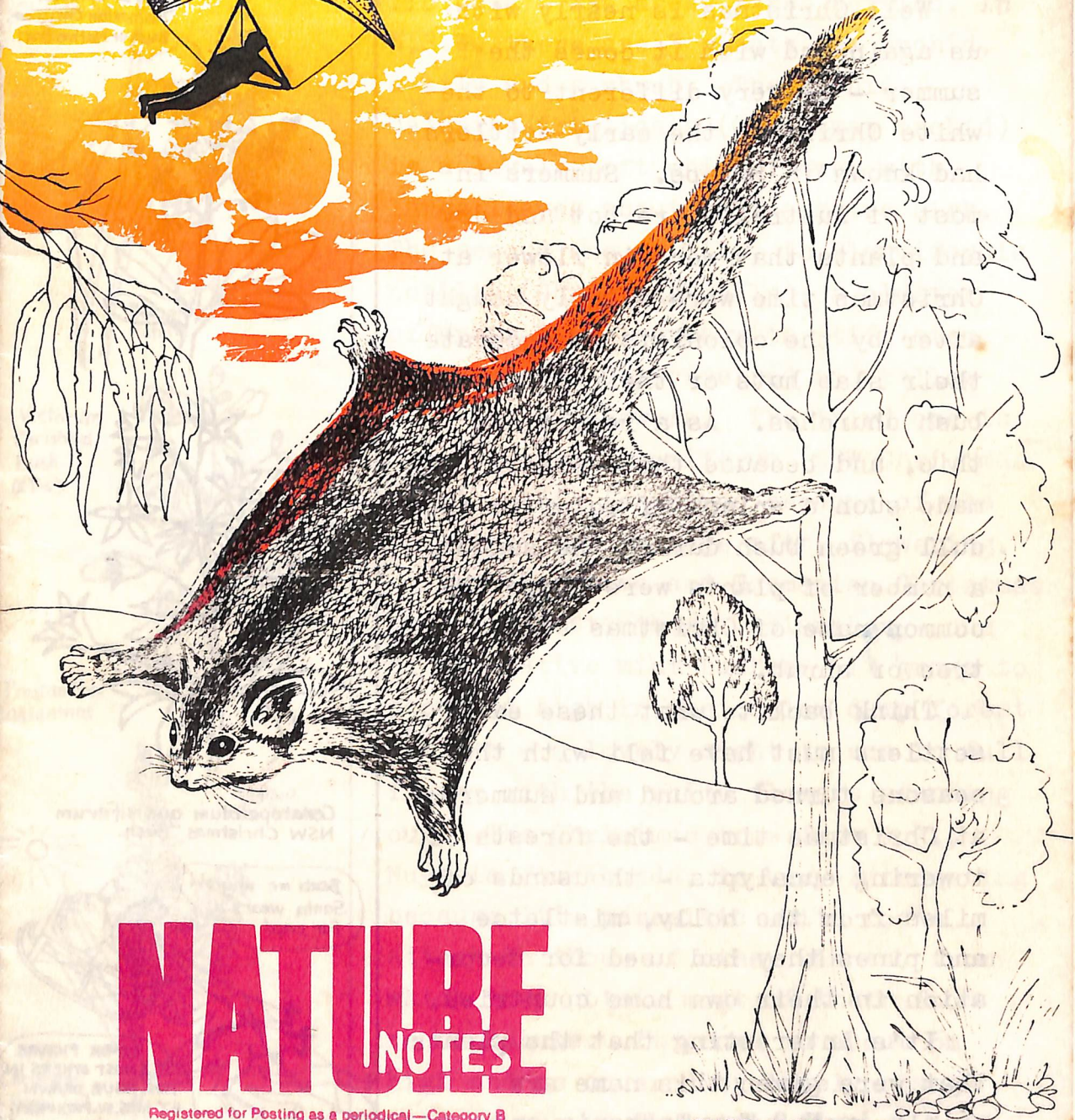


58

Vol.13, No.10.



NATURE NOTES

Registered for Posting as a periodical—Category B

LESSER GLIDER POSSUM

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS TREES by D. Dobson.

Well Christmas is nearly with us again and with it comes the summer - so very different to the white Christmas the early settlers had known in Europe. Summers in most of Australia are hot and dry and plants that were in flower at Christmas time were eagerly sought after by the colonists to decorate their slab huts or their little bush churches. As a result of this, and because these plants made such a splash of color in the dull green bush during the summer, a number of plants were given the common name of Christmas bush, tree or shrub.

Think back to what these early settlers must have felt with the seasons turned around and summer at Christmas time - the forests of towering eucalypts - thousands of miles from the holly, mistletoe and pines they had used for decoration in their own home countries.

It's interesting that the plants that were given this name are mainly in N.S.W., Tasmania and



Bursaria spinosa
Tasmanian Christmas
Bush or Native Box.



Ceratopetalum gummiferum
NSW Christmas Bush.



Christmas
Bells.

*Blandifordia
nobilis.*

Victorian
Christmas
Bush.
(R.Tas.)



*Prostanthera
lasianthos.*



*Nuytsia
floribunda.*

W.A.
Christmas
Tree.

Victoria - the areas first settled. In N.S.W. there are 3 plants, an orchid, a lily and a shrub. The orchid *Calanthe triplicata* (Christmas orchid) is a lovely soft white flower with large leaves about half a metre high. The second one, a lily, is *Blandifordia nobilis* (Christmas bells), a cluster of grass like leaves with stiff stem carrying the delicate red and yellow bell-shaped flowers. The third one is *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* (NSW Christmas bush) - this is prized because of the brilliant red foliage after flowering.

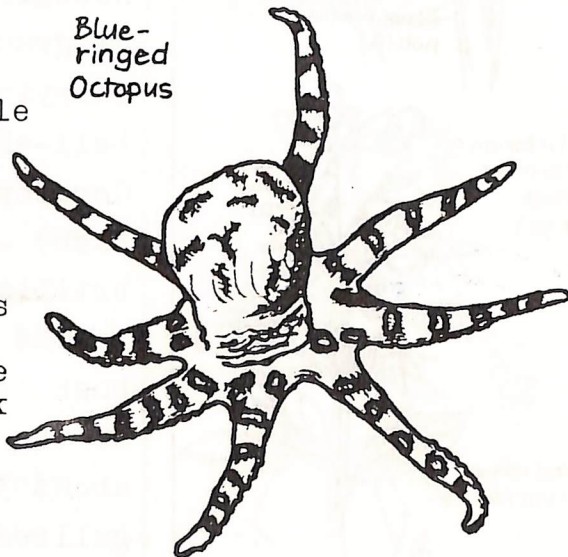
The Victorian and Tasmanian Christmas bush is *Prostanthera lasianthos* - one of the native mint bushes. It grows to about 3m high in the cooler damp forest gullies - a lovely sight to see in full flower with the white flowers standing out. The Christmas tree from W.A., *Nuytsia floribunda*, is very interesting because it's parasitic - its roots attach to those of other plants, from which they obtain most of their food requirements. It grows to about 6m high and is covered by lovely orange flowers around Christmas time.

THIS 'N' THAT ON

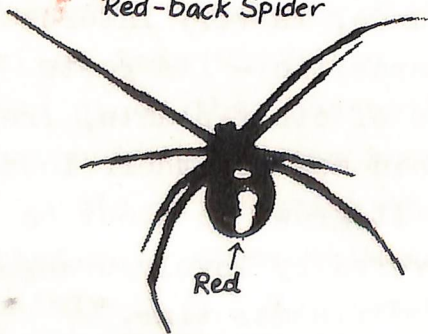
By the time you read this girls and boys, I can imagine that most of your thoughts will be on the holidays just around the corner. Probably many of you will be travelling far and wide - to beaches, mountains, plains and forests. For most people, holidays are a happy time, an exploring time, a finding out time. For some, possibly even you, they can become a sad or painful time. On holidays we are very often in unfamiliar territory and engaging in unusual activities. This is then the time that we need to keep alert to the dangers that may lurk behind that rock, under that log or in that pool. Let us look at some of these:

Nature Notes has often warned you about a pretty little fellow with eight legs - often found in rock pools where people love to explore. Yes, that's right, the BLUE-RINGED OCTOPUS - found right around Australia. This very dangerous mollusc can hold a fascination for children because it is able to change color from dull, dark blue rings on the brownish, yellow body, to bright peacock blue. Under no circumstances should you handle it as a bite produces an immediate numbness which leads to respiratory failure (ie. you can't breathe) and the need for artificial respiration.

Blue-
ringed
Octopus



Red-back Spider



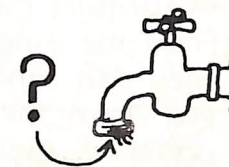
Another nasty and dangerous creature is the red-back spider. Many spiders rely on strong silken webs to catch their prey whilst others have to use venom to subdue their suppers. While Sydney has its fatal funnel-web, Victoria has its red-back.

THE LOOKOUT.

by
L.J. Delacca

Where NOT to look for the red-back: Usually it builds an untidy web in old drain pipes, bags, old iron and wood heaps. While very seldom fatal, the bite can cause agony - particularly in the legs and stomach - followed by much perspiration. The spider is easily recognized by its black, pea-shaped body with the red stripe and long slender legs. Sometimes the red stripe may not be readily visible. If you believe you have found a red-back - call an adult but don't touch. Often on holidays I have seen thirsty children rush to a tank tap, put their mouth over it and turn it on.

That is NOT a very wise thing to do. ALWAYS turn the tap on first, as there maybe a red-back, bullant, bee or wasp hiding up the tap - and a bite inside your body can be very nasty indeed.



This chart may help you to know what to do:

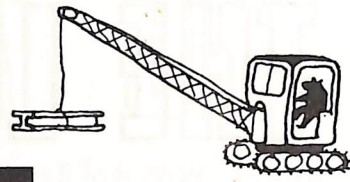
ANIMAL	TREATMENT	ANTIVENENE	HOSPITAL?
SNAKES.	• Put a tourniquet around the bitten limb. • Rest limb - get patient to hospital quickly - but without panic. • Identify snake if possible.	For most Snakebites.	Yes.
SPIDERS Red Back	No tourniquet needed - rest patient.	Yes.	Yes.
Funnel Web	Tourniquet - don't loosen it.	No.	Yes.
OCTOPUS. (Blue Ringed)	Keep up artificial respiration until you get to a hospital.	No.	Yes.
STONEFISH. STINGRAY.	Bathe in warm water.	Yes. No.	Yes. Yes.
BEEs. WASPS. BULLANTS.	Remove stinging barb without squeezing poison sac. (Use knife edge.) Antihistamine cream may be necessary.	No.	Only if you're allergic to the bite.
PLATYPUS.	Pain killers and rest.	No.	No.

(Adapted from 'THE AGE' Nov. 8, 1976)

Before I say goodbye for 1976, I'd like to say just a word for the poor old maggies. Many of them are killed on our roads because they cannot get out of the way of cars quickly enough. You may help to save them by asking Dad to ease up a bit on the right-hand pedal - and you might be saving more than a magpie's life too. Meanwhile, enjoy your holidays girls and boys (if you still can after all these dire warnings) and we look forward to you telling us all about them in 1977.



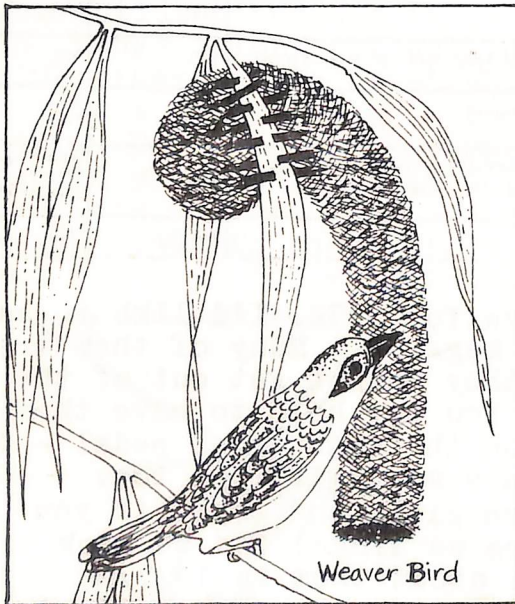
ANIMAL



It's amazing how many of the 'inventions' made by humans have actually been 'borrowed' from other members of the animal kingdom. All sorts of things from dams to gliders have been learnt from our animal friends. Here are a few more examples:

The Weaver Bird (not an Australian native) makes a beautifully finished nest from the finest materials they can find. Often they pull down the nest and start again if everything is not perfect! The material they use is actually interwoven to give added strength and allow such strangely shaped nests.

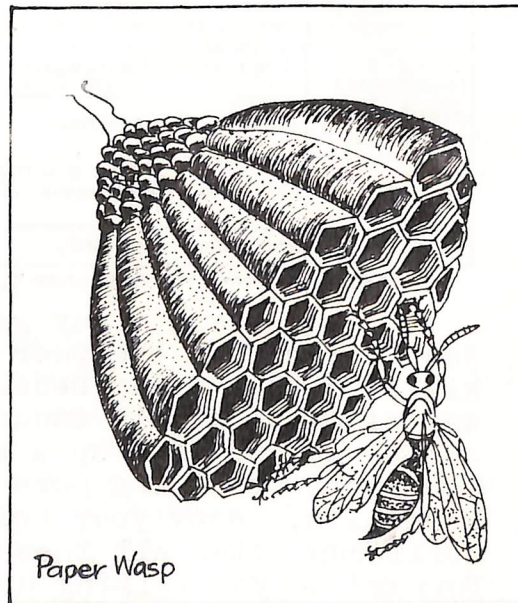
Basket Weaving!



Weaver Bird

The Paper Wasp builds an elaborate nest from a white, paper-like substance. In each cell is placed a preserved caterpillar, or something similar, and a single egg is laid on top. When the baby wasp hatches its first meal is ready and fresh! The wasp's 'flats' are fully furnished with a deep-freeze full of meat!!

Origami & High Rise Flats!



Paper Wasp



Mallee Fowl

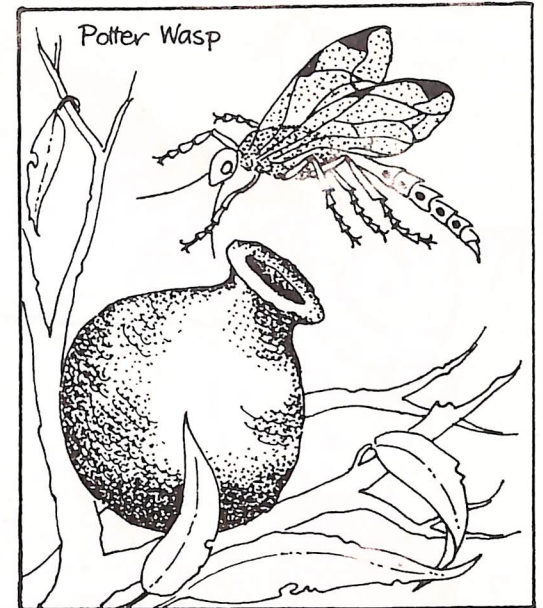
Incubating Oven!

(See Nature Notes No.8, Vol.12.)

Rotting litter in the Mallee Fowl's mound provides heat and by shifting the dirt on or off the heap the bird can control the temperature. It seems to measure the temperature with its beak. The eggs are buried & when they hatch, the chicks must dig their way to the surface.

LOOK UP THESE OTHER 'ANIMAL INVENTIONS':

- The Parachute (The Flying Frog of Borneo)
- The Tank - armour plating (The Armadillo)
- Periscopes (The Stalk-eyed Fly of New Guinea)
- Fishing Rods (Anglefish)



Potter Wasp

Pottery!

The Potter or Mason Wasps are 'loners' or solitary wasps - unlike the social Paper Wasps on the page before. They too have individual cells inside their mud house but they don't live and find food as a colony. Their wings fold lengthwise when at rest, whereas you may have noticed that other solitary wasps have wings that stick out like a bee's.

- Bi-focals (The 4-eyed Fish of Sth. America)
- Hydroplanes (almost! The Basilisk runs on water!)

ENGINEERS

(See page 10 also for information on gliders.)

Can you draw a food chain using the plants and animals found in a rockpool? Is a sea anemone a plant or an animal? How is it that some seaweeds can grab a swimmer and pull them under? What sea creatures like to lurk in underwater caves?

WHAT'S WHAT..

- 1 Limpets ✓
- 2 Barnacles ✓
- 3 Anemone ✓
- 4 Sea Urchin ✓
- 5 Sea Star ✓
- 6 Turban Shell ✓
- 7 Mussel ✓
- 8 Brittle Star ✓
- 9 Seaweed (Neptune's Necklace)
- 10 Hermit Crab
- 11 Porcupine Fish
- 12 Sea-bat Starfish

DANGER! → Make sure you keep away from the deadly blue-ringed octopus, girls and boys!

Help!

DON'T GO ROCK-HOPPING WHEN THE TIDE IS COMING IN !!

Can you draw a food chain using the plants and animals found in a rockpool? Is a sea anemone a plant or an animal? How is it that some seaweeds can grab a swimmer and pull them under? What sea creatures like to lurk in underwater caves?

You can't eat me! I'm not a sea-snail!

- 1 Limpets ✓
- 2 Barnacles ✓
- 3 Anemone ✓
- 4 Sea Urchin
- 5 Sea Star ✓
- 6 Turban Shell ✓
- 7 Mussel ✓
- 8 Brittle Star ✓
- 9 Seaweed (Neptune's Necklace)
- 10 Hermit Crab
- 11 Porcupine Fish
- 12 Sea-bat Starfish

DON'T GO ROCK-HOPPING
WHEN THE TIDE IS COMING
IN !!

Up,up and Away..

One of the things man has always been trying to do is fly - especially to glide like an eagle. In this day of jet travel, gliding has become popular again. The Rogallo designed gliders - like the one above - have given people the feel of what it's like to glide like a bird or the possum on the front cover. Whereas glider possums may volplane for about 100m, the hang gliders of today can stay aloft for at least 12 hours and travel over 40kms! Unfortunately however, the accident record of the hang gliders is not quite as good as the possums' - two people are killed every week in the USA trying to glide. Schools are being set up in Australia to teach people how to do it properly - rather than just jump off the nearest cliff with a set of wings!

Find out what you can about the history of flight. How is it that gliders can actually rise in the air and not just keep on falling? Why is there a statue of Icarus at Tullamarine Airport - and who was he? Can you make a better model glider than the usual paper dart?

★ FASTER THAN A SPEEDING TORTOISE,
★ ABLE TO FIGHT HIS WAY SINGLEHANDED OUT OF A BROWN PAPERBAG,
★ ABLE TO LEAP TALL TOADSTOOLS WITH A SINGLE BOUND,
★ THICKER THAN A BRICK, IT'S ...



ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION PARADE.

Sort out the jumbled names of these creatures and draw a line to the right picture.



aroadmll

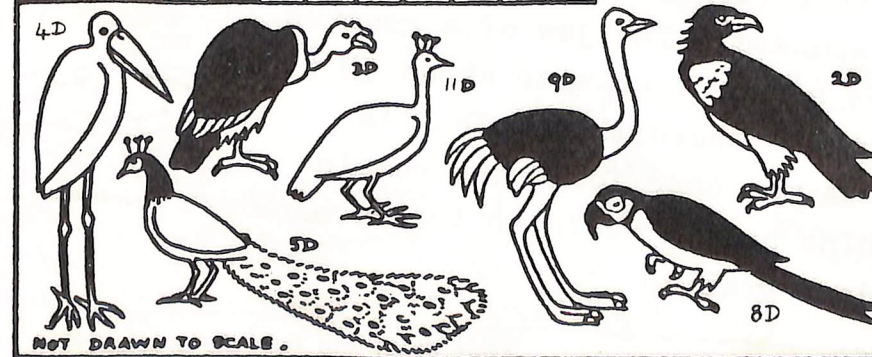
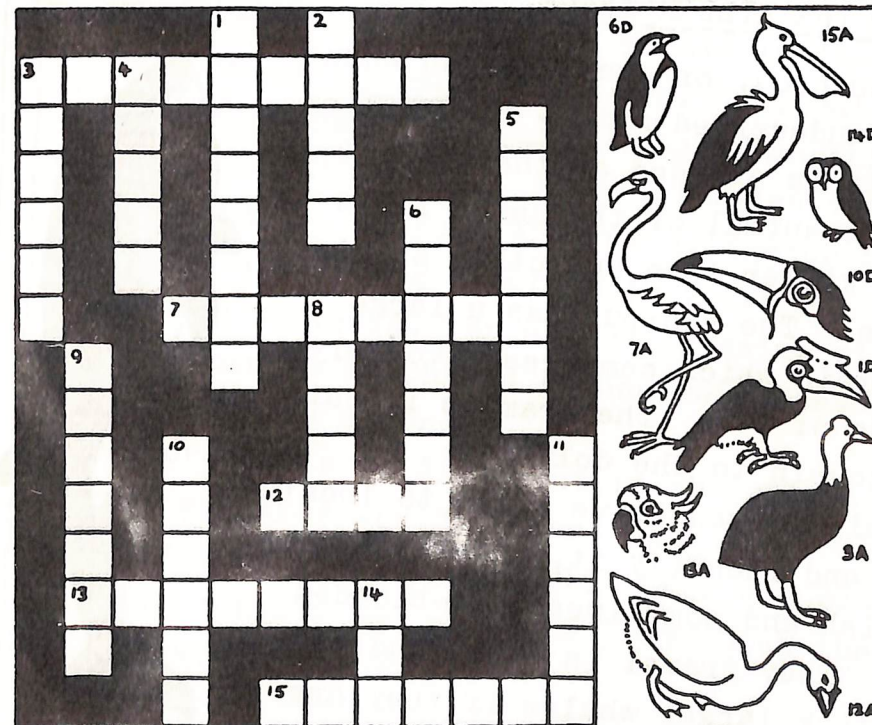
peatlone



splatpuy

BIRDS AT THE ZOO

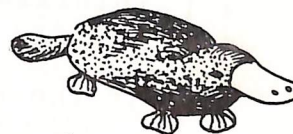
The numbered picture clues are all of birds you might see at the zoo. Can you recognize them?



NOT DRAWN TO SCALE.



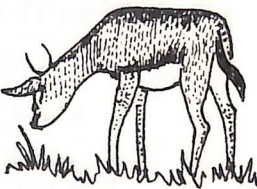
lecor



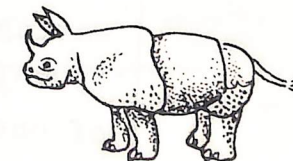
leom



berave



yalsc rattennae



Lettuce? Did I hear
Som one mention
Lettuce!?

CHOMP
CHOMP

Letters

BOOK PRIZES FOR
THESE 2 BOYS.
Thanks for all your
letters throughout
the year!

This letter from Stuart Jones came earlier in the year but we have kept it until the summer when some of you may even see a whale at Marineland or washed up on the beach.

MYTHS OF THE KILLER WHALE.

The Orcinus orca, or grampus, has been given the undeserved name - "The Killer Whale". It is classed as the most intelligent animal of the sea. It is no more a killer than any other species of the sea. The grampus has a large complex brain which compares favorably with those of men. The grampus is said to be a cousin to the dolphin. It uses highly sensitive sonar to locate its prey and identify it, usually eating squid, fish and sometimes warm-blooded animals. They travel in packs and sometimes attack larger whales if they are sick or wounded. The jaw of a grampus resembles a huge trap with about 50 teeth with which it tears the flesh it's eating. A man once found the remains of 13 dolphins and 14 seals in the stomach of one dead grampus.



Orcinus orca.

Read about 'Old Tom' the grampus in
NN Vol. 12, No 4.

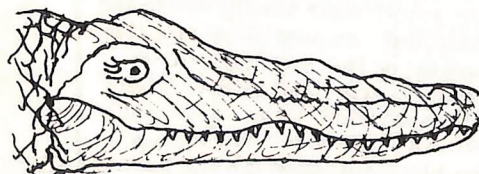
Another Grade 6 boy, Leo Spoor, sent us this letter about another sort of animal with 'jaws of steel'.

ALLIGATORS & CROCODILES.

I have written in about alligators from a project I did earlier this year. The alligator lives in Asia, Africa, Australia* and America. He lives in rivers, swamps, lagoons, bays and fresh or salt water marshes. They live mainly in the water but do love to lie out in the sun. Alligators don't mind what they eat - they snap at anything that passes their jaws.... which includes crabs, shrimps, crayfish and ducks. When an alligator is born he weighs about 200g - but at 10 years old he may be as much as 150kg. An alligator swims with his tail & when he is chased he can swim faster than 2 men paddling a canoe!

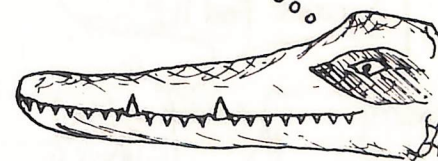
The crocodile is different to the alligator - his head and eyes are different and the crocodile has 2 teeth sticking up when his jaws are closed. (Leo included two sketches from which the ones below were taken.)

See you later, Alligator!



*According to H. Cogger in 'Australian Reptiles' (Reed) there are NO ALLIGATORS in Australia - only the Fresh-Water & Estuarine Crocodiles!

In a while, Crocodile!



* HOT STUFF!! (Or, how to beat the heat this summer.)



Thanks

As this is the last issue of Nature Notes that I will be editing, I really must take this short space to sincerely thank the following people, named and unnamed:

- * my "Ass.Ed." Mrs. Ann Gibson,
- * Mr. Pruden, the Ringwood District Inspector,
- * Mr. Little, Principal, Ringwood East,
- * The Nature Notes Committee of the past two years,
- * The Mothers' Club of Ringwood East who have typed, drawn, collated, packaged and delivered Nature Notes,
- * Teachers like Mr. Williams of Beaumaris who have spread Nature Notes everywhere!

What about thanking us, we have to read the thing!



And I'd like to send a cheerio to my Aunt Winifred and all the girls & boys in hospital.



THANK YOU ALL & SEASON'S GREETINGS, Keith Dyer

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MYSTERY MESSAGE

~ AS YOU SOLVE EACH CLUE, WRITE THE LETTERS IN THE SQUARE WITH THE SAME NUMBER AS THE LETTER.

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36

A long-nosed Australian marsupial looking something like a rat

= $\frac{I}{6} \frac{C}{17} \frac{I}{34} \frac{C}{13} \frac{I}{28} \frac{C}{10} \frac{C}{24}$

The largest Australian lizards are the members of the

$\frac{I}{3} \frac{I}{23} \frac{I}{16} \frac{I}{9} \frac{I}{35} \frac{I}{1}$ class.

Largest Australian bird = $\frac{I}{25} \frac{I}{5} \frac{I}{19}$.

Imported animal used to catch rabbits =

$\frac{I}{27} \frac{I}{21} \frac{I}{8} \frac{I}{12} \frac{I}{14} \frac{I}{18}$

Small Australian bird with an almost perpendicular tail

= $\frac{I}{36} \frac{I}{20} \frac{I}{2} \frac{I}{22}$

$7 \times 11 = \frac{I}{32} \frac{I}{33}$

$53 - 34 = \frac{I}{30} \frac{I}{31}$

Plural of goose = $\frac{I}{4} \frac{I}{7} \frac{I}{26} \frac{I}{-}$

Antelopes shiver when they hear the $\frac{I}{15} \frac{I}{11} \frac{I}{-} \frac{I}{29}$ of a lion!

SPoonERISMS

The Rev. W.A. Spooner kept accidentally wixing his mords up, and ever since then such 'mistakes' have been called Spoonerisms. Here are some examples:

Said the teacher to the boy:

"You have tasted one whole worm!"

Replied the boy:

"Now missen lister, thinkle peep you're soo trict!"

Try writing a fairy story full of Spoonerisms.

It might go something like this:

"Rindercella slipped her dropper at the Dancy Bress Fall - but the Prandsome Hince found it."

I couldn't have bet it putter myself!

Merry Christmas and a Nappy Yew Hear!

