the air vibrates vocal chords in the throat. This causes the throat to swell up like a balloon and act as an echo chamber to magnify the sound. The echo chamber serves as a sounding box. So you see our frog or toad doesn't really need to open his mouth to sing, just as we don't need to open up a drum to make a loud noise.



THAT.

By L. Delacca.

Sailors of the 18th and 19th centuries loved to tell tales of the beautiful Mermaids they had seen whilst travelling in far off lands. Clever Chinese salesmen realized that this was a great chance for making a quick profit - if they could sell mummified Mermaids to the European sailors. That is just what they did - and this is a picture of one of them. (A baby Mermaid of course, because the fully grown ones "were very hard to catch.")

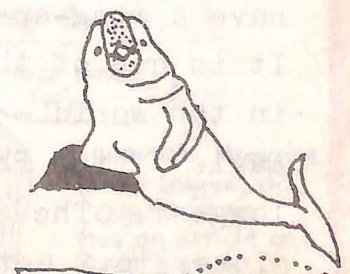


These Mermaids fetched very high prices and it was some time before curious scientists in

Europe could get a close enough look at one to prove the whole thing was a hoax. They showed that a monkey's head, chest and arms had been skilfully sewn onto the body of a fish and then dried and preserved with herbs! Actually, it was probably the Dugong which started the Mermaid myth, as this mammal sits up in a way not unlike a Mermaid on a rock - well, to a drunken sailor that is!



The Dugong



Soaring high above the ground - gliding for hours on the air currents without moving a feather - old 'eagle-eyes' is watching for the slightest movement down below. A careless animal out for a morning stroll (most probably a rat or a rabbit, very rarely a weak lamb) suddenly becomes breakfast for the silently swooping eagle, striking like lightning from the sky. With a beak like a meat-hook at one end, telescopic vision, powerful wings and vice-like claws, the eagle is beautifully equipped for its job. A great job it does for the farmer too, killing many rodents and rabbits.

Australia's largest eagle is the Wedge-tailed Eagle which can grow to have a wing-span of over 3 metres. It is one of the four largest eagles in the world - the Monkey-eating Eagle of the Philippines being the largest. The average wing-span is closer to 2 metres however.

Page 8.

Wedge-tailed Eagles build a nest over 2 metres across - usually in the tops of big trees. The female lays 2 (perhaps 3) white eggs in it between July and September.



EAGLE
is not a
dirty word.

Notice the beak and claws - isn't it just as well that eagles don't "dive-bomb" people like nesting magpies do sometimes! Notice too the "fingers" on the wing tips - eagles are masters of gliding.

NATURE NOTES - JUNE 1976

Eagles belong to a group of birds known as Diurnal Birds of Prey. This name simply means "daytime hunters of meat", as distinct from Nocturnal Birds of Prey (eg. Owls) which hunt at night. Other Diurnal Birds of Prey include: Goshawks & Harriers
Buzzards
Eagles, Kites & Falcons
Osprey Eagles
Condors
Vultures.

These last two groups of birds do not occur naturally in Australia -

what can you find out about them? "Eagle" is actually the name given to large Hawks, so sometimes you might hear the Wedge-tail called an Eaglehawk. Other Australian eagles include:

The Little Eagle
The White-breasted Sea Eagle
The Whistling Eagle.



SURVIVAL Magazine
(Gould League, Vic.)
Coastal (1976)
has an article on
SEA EAGLES.

Page 9.

ATTACK & DEFENCE.

Speaking of eagles swooping out of the sky reminds me of something that happened just the other day. I was walking through the car-park minding my own business when a squawking Magpie-lark ("Mudlark") attacked me! It just flew straight at me and swooped at my head. I don't know whether it was because it saw its reflection in my bald spot - or perhaps it wanted to nest in my curly locks - but I certainly got out of the way very smartly! Which brings me to my topic of "Attack and Defence". Australians are fortunate that the only animal likely to attack and injure is the shark - and perhaps some poorly trained dogs. All our other poisonous species (such as some snakes, spiders and sea creatures) only inject their poison as a means of defence. So if we keep away from them there are no problems.

But I wonder if you have ever looked at "Attack and Defence" from an animals point of view? Here are some suggestions which may help you to do a project on this fascinating topic.

FIRSTLY, let's divide the animal kingdom into 3 groups:

CARNIVORES (flesh-eating) Eg. Lions, praying mantids, sharks, eagles.

HERBIVORES (plant-eating) Eg. Cows, giraffes, koalas.

OMNIVORES (eating both plants and flesh) Eg. Most humans, possums.

5. Ostrich

Families: 1. Rat K.

2. Red K.

3. Tree K. 4. Potoroo

Meat - eating animals are the ones that are best equipped for attacking their prey. Can you name these animals from the clues:-

- * The insects that dig traps for ants to fall into.
- * The "fishing fish" that has a built-in fishing rod, line and bait to catch its own food.
- * The insect that carries supplies of a chemical that it injects into its prey to paralyse it.
- * The fish that "shoots" its prey.
- * The reptile that squeezes its prey to death.

Now see if you can give examples of animals that use these methods of defence:-

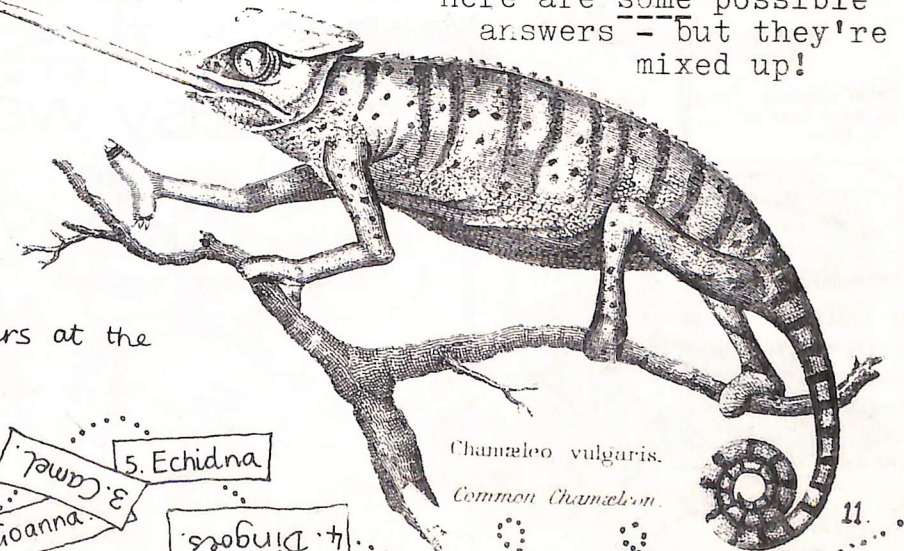
- * Animals that "play dead".
- * Animals that rely on camouflage only.
- * Animals that carry their "castle" with them.
- * Animals that build a retreat to hide in.
- * The reptile that leaves half of its body with its attacker and runs off with the rest!

PYTHON
SNAILS
SLATERS
ARCHER-FISH
SKINKS
WASPS
SPIDERS
STICK-INSECTS
TURTLES
FROG-FISH
ANGLER-FISH
POSSUMS
ANT-LION



Here are some possible answers - but they're mixed up!

The Chameleon Lizard is a very interesting example of ATTACK (the tongue catches food) and DEFENCE (Chameleons change color to suit their environment - just like some barrackers at the Footy eh?!)



Chamaeleo vulgaris.
Common Chameleon.

Alphabet Animals: 1. Adder.

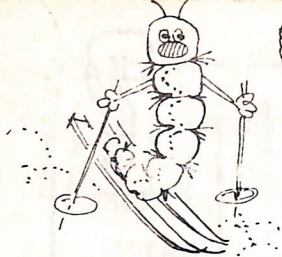
6. Fox.

7. Camel.

5. Echidna

2. Bridle 7. Goanna

4. Dingoes

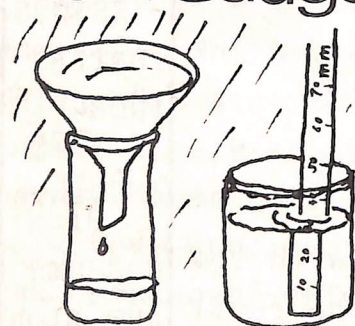


WINTER

what's it really mean?

COLD, WET and DARK might well be the first three words that come into your head when you think about winter. But have you ever tried measuring just HOW cold, wet and dark it is? You may well find that winter is NOT your wettest season for example. Here are some ideas to try at your school:-

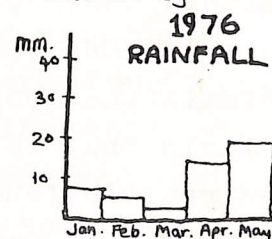
Rain Gauge



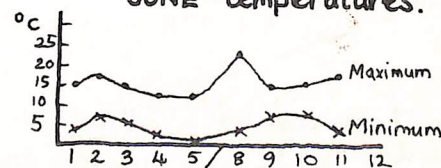
~try making your own rain gauge (even an empty jar will do). Take measurements twice a day (empty it out each time!) using a millimetre rule. The top of a shelter-shed roof is a good spot to put it - but keep it away from trees! Your measurements may not agree with the Weather Bureau - why not?

Graphs

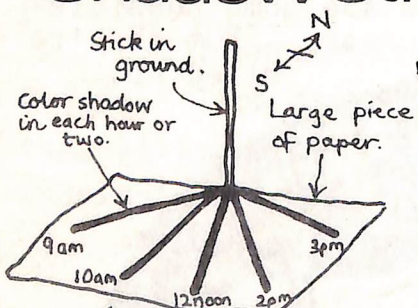
are the most interesting way to record your results. Eg.



JUNE - temperatures.



Shadow Stick



Why is the sun not as hot in winter even when there are no clouds?

Easy way

~to get information about the weather is to look in the daily newspaper.

SUN, MOON PLANETS

These times are supplied by the Mount Stromlo Observatory. They are correct for Melbourne.

TODAY
 Rises 5.13
 7.23 a.m. 1.23
 12.45 a.m. 5.1
 7.05 a.m. 4.1
 6.43 a.m. 9.1
 11.51 a.m.
 5.52 a.m.

CAPITAL CITY TEMPERATURES

	Max.	Min.
Melbourne	18	7
Brisbane	22	16
Sydney	22	10
Canberra	16	1
Hobart	13	5
Darwin	31	18
Adelaide	17	11
Perth	21	13

If this is a winter shadow pattern, can you draw here what a summer pattern for the same place would look like?

TOPAZ

SILVER

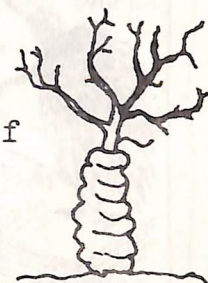
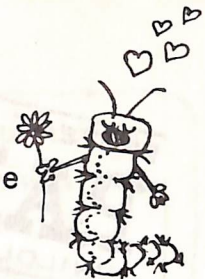
Nature Notes, June '76.

LIMESTONE

GARDENER'S PLOT.

WINTER GARDENING NOTES - by Mrs. Brodie

1. Make sure the ground is well drained.
2. Dig into your garden bed well rotted animal manure and compost - also gives warmth and fertility.
3. Prune fruit trees, hydrangers and roses. Cut out dead wood and trim hedges and shrubs.
4. Protect lemon trees and other tender plants if heavy frosts are likely. (Wrap the trunk in old sacks.)
5. It's a bit late - but you could still plant broad beans, parsley, cabbages and cauliflowers.
6. Divide your strawberry and rhubarb plants.
7. Keep weeds under control.

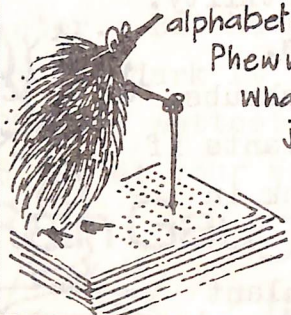


REMEMBER! Don't throw your apple cores, vegetable peelings and lawn clippings out - use them again by making a compost heap. Rotting plant matter is excellent for digging into your garden. It eventually forms humus, and together with earthworms, helps to ventilate and fertilize your soil!

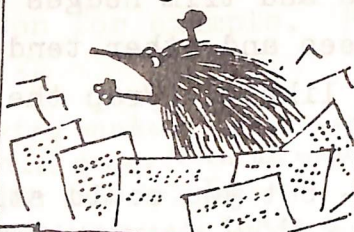


At P.A.W Headquarters an Animal Directory is being organized. Three busy Echidnas are collecting names...

I have listed A to K alphabetically
Pheww! What a job!



Oh No!! I have listed mine in family groups!



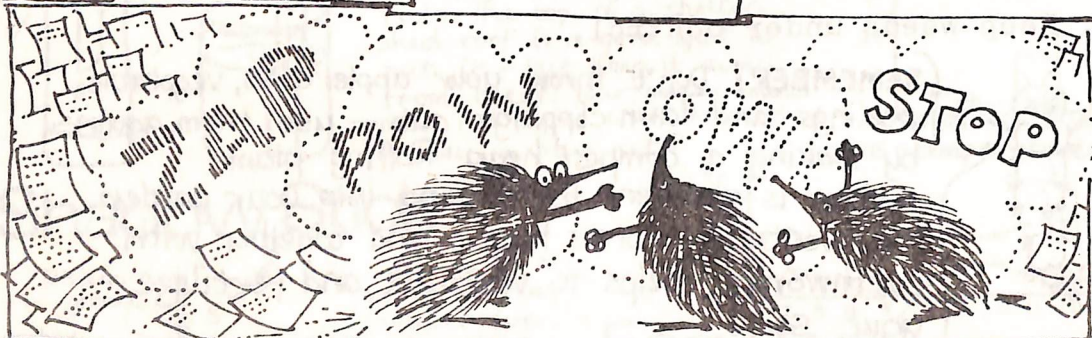
WHAT? you are both wrong! I have grouped mine by the areas in which they live!!



You'll have to change!

I WILL NOT!

OH YES YOU WILL!



What a mess!

We will let the readers decide for us, see the next page...



ANIMALS from AFRICA!

1. H
2. E
3. C
4. G
5. O

1. Greek for river horse.
2. A huge animal!
3. The fastest cat.
4. A graceful Antelope.
5. This bird lays the largest eggs in the world.

MEMBERS OF THE KANGAROO FAMILY

The smallest member being from 10" to 18" high. kangaroo

The largest of all marsupials is the kangaroo

This kangaroo is not a ground dweller... kangaroo

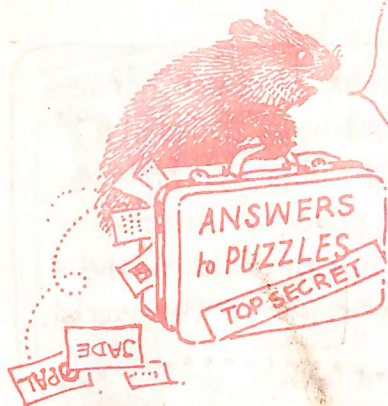
This little fellow has a pointed snout and short round ears, it lives along the East + South coast of Tasmania...

ALPHABET ANIMALS

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. E
6. F
7. G

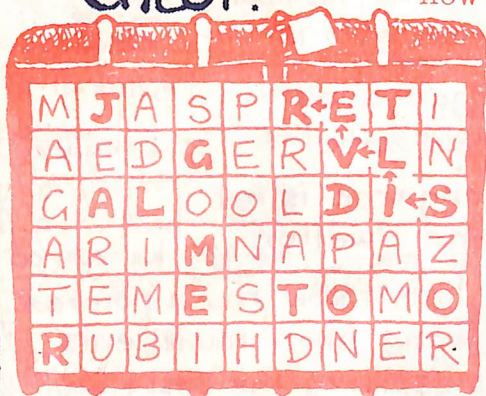
1. A "deathly" snake.
2. A dancing bird.
3. A desert animal.
4. Wild Australian Dogs.
5. Three of these animals work for the P.A.W organization!
6. A sly animal.
7. The second largest reptile. ...

↓ Can you keep going right through the alphabet? Write clues as well!



Heh Heh! You'll never find these answers once I've hidden them!

Word TREASURE CHEST!



Clue!



Fancy thinking rocks are valuable! Ants are much more useful! I think I'll start an Anti-Rock group.

Who Am I??

History Mystery

1. What animals did Hannibal cross the Alps with?
2. What animal did Richard III call for in the middle of the Battle of Bosworth?
3. What animal did King John of England die from eating too much of?

☐

My first is in beak but not in book,

☐

My next is in feather but not in chook!

☐

My third is in flying but not in filly,

☐

My fourth is in claw and twice in silly!

☐

My last is my first - and by farmers I'm cursed!

