

# NATURE NOTES



Volume 20

No. 9.



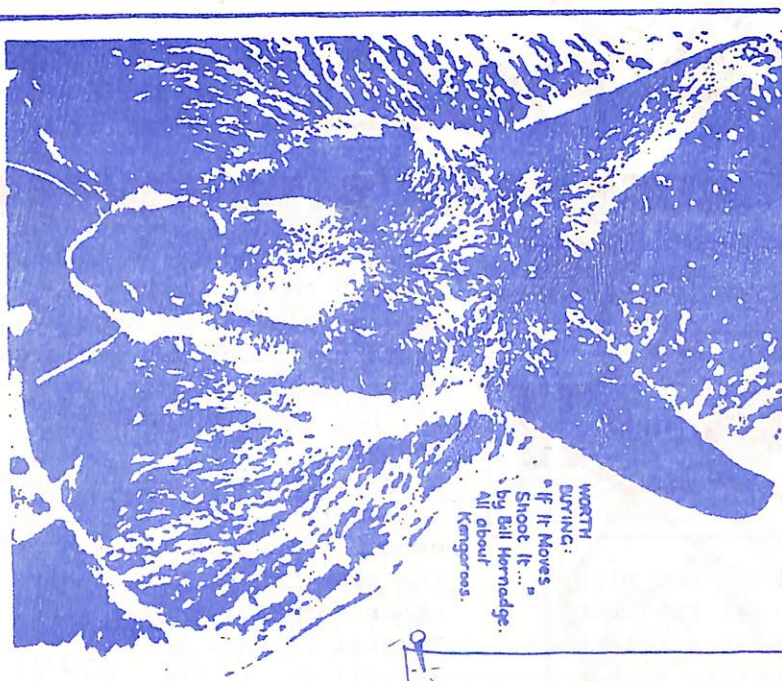
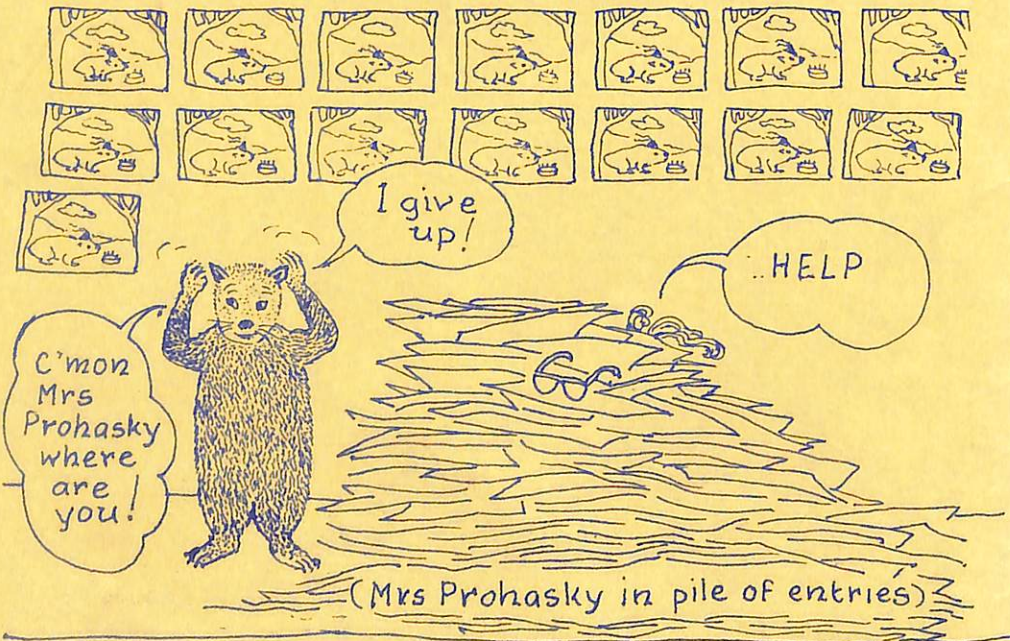
# ED'S PAGE —

Hi There!

This month in Nature Notes we're having a closer look at some of our more common marsupials, as well as a variety of other articles. A 'mixed bag' so to speak. I must thank the hundreds of children who sent in drawings for our coloring in competition in the September issue. There were SO many entries we couldn't believe it! We had a VERY hard job choosing the winners, so please don't be disappointed if you didn't receive a prize. Poor Mrs. Prohasky, (Wally's mother) had about sixty winners, but we had to reduce them down to only eleven we couldn't decide between. Here's a hint for the next coloring competition.....we LOVE work that is the correct colors....

Happy Reading  
Mandy Carmichael  
Editor.

## COLORING COMPETITION



WORTH  
DYING:  
"If it Moves,  
Shoot It..."  
—  
by Bill Hemmidge.  
All about  
Kangaroos.

"kan Guroo .....  
isn't he a famous  
Indian religious  
leader?"

## THE WONDERFUL KANGUROO, FROM BOTANY BAY,

(The only One ever brought alive to Europe)

Removed from the HAY-MARKET, and now exhibited at the LYCEUM,  
in the STRAND, from 8 o'Clock in the Morning, till 8 in the Evening.

THIS amazing, beautiful, and tame Animal, is about five Feet in Height, of a Fawn Colour, and distinguishes itself in Shape, Make, and true Symmetry of Parts, different from all other QUADRUPEDS. Its Swiftnefs, when pursued, is fuperior to the Greyhound: to enumerate its extraordinary Qualities would far exceed the common Limits of a Public Notice. Let it fuffice to obferve, that the Public in general are pleafed, and bellow their Plaudits; the Ingenious are delighted; the Virtuofos, and Connoiffeur, are taught to admire! impelling the Beholder with Wonder and Admiration, at the Sight of this unparalleled Animal from the Southern Hemisphere, that almoft furpaffes Belief; therefore Ocular Demonftration will exceed all that Words can defcribe, or Pencil delineate.....Admittance, ONE SHILLING each.

Can you work out what the poster above is saying?  
(Clue: f = s ! ) It was a poster displayed in London around 1790, and the admission charge of 1 shilling was worth quite a lot in those days. (It probably would have been enough to buy about 10 lunches!) Notice the funny spelling of Kangaroo. Other ways of spelling it were: kangaru or kanguru (by Captain Cook), kangooroos (by Collins), kangaros (by Cunningham the explorer) and kongouru (by the artist George Stubbs). Kangaroo, the way we spell it now, is the way that Joseph Banks spelt it.



**exclusive!**

# possum

## AUSTRALIA'S TOUGHEST



Impossible you might say, but true! The humble possum is Australia's hardest marsupial. It has a proven track record of extensive breeding and adaption despite 200 years of white colonization in this country, which has wiped out many other possible contenders for this title.

The brushtail possum is the most common possum in Australia. He's the little fellow that has made himself at home in the suburbs, staining our ceilings, and having discos at 4am in the morning in the roof!

The brushtail has survived attempts to reduce its numbers by hunters and trappers. Possum fur was widely used in the last century particularly, both in Australia and overseas.

THANKS TO CAROL MEASURES FOR THE POSSUM PICS!!

(It was even called strange names like "Adelaide chin-chilla" so as not to upset some people!) Even nowadays, hunting seasons are declared on possums, as their fur still has uses in industry today.

The brushtail can be found all over Australia, and can even be found on islands off the coast which do not have other forms of mammal life. Several islands in Bass Strait as well as off the coast of Western Australia are home to the possum.

There are some people who see the possum as a pest, especially those who have an interest in pine plantations, as the possum is known to eat the bark off young trees. However, there is evidence to prove that the possum also helps our hardwood trees to survive, by eating parasitic mistletoes and the like which can kill hardwood trees.

The possum, however is not popular in New Zealand, where it was introduced over 100 years ago. Because NZ had no animals similar to the poss, its plant life was unprotected and the possum soon made a reputation for itself by destroying many types of plants. Possums are regarded as a pest in New Zealand.

# power—

## MARSUPIAL IS HERE TO STAY!

The brushtail possum is specialized for living in trees, but is known to forage for food on the ground. (If you have ever been camping you may know what I'm talking about!) The possum eats young shoots, plants, and even insects and occasionally meat. The brushtail does not build a nest like the ring tail possum, but instead curls up in a safe place during the day. Possums are nocturnal animals.

Possums have an unusual cousin called the cuscus. He lives in northern Australia and is an important link with Asian animals. Other types of possums found in different areas of Australia are the striped possum and the green possum. See what you can find out about possums....they're here to stay!

YOU MAY THINK WE CUSCUS ARE PLACID LOOKING ANIMALS, BUT WAIT TILL YOU SEE US IN ACTION!





# BATTLING



Where do you think my brothers, sisters  
cousins, uncles, aunts and all the  
other relatives live nowadays?

Well, Victoria's most endangered mammal, the eastern-barred bandicoot, has made the Hamilton rubbish tip it's secure home. You are probably wondering why they have chosen a "smelly old tip" as their home. The reason is that the bandicoots use the dumped cars as shelter from predators, such as foxes and cats. They are nocturnal, and only leave their "homes" for short periods at night to feed on insects in a nearby paddock.



Why have we  
declined in numbers?

Their decline began when grazing animals were introduced and began eating the native tussock grass. This was replaced with exotic plants, taking away the bandicoots natural shelter. As the grazing increased the hardy little survivors had to move on to find other shelter- and found the Tip! There are about 400 bandicoots at the tip, but the wrecks may be taken away at any time, leaving the little fellows homeless once more!



It's safe  
here, but a  
little smelly!

# BANDICOOTS



Would you recognise me if you  
happened to visit the Hamilton Tip?  
(Not a very nice place to visit?)

The eastern-barred bandicoot weighs 500-900g and has grey-brown grizzled fur. It has white hands and feet and a white tail with a brown tip. If you happen to visit the Hamilton Tip someday, look out for a little furry snout popping out from a rusty, old car shell!



When thinking about "SAVING THE ANIMALS", don't forget about our little friend the bandicoot! We need to ensure the long term conservation of the bandicoot species in Victoria by ensuring these animals have security and protection from the dangers surrounding them.

Boys and girls, how can we  
help protect the bandicoots?  
If you come up with any  
ideas, Bruce the bandicoot  
and all of us here would  
love to hear them.

PLEASE,  
LEND A  
HELPING HAND!!



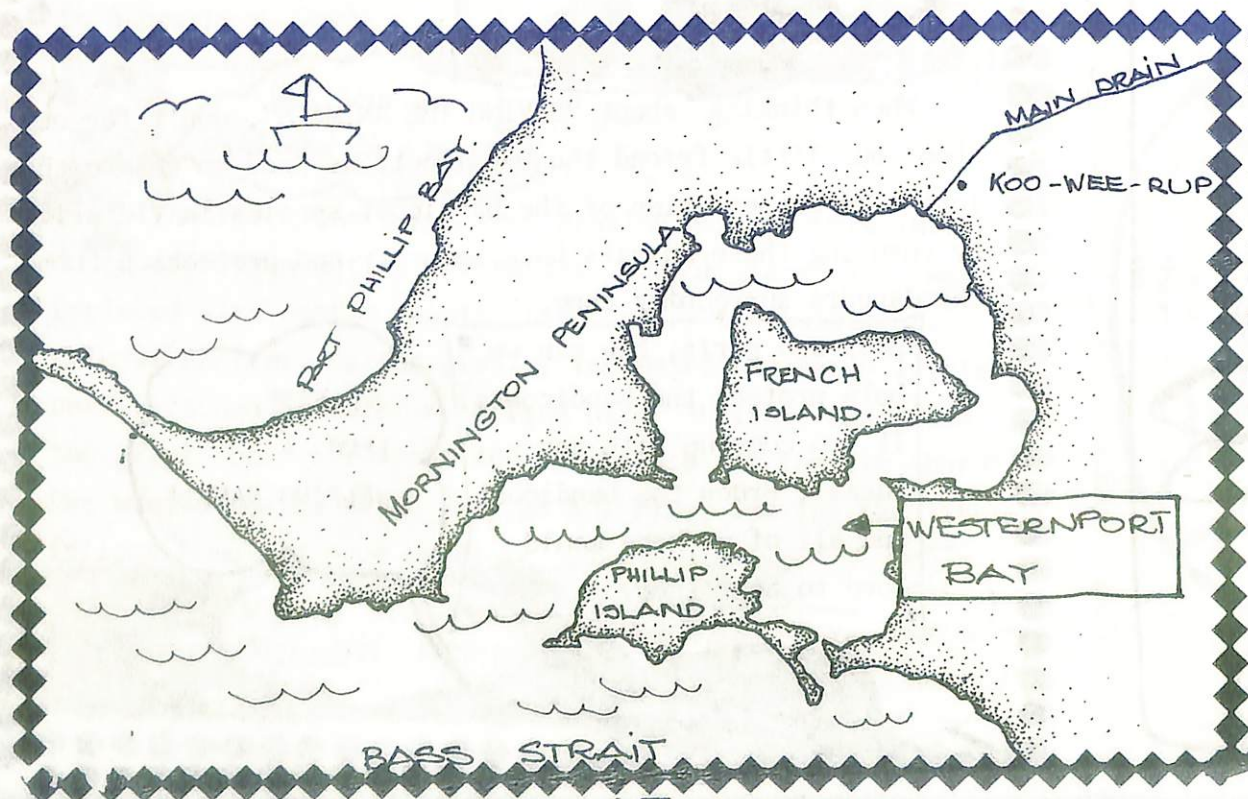


# DEATH OF A BAY



MANGROVE TREES

SEA GRASS



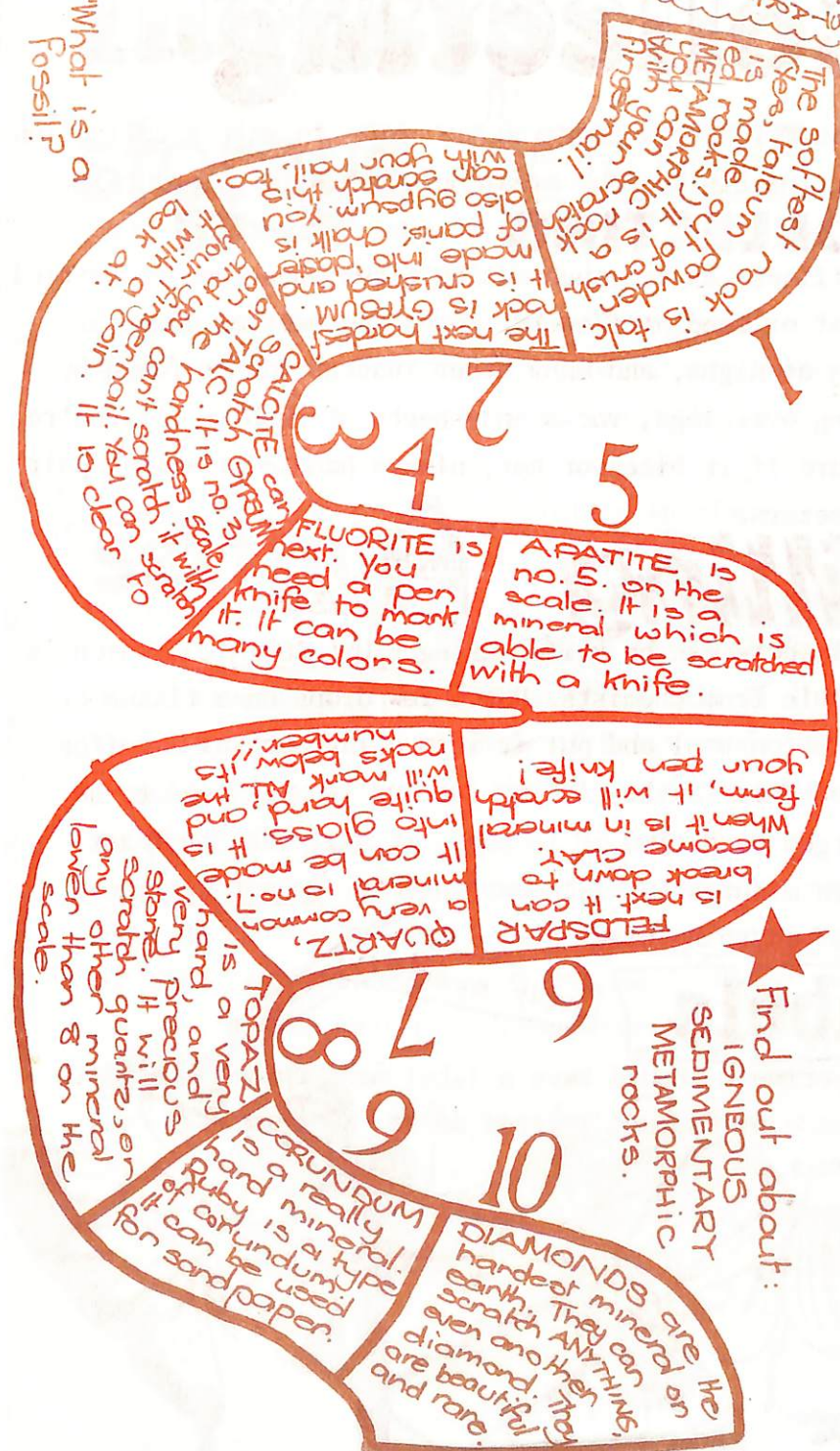
Recently, there has been an investigation into Westernport Bay in Victoria, concerning the virtual disappearance of the sea grass in the Bay. This is quite serious as the sea grass is just one part of the ecological chain in the Bay, all of which has been affected. There are hardly any shellfish, algae, plankton and fish left, as each was dependant upon the sea grass for life. Aerial photographs recently taken revealed the massive area affected by the sea grass die back. When the sea grass disappeared it left the mud banks it grew in bare, and they then started to erode away. This left no mud for the sea grass to grow again in. Some people are blaming the drainage channels from the Kooweerup swamp, others say it is due to a number of reasons, such as tourists' speed boats, industrial pollution, and dredging. Whatever the reason, it seems that Westernport Bay is in serious trouble, as the fishing industry there is declining rapidly, as well as the disastrous natural effects. Can you imagine a bay without fish or plant life? One man, a marine biologist, says the dieback is the worst disaster of its kind in Australia. What can be done about it? Some researchers think that there is still some hope of returning the Bay to its proper balance, but believe the main value will be found in preventing similar disasters from occurring elsewhere in Australia. Meanwhile.....what happens to Westernport Bay?



# HOW HARD IS HARD ?? a look at the hardness of rocks .....



The trigger plant has a special way of making sure insects take its pollen from one flower to another. It has a style like a trigger bent back behind the petals. When an insect lands to feed, the trigger swings up to hit the insect on the back. It can sprinkle pollen on the insect or take pollen from it. After an hour, the trigger returns behind the petals, ready to spring again. The trigger plant does not do this on rainy days. It works best when it is sunny.





# Collecting

With summer approaching you may want to make a collection of the insects in your area. Here's how to go about it.

## COLLECTING

Butterflies can be caught using a net when they've settled to rest or feed at flowers. Moths and beetles come to lights at night, and many other insects can be found by turning over logs, rocks and sheets of rubbish. If you're not sure if it bites or not, always handle it with a pair of tweezers.



## killing



WULF ESK!

Most insects can be killed using ETHYL ACETATE, which is available from chemists. Put a few drops on a tissue or some cotton wool and put it into a jar such as a coffee bottle. This is the killing jar and it will need to be recharged each time it is used. It will take at least fifteen minutes to kill most insects. Do not use the jar for anything else.

## labels

Wolf spider beetle

All specimens should have a label made up with the date and place of capture written on it.



# Insects

## storage



There are two main ways to preserve insects. One is called "Wet" storage, where the insect is put in a bottle and covered with methylated spirits. This is suitable for spiders, ants, grubs, and others with soft bodies. "Dry" storage is used for butterflies and moths, beetles and grasshoppers. They are set out in position on a board and held by pins until they set rigidly in place.

## setting



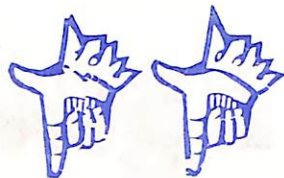
Insects should be <sup>(pinned)</sup> pinned out as soon as they are dead, or they will harden and be impossible to move. The specimen should have a long pin through the middle of the body and be put onto a setting board made of balsa wood. Using strips of paper and pins arrange the wings of the butterfly or moth and pin firmly in place. With beetles and other insects, arrange the legs in life like positions. Specimens should be left for at least 2 weeks until they are set in position, and then can be removed from the board. Place the label under the body on the main pin through the body.

## and —

Keep the specimen pinned in a box containing a couple of moth balls or naphthalene flakes to stop other insects from eating it. In this way insects can be kept almost permanently. There is a butterfly in the British Museum over 300 years old, and still in same condition it was caught in!



# PUZZLES



OOPS! Wally has jumbled up the names of some of the minerals used in the hardness scale! Can YOU help him unjumble them? Which three are missing? (See if you can do it from memory.....turn back to the page only if you have to.)

aoddimm  
riotflue  
zapot  
mundrouc  
ratzuq  
latc  
yumspg.

Sorry Ed.

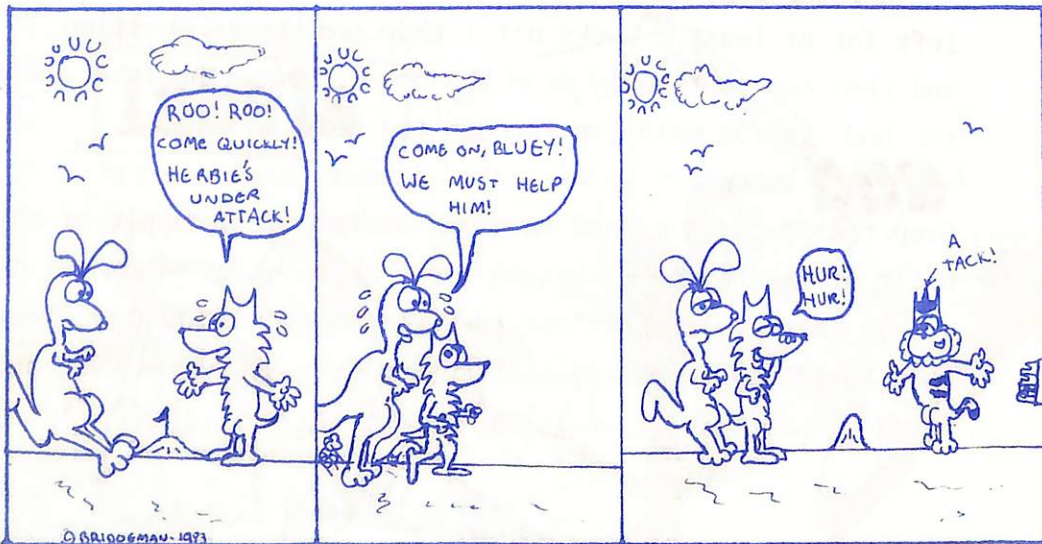
Any of  
onto of  
here?



In 60 seconds, how many words can you make from the word BANDICOOT?

Wally got 16. Can you beat him?

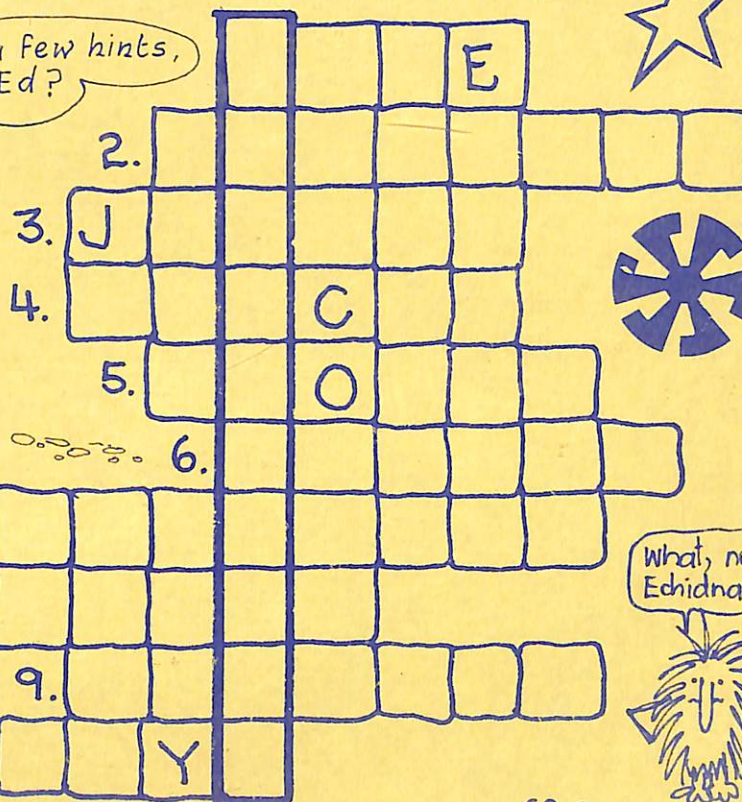
Wally.  
band  
ban  
an



# ACROSS WORD



I've filled in a few hints, OK, Ed?



What, no Echidnas?



(can you tell Ernie WHY?)

## CLUES:-

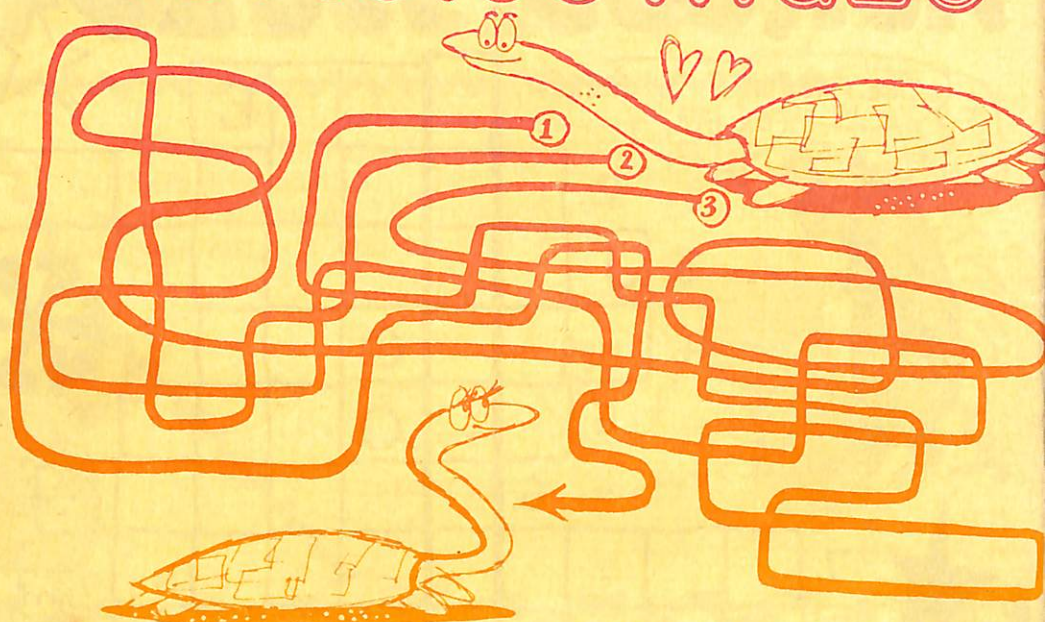
1. This fellow is blind, and lives under ground.
2. A high jumping, long tailed, pouched animal.
3. A tiny, mouse like animal, that hops.
4. A relative of the possum, it lives in tropical northern Austral
5. This animal lives in Western Australia, especially on Rottnest.
6. A ring tail is one of these.
7. These little animals have been known to live at Hamilton tip!
8. Wally is one of these.
9. A small kangaroo like creature.
10. A small animal that lives in snowy areas of Australia. It has only recently been 'rediscovered'.

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED, YOU WILL FIND A WORD IN THE CENTRE WHICH DESCRIBES WHAT ALL OF THESE ANIMALS ARE KNOWN AS.





# tortoise maze



Can you help Tangles the long necked tortoise find the right path to take so as he can meet his girl friend, Tanya? Look at the maze with your eyes first, and see if you can work it out without using a pencil.

