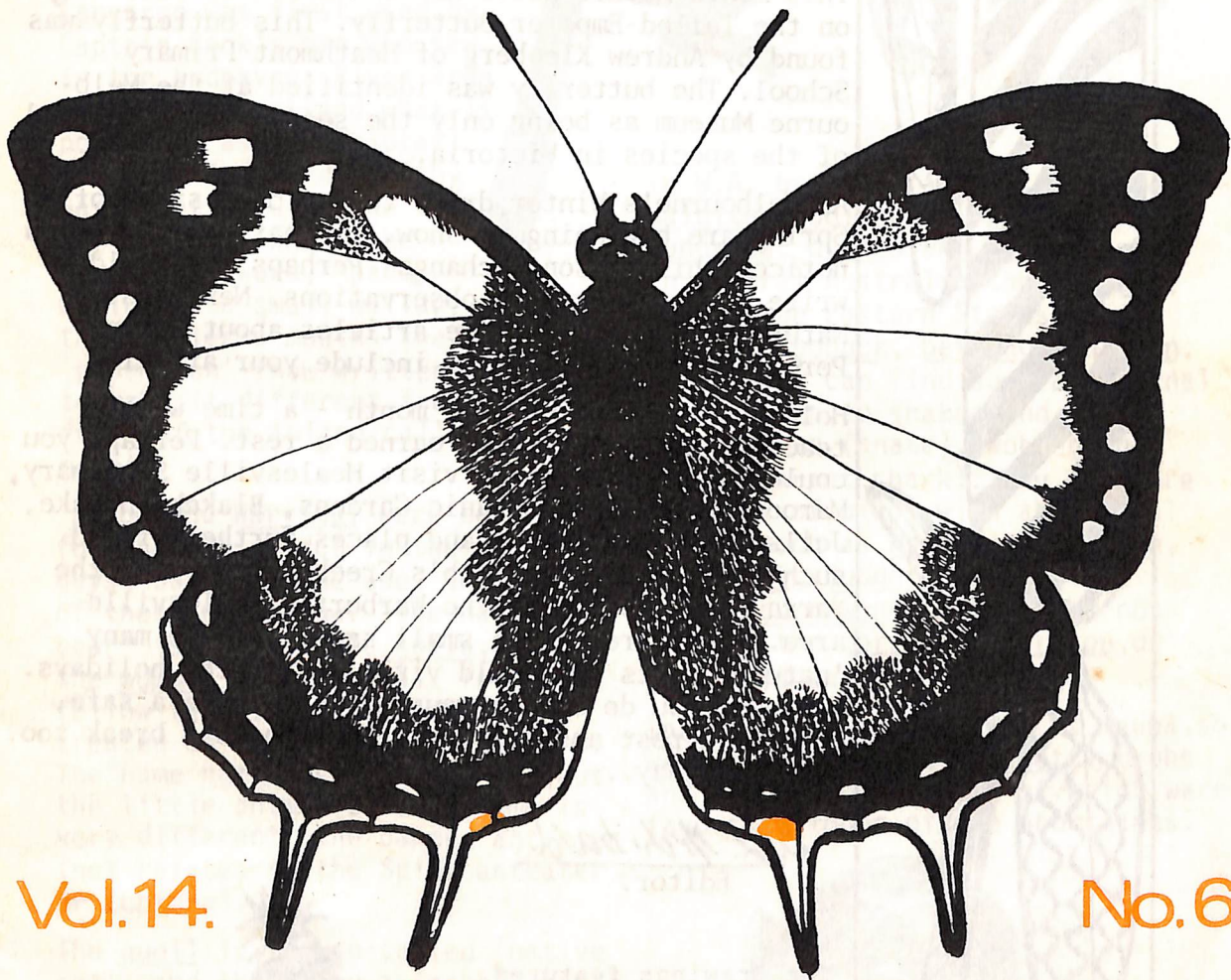


NATURE



Vol. 14.

No. 6.

NOTES

Editorial.

This month Nature Notes has a feature article on the Tailed-Emporer Butterfly. This butterfly was found by Andrew Kleeberg of Heathmont Primary School. The butterfly was identified at the Melbourne Museum as being only the second recorded find of the species in Victoria.

As Melbourne's Winter draws to a close, signs of Spring are beginning to show. In what ways have you noticed this seasonal change? Perhaps you could write to us about your observations. Next month Nature Notes will feature articles about Spring. Perhaps we may be able to include your article?

Holidays are with us this month - a time when teachers and pupils have earned a rest. Perhaps you could take some time to visit Healesville Sanctuary, Maroondah Dam, the Botanic Gardens, Blakeburn Lake, Jells Park in Waverley and places further afield such as Lake Eildon, Snob's Creek Hatchery or the Yarra State Forest in the Warburton-Healesville area. These are only a small sample of the many 'nature' spots you could visit during the holidays. Whatever you do during your holiday, have a safe, enjoyable rest and remember - mum needs a break too. Happy holiday..

B. L. McInch.
Editor.

The drawings featured on this page are of aboriginal weapons. Do you know the names of any of them? Do you know how they are used?

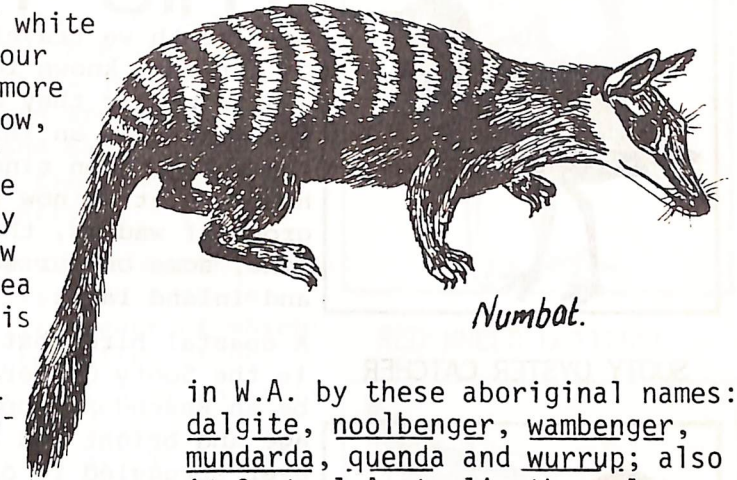


Aboriginal Names in Common Use

From the earliest days of white settlement many of our native animals, then far more plentiful than they are now, came to be known by their aboriginal names. The name kangaroo was first used by Captain Cook's men who saw in the Endeavour River area of North Queensland what is now known as the Whiptail Wallaby. The word wallaby was first used in the Sydney district where the aboriginal word, 'paddy-malla for a small wallaby became in the settler's mouths the odd name 'pademelon' (now written "pademelon" to make it different from the wild fruit of the inland called by that name).

Dingo and Warrigal were both used for the native dog in the early days, but everyone uses the first of these names now. 'The native bear' is the lovable koala, and the wombat is a comical, friendly fellow that is unfortunately, treated as a pest by some farmers. The name numbat sounds similar, but the little animal of that name is very different: the banded anteater (not related to the Spiny anteater or Echidna).

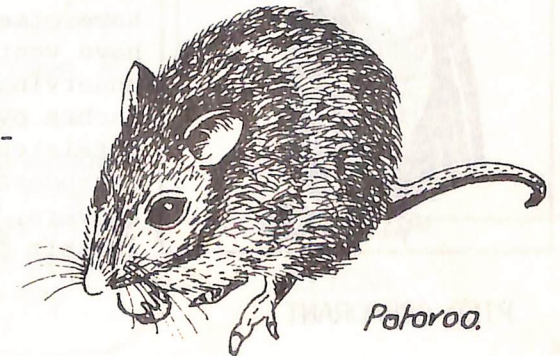
The quoll is the so-called 'native cat', and the bilby a 'rabbit-bandicoot'. In Troughton's book, 'Furred Animals of Australia', you may find out what kinds of animals are known



Numbat.

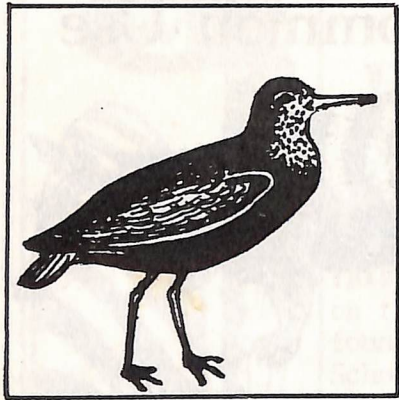
in W.A. by these aboriginal names: dalgite, noolbenger, wambenger, mundarda, quenda and wurru; also in Central Australia the mulgara, and in the Eastern States, the potoroo, bobuck, bettong and tuan. See if you can find some aboriginal names given to snakes and fish, e.g. taipan (snake), wobbegong (small carpet shark). You are sure to think of birds with aboriginal names, such as kookaburra, galah, gang-gang, budgerigar, brilga, lowan, currawong, but you may not know of the corella, quarrion, or wonga pigeon.

Insects are also classed as fauna, so we must not forget witchetty grubs and bogong moths, both of which were favourite foods of the aborigines.

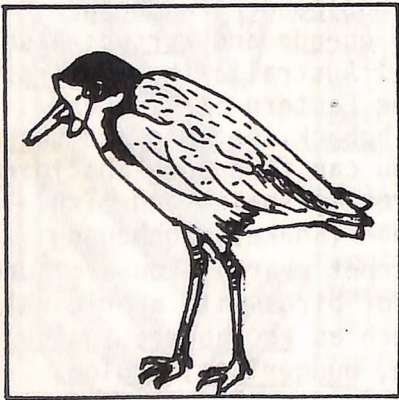


Potoroo.

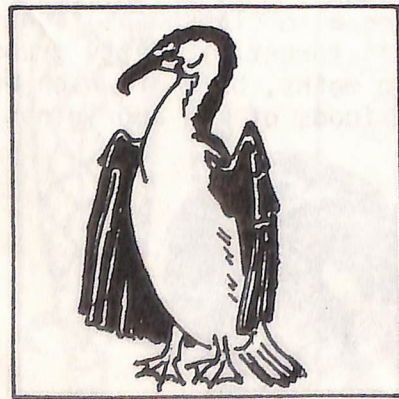
NATURE NOTES - August, 1977.



SOOTY OYSTER CATCHER



SPUR WINGED PLOVER



PIED CORMORANT

This 'N That...

Last month we travelled inland and met some of our best known long-legged waders and what a picnic they have been having. In fact the other day an Ibis told me that this is the best season since 'The Great Flood'. However let us now take a look at another group of waders, those found round the shore-line, some on our sea coast and some on dams and inland lakes.

A coastal bird that is quick to catch the eye is the Sooty Oyster-catcher. This fellow must be an Essendon supporter with his black plumage and bright red bill. I wonder if you have ever struggled to open a shellfish. This task is a push-over for the Oyster-catcher. With his specially designed, vertically flattened bill he has no trouble at all. Naturally shellfish hold the pride of place on his menu.

A few years ago on a visit to Tasmania we saw large numbers of what must surely be their national bird- The Spur-winged Plover. They seemed to be everywhere, in fact they are almost everywhere, being very common throughout Eastern and Southern Australia; for their size they are probably the most pugnacious of any of our birds, especially during the breeding season. Many times I have seen them attack our dog using the dive-bombing technique. Every time they would get the better of the encounter and the poor old dog would then beat an undignified retreat. I have often been dive-bombed myself, when I have ventured too near a nest. It is somewhat unnerving to suddenly hear a whir of wings inches over one's head. They are most persistent and will not be deterred until all intruders are driven off to a safe distance. Plovers, a little smaller than the magpie, inhabit paddocks, marshes, dam and lake

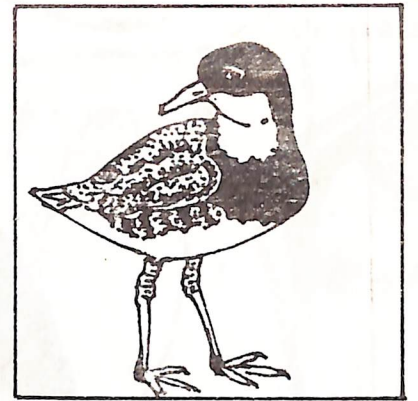
Nature Notes - August, 1977.

banks as well as the shore line.

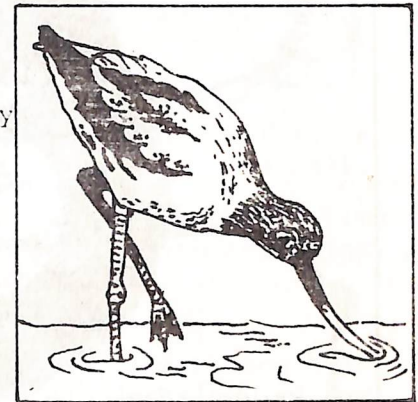
Have you ever been left like a 'shag on a rock'? If you have seen either the black or the pied cormorant standing on a log or rock in or near water you will know just how apt that saying is. These birds are very common and are found near fresh and salt water. Because their main diet is fish they are not really popular in this country.

Among the smaller waders you should look for are the Dotterels, the Gulls, the Avocets, the sandpipers and the Stilts; each of which can provide you with an interesting study, while we must not forget the biggest wader of all - The Pelican- a bird found at various times almost all over Australia. This bird may weigh up to 7 kilograms and measure nearly 2 metres from tail to bill-tip. Much has been written about its pouch which can hold up to 15 litres (3 gallons)

See if you can discover more about this interesting group of birds-- their food and food catching habits, their nesting customs and the interesting functions of their beaks. Your library will give you a good start but remember personal observation is even better.



RED-KNEED DOTTEREL

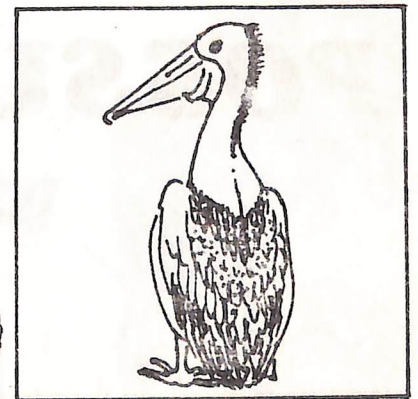


AVOCET

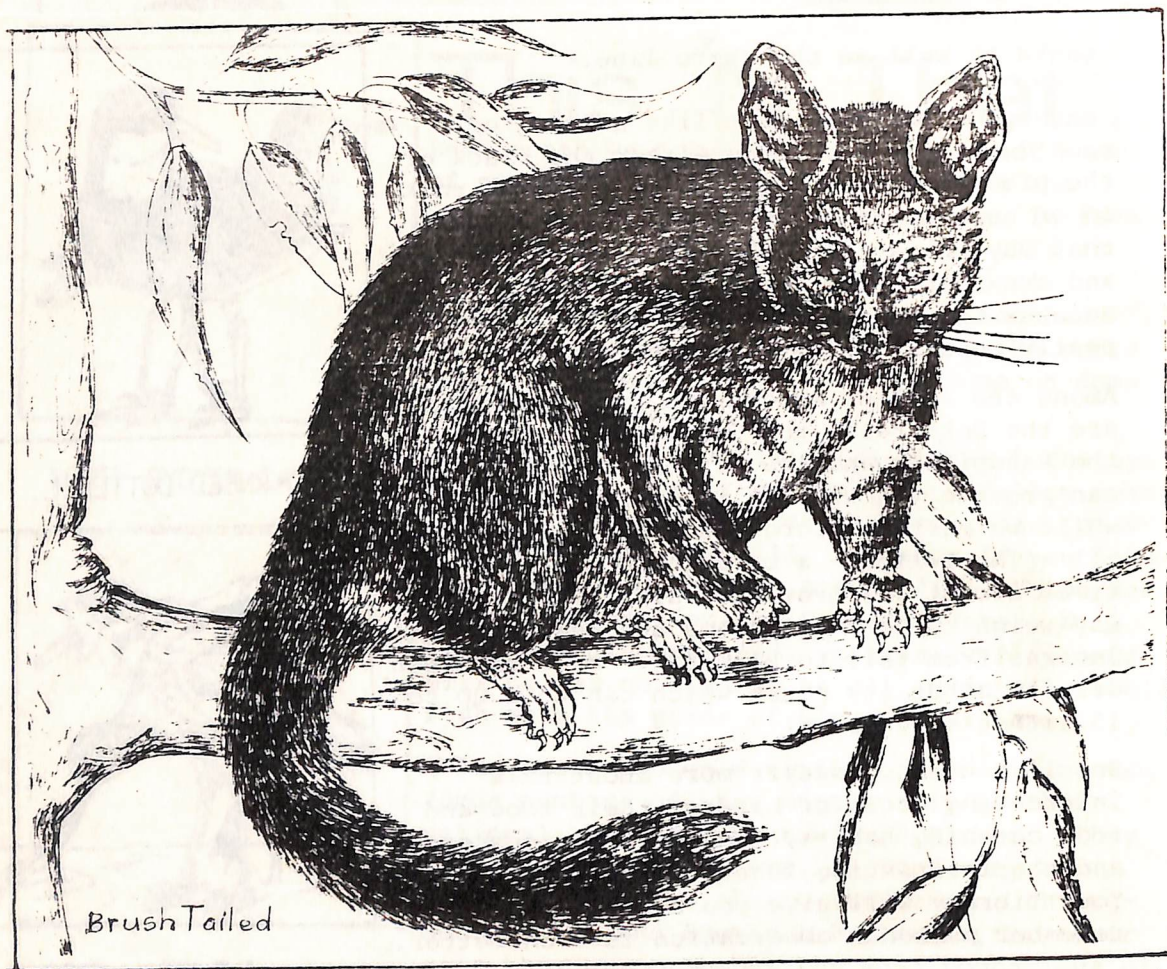
... Still Wading.

FANTASTIC FACTS

- Each 2½ cm. long
- Colombian Tree-Frog contains enough venom for 50 lethal poisoned arrows.
- Snails can sleep for three or four years at a stretch.

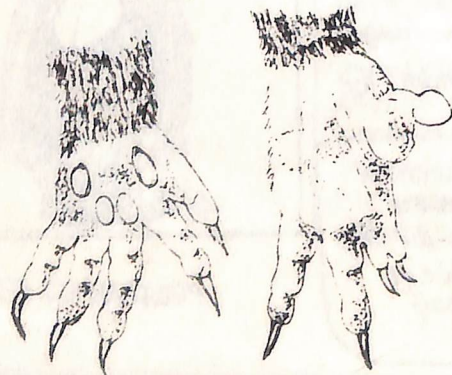


PELICAN



Brush Tailed

POSSUMS

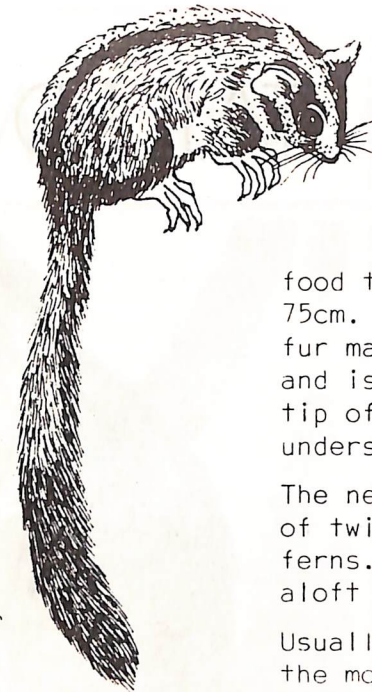


Possums are tree dwellers, and all are harmless. Their size ranges from mouse-like insect and nectar eaters to the large gliders which are part of the possum family.

The first toe of the hind foot is like a thumb and this enables the branches to be gripped securely.

Many possums have a prehensile tail - one that can be wrapped around for added security. Often they may swing by their tail until a branch can be caught with their fore paws, or they are able to climb up their own tail if they are unfortunate enough to slip off a bough.

Leadbeater



Perhaps our best known possum is the Eastern or Common Ringtail. This possum is found down the east side of Australia from Queensland to South Australia. It lives in the forest and woodlands, is at home in a park (if there is food) or even around a suburban home if there is food to be had there too. It is up to 75cm. long (body and tail) while the fur may be a light grey to chesnut and is usually white underneath. The tip of the tail is naked of fur on the underside.

The nest of a ring-tail possum is made of twigs, leaves, bark and sometimes ferns. Grass may also be used. The material is carried aloft to a suitable fork, in a twist of the tail.

Usually there are two babies which spend some time in the mother's pouch. When they leave the pouch they are carried about on the mother's back - they cling to her to her fur with claws and teeth.

The Ring-tail Possum feeds upon various euclaypts, leaves and bush fruits which include the mistletoe. One of our interesting possums is Leadbeater's possum. This possum had not been seen for over 50 years when it was re-discovered in

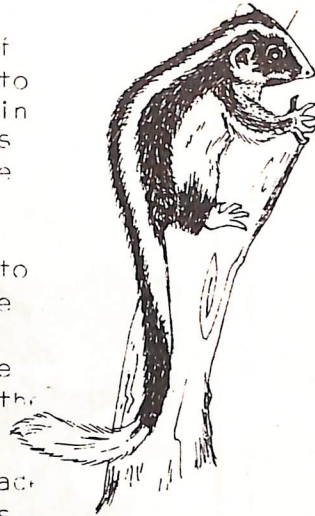


Ringtail

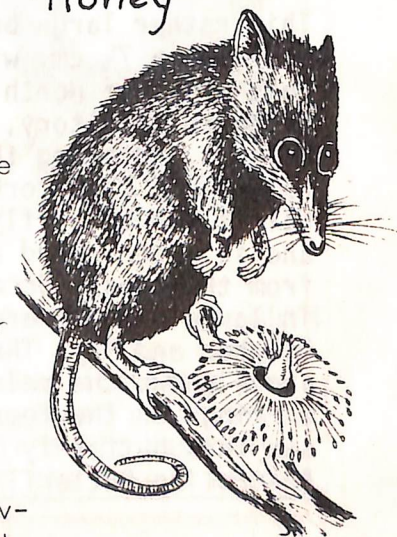
the bush near Marysville. Except for the absence of gliding membranes and its browner coloration, this possum closely resembles the well-known Sugar Glider. Beyond the fact that timber and dense scrub are common to the known localities of the possum, nothing is known of its habits. (Furred Animals of Australia, -E. Troughton.)

The pouched mammals or marsupials in Australia are divided into five families. What are they? ~ NATURE NOTES ~

Striped



Honey



TAILED – EMPORER BUTTERFLY.



This rather large butterfly, having on average, a 7½ cm. wing span, is found in most areas of North Western Australia, the Northern Territory, the Torres Strait Islands and along the East Coast of Australia from Cape York to Southern New South Wales. The butterfly ranges well inland and is often found at places up to 480 km. from the coast. Occasionally it is found in large numbers around Sydney between October and May. The photograph reproduced above shows the male butterfly. The markings on the female are different. To see this butterfly in colour, refer to, Australian Butterflies, by Alexander Burns.



You may wonder why this article is in Nature Notes. We don't find the Tailed-Emperor Butterfly in Victoria... or do we?

Well surprising as it may seem, one was found in Victoria during May by a young reader of Probe, Andrew Kleeberg of Heathmont Primary School.

Andrew was on holidays at McCrae when he found a beautiful specimen of the Tailed-Emperor. While hand feeding a large flock of magpies, Andrew noticed the butterfly fluttering on some nearby grass. The butterfly couldn't fly so Andrew 'saved' it from the magpies. The following week he brought it to school. As you can imagine no-one really knew what type of butterfly it was. With Mr. Bull's help, Andrew contacted the Melbourne Museum who were extremely interested in the 'find.' It has been only the second discovery of the butterfly in Victoria. The only other Tailed-Emperor to be caught was at Altona. It has only been sighted on a few other occasions. Andrew's butterfly now has a special spot in the Museum alongside the other specimen. Why do you think it came to be found so far south?



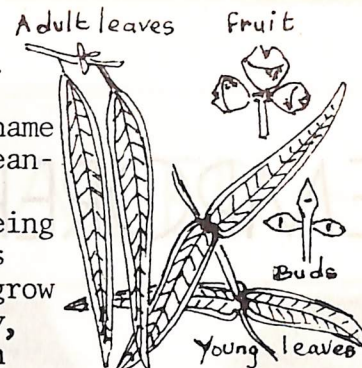
LARVA

EUCALYPTS

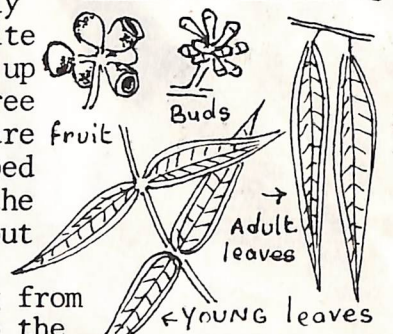
There are some 600 species of Eucalypt. They have a characteristic leaf scent flower and fruit (i.e. gum nut). The name Eucalyptus comes from the greek 'eu' meaning well and 'kalyptos' meaning well covered and refers to the flower bud being tightly sealed by a cap (operculum). As the flower dies the seeds continue to grow and the capsule becomes a greenish grey, woody and drier. Later the valves open and seeds are dispersed. Many species have juvenile leaves which are usually rounder greyer or glaucous and opposite i.e. leaves grow opposite each other up the stem. With further growth the tree develops its mature form the leaves are now alternate and usually sickle shaped except in some striking cases where the juvenile leaves are retained throughout the plants life.

The range of size is enormous ranging from the Mountain Ash measured at 108.m.to the small mallees from W.A. between 2 and 3 m tall. Flower colour ranges from green through all shades of yellow white and red the largest flowering species having a flower about 9.cm in diameter. The genus has evolved in an environment very dependant on fire and so the eucalypts have literally thousands of dormant buds in the trunk and when a tree is burnt these then become active giving use to the characteristic new growth seen after fires i.e. short branches growing horizontally from the trunk and branches.

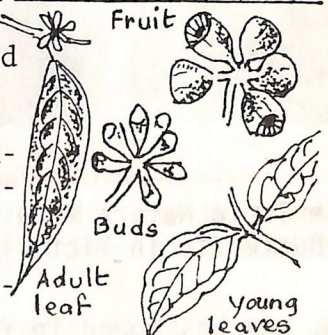
The mallee have developed a lignotuber (we used to call them mallee roots and burn them) which enabled the tree to cope with both drought and fire. The tree dies back to ground level but the lignotuber (a swell on the bulbous area between roots and trunks) have a store of food and dormant buds can shoot again when conditions improve, this gives use to the mallee type growth with the tree consisting of many



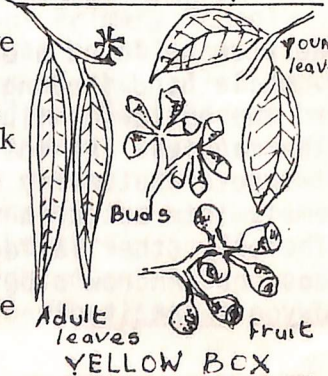
MANNA GUM



NARROW LEAVED PEPPERMINT



MESSMATE (STRINGYBARK)



YELLOW BOX

small trunks growing from the lignotuber. The usual classification of eucalypts is by their bark and the group is as follows.

GUMS Bark generally smooth but there is often a region of rough bark at the base, shed annually in strips or ribbons.

BLOODWOODS Here the rough bark occurs on the smaller branches, bark is flaky and cork like.

IRONBARKS Deeply furrowed very hard are the Victorian species in Northern Victoria.

STRINGYBARK Furrowed bark with long fibres, the endemic eucalypts are part of this group.

PEPPERMINTS A mixed variety of barks similar to the stringybarks but having a characteristic odor of the leaves when crushed. Bark tends to be smoother higher up the tree.

BOXES The box is not thick and there is an appearance of furrows up the bole.

USE There is no part of the tree that is not used for some purpose. Flowers are the source of honey. Leaves are distilled for oils used for pharmaceutical and industrial purposes. They are used as stock fodder in drought.

TIMBER Principal hardwood in Australia. Richest source of hardwood and assoc. products in the world. Some species were used as a source of food and water by the aborigines. Tanning materials (manufacture of leather) are made from the bark of some species.

OTHER COUNTRIES Rome drained a malarial swamp in the late 1800's by planting blue gum (Eucalyptus globulus) from East Gippsland. The Tasmanian Blue Gum was growing in Paris by 1810. By far the most extensive use of this genus has been in the west coast of the U.S.A. where many of the species are being naturalized to the extent that it is known as the Californian Blue Gum, it is however Australian in origin. Naturally the extent of this genus outside Australia is one or two species in the New Guinea and one in Indonesia.

by D. DOBSON



MANNA GUM



NARROW LEAVED PEPPERMINT



MESSMATE (STRINGYBARK)



Yellow Box

A Legend of the Native Companion



The most beautiful dancer in the land of the Daens was a fair young maiden named Bralgah.



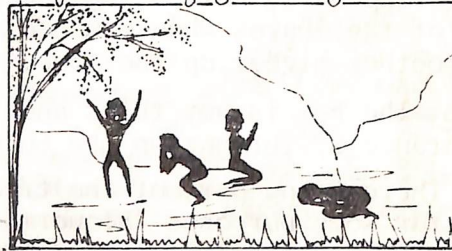
But one day the evil spirits of the whirlwind seized the lovely dancer and carried her far away.



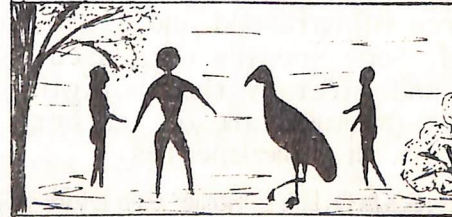
But many days later a strange new bird came shyly to their camp and when the people turned to look at it, the bird began dancing lightly to and fro in a way that only Bralgah herself could dance.



Every day Bralgah used to dance for her people and they loved her for the joy she gave them.



Then a great cry of grief came from all the people and the pain of sadness filled their hearts.



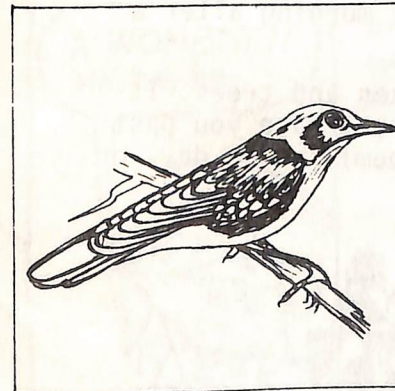
Then the people knew that Bralgah had come back, and though she was now a bird called the Native Companion they were happy because she was still the most beautiful dancer in all the land.



This month's letter comes from Melissa Gray of Blackburn Lake Primary School. She writes to us about two of our migrating birds.. The Bar-tailed Godwit and The Silver-eye. Perhaps you may know of others. Write to us at Nature Notes about them.



BAR-TAILED GODWIT. The Bar-tailed Godwit is a long legged wading bird which lives on the coast and around river mouths. It has a rather long neck and a long, slender, up-turned bill. Its tail is usually, though not always, barred brown and white. The female bird is larger than the male. These birds live in Australia only from about October until April. Most of them then fly to Asia where they mate and raise their families during the northern summer, Bar-tailed Godwits eat sand-hoppers and also shellfish and worms which they dig out from the mud and wet sand using their long bill as a probe.



THE SILVEREYE. The Silvereye is a well known little bird in towns and cities in most parts of Australia. It lives also in open forest and scrub country. The noticeable ring of white feathers round its eyes gives the bird its name. The Silvereye eats insects, grapes and other soft fruits and is sometimes called the 'grape-eater.' It has a lovely musical song and it can mimic other birds. Silvereyes living in the south often move to the north for the winter and return south again in the spring.

Melissa's great letter has won the book prize for this month.



That plane will have to go. It's stealing my show!



A Beautiful Place

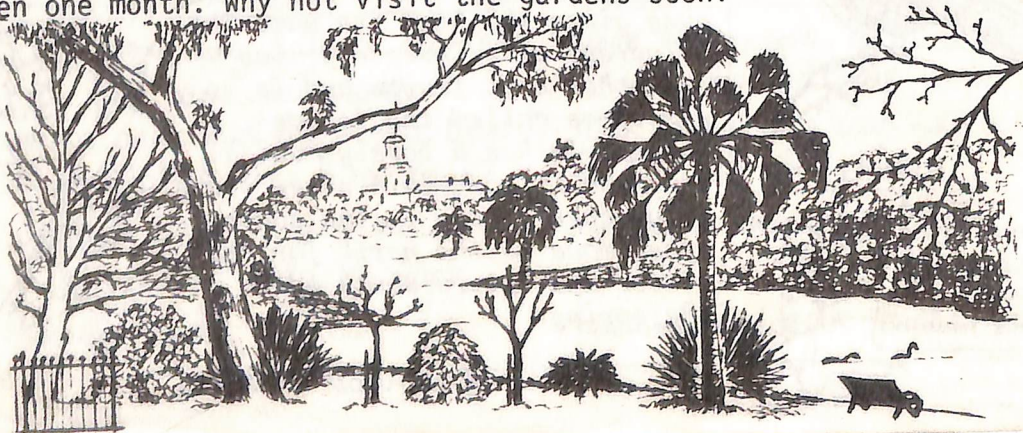


Where, within a very short distance from your school, can you enjoy the beauty of tropical flowers, wander through the jungle trees of Africa and gaze with wonder at the giant palms of the desert?

To walk through the Botanic Gardens is to escape from all the noise and rush of city life, although it is situated almost in the heart of the bustle of busy St. Kilda Road.

The beauty of the Botanic Gardens can be seen at any time of the year—summer days bring out a rich abundance of color as hydranges, flowering gums, jacarandas and grevilleas burst forth in full bloom, but autumn is rich in the golden hues of faded leaves on the English elms and oaks. Winter has a special beauty of its own, that must be seen to be appreciated, especially on a bright morning after a shower of rain.

There are 35 hectares of lawns, flower beds, lakes and trees. It would be almost impossible to follow the paths that take you past all the trees and shrubs (there are 30,000 of them) in one day, or even one month. Why not visit the gardens soon?



WALLY'S QUIZ TIME!



HOW MANY ANIMAL QUIZ QUESTIONS OF YOUR OWN CAN YOU WORK OUT?

PUZZLES

M O I S T U R E C
 F O G H K Y N O U
 L S U E C Y V E M
 E N N E L E Y L U
 E O I T R C Z Z L
 C W A T E O S Z U
 Y A R G S R S I S
 C G R N N O T R U
 T H H A E N O D B
 F A C I D A R K M
 C I R R U S M N I
 D L Y M S U L E N










CAN YOU FIND THESE WORDS? WHEN YOU DO,
 CIRCLE THEM... AIR CIRRUS CORONAS
 COVER CUMULUS DARK DENSE
 DRIZZLE FLEECY FOG SKY
 GRAY HAIL MOISTURE
 NIMBUS RAIN SHEET STORM
 SNOW

'riddle-me-ree'



I never seem to be able to work these out...



My first is in star, but not in → 
 My second's in cup, and also in → 
 My third is in orange, as well as in → 
 My fourth is in ring, but never in → 
 My fifth is in river, and also in → 
 My sixth is in plate, though not in → 
 My seventh's in cloud, yet never in → 

MY WHOLE IS A DOG, THAT FOLLOWS THE

