

NATURE NOTES



dinosaur issue

Vol. 20, no. 10,
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ED'S ^{last} PAGE —

Hi there!

Well it's December already, and another year of Nature Notes comes to a close. This month we're having a look at some of our fabulous extinct dinosaurs. I bet lots of you know about dino's from other countries, but DON'T know about the AMAZING dino's we've had here in Australia! I hope you learn a little about them after reading this month's magazine.

Since this is my last issue, I'd like to say 'thank you' to Dianne Darley, Wilma Prohasky, Ann Gibson and Carol Measures, who have all been a terrific help to me this year. Mrs. Darley and myself are both going 'bush' next year, so you'll have two new editors of Nature Notes and Probe to look forward to!

Remember to have a safe and happy holiday,

Happy Reading

Mandy Carmichael
Editor.



What about a thank you to Ernie, Wilbur and me? After all, we do all the HARD work around here!

Yeah

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



dreamtime

Australia had a unique set of animals that disappeared from the continent, as have nearly all the other dinosaurs that lived around the world. Why they disappeared is a very complicated question to answer in just a few sentences, but perhaps you'd like to try and find out the reasons for yourself.

Three well known Australian 'dinos' were Megalania, Genyornis and Meiolania. These dinos have relations that are alive and well in Australia today.

Megalania was a giant goanna, which was nearly 10 metres long! The largest goanna today in Australia is 1.2m long, so you can imagine how big 'Meg' was!



Australia's largest bird today is the emu. A giant emu called Genyornis used to also live on the continent, but it weighed four times as much as the emu, and was probably very slow on its feet. This would have made 'Geny' an easier catch than the emu, and could explain why we have emus, but not Genyornis.



The large horned tortoise called Meiolania lived in Australia nearly 2 million years ago. It had a skull 25cm long and 20 cm across. It had two large horns to defend itself, because it couldn't pull its head back into its shell. Can you think of a reason why it may have become extinct?



SKULL OF THE GIANT TORTOISE (MEIOLANIA)

dinosaurs

The kangaroo had many different relatives which existed in Australia during the days of dinosaurs. They were all members of the Macropodidae group. There were at least twenty sorts of kangaroos, ranging in size from sheep to rhinoceros!



The mystery animal of Australia's prehistoric times is the Thylacileo. It is a member of the Macropodidae family, but many scientists put it in a class of its own, because it had some really different features. Firstly, the scientists think it was a type of marsupial lion, with sharp claws, powerful legs, and massive, deadly teeth. It was the size of a leopard and is thought to be a meat eater, because of its unusual slicing and chopping teeth. They think "Thylo" lived part of the time in trees, not to hunt there, but to eat his food there, out of the way of other animals. "Thylo" would have been too heavy to hunt for food out on the limb of a tree!



WONDER WALLY & RELATIVES

Marsupial Sleuths
of the undergrowth

One fine day
Wally Wombat meets
his cousin Wilbur...

I feel shaky
too Wally.
Come and
have a look
at the huge
bones I've
dug up and
you'll see
why!

What's
wrong
Wilbur,
you look
quite
shaky!



I-I-I think there's been
a murder! W-What sort of
animal would have bones
that big? I hope there
are no more about!!

W. WOMBAT



Clever old Wally smiles and explains to Wilbur...
that these are the bones of his ancestors —

.. a giant marsupial
weighing about
two tonnes and
called a

DIPROTODON



WOW!

Diprotodons were as big as a
rhinoceros Wally — and three
possible reasons why they
became extinct are



Changes in climate
that made much
of Australia dry



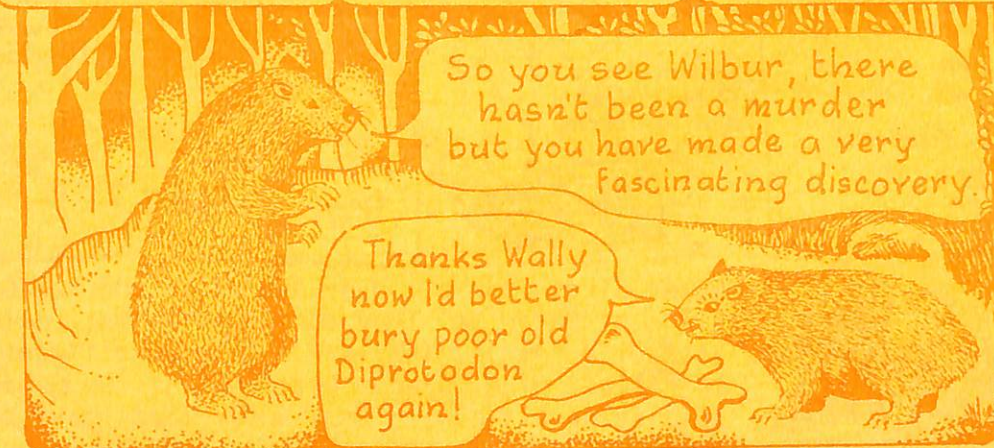
The coming
of the dingo to
Australia



Being hunted by
the aborigines
for food

So you see Wilbur, there
hasn't been a murder
but you have made a very
fascinating discovery.

Thanks Wally
now I'd better
bury poor old
Diprotodon
again!



In a sleepy hollow in the Victorian Alps, Christmas preparations are well under way....

I've just finished writing this letter to Santa and then we'll fix up the Christmas Tree!

Dear Santa,
Your presents is required at

That letter should really sleigh old Santa, eh James!

Joke Joyce.

WALLY'S BUSH CHRISTMAS!

Being a dinkum Aussie, Wally decides not to chop down the usual pine tree, but rather, he decides to decorate a live Victorian Christmas Bush (*Prostanthera lasiantha*) which flowers in December...

These white flowers look so good I don't need that many decorations

But alas — next morning (Christmas Eve), when Wally returns to hang up his stocking, he finds that **all** the decorations have gone!

Hm. No decorations eh! This is a case for **SUPERWOMBATMAN!**

Oh no! This could take him until next Christmas to solve!

So Wally puts some more decorations on the tree, hangs up his stocking, and then hides nearby to see if he can catch the thief!

Sure enough, in the middle of the night, Wally hears footprints.... (or were they footsteps?)... approaching his tree!

HALT! WHO GOES THERE!
You miserable thief!

(Rustle, Rustle)

I'll (crunch) teach (thump) you to (smack) take my decorations! (crash.)

Help! It's me — Santa Claus — ouch!

What's that you say? I've got sharp claws? Of course I have — I'm **SUPERWOMBATMAN!**
Er.... what's this on your back?

..... a bag of toys?!? You've got a funny hat on!..... beard....? fur-lined boots.....
...uh..oh...!

SANTA!
My dear friend! Sorry to knock you over like that.... just a little game... heh, heh, hum...

Groan

Wally wakes up next morning to find only a couple of broken toys left behind by Santa — and half of his decorations gone too!

Groan. What a night! Hey, what's that bird doing up my tree!

Right before Wally's eyes, the bird pecks off one of the brightly colored decorations...

Hey! Stop thief!

Oh, sorry. Is this your Christmas Tree? I'm a Bower Bird and I collect bright things. Say, would you like to come to my place for Christmas Dinner?

Bower Birds prefer blue things.

And so Christmas Day turned out to be a happy day for Wally after all.... and he even got some more presents....

The decorated bower.

Hey Wally! We brought you some gold....

Frankenstein

...and Myrrh!

Bower

Bower Birds live all over Australia and New Guinea. They are relatives of the beautiful Birds of Paradise. They construct a nest called a bower and decorate it with objects to attract a female. They are highly intelligent and unique birds. The Satin Bower Bird likes to collect blue objects best, whilst the Golden Bower Bird likes to use live orchids to display on his bower. Some Bower Birds have been known to fly into houses to collect objects that take their fancy!

Bower Bird

THE MIGHTY MARSUPIAL...



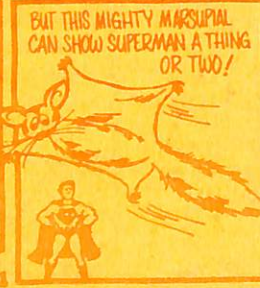
Are you wondering who I am?
I am Australia's SUGAR GLIDER, the country's second smallest gliding possum. To find out more - read on!



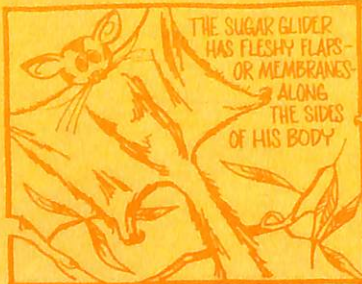
HE MAY MEASURE ONLY 37cm FROM HIS PINK NOSE TO THE TIP OF HIS BUSHY TAIL



AND HE MAY OFTEN LOOK MORE DOCILE THAN DASHING



BUT THIS MIGHTY MARSUPIAL CAN SHOW SUPERMAN A THING OR TWO!



THE SUGAR GLIDER HAS FLESHY FLAPS - OR MEMBRANES - ALONG THE SIDES OF HIS BODY



WHEN HE LEAPS FROM A TALL TREE THESE UNFOLD LIKE A KIND OF PARACHUTE...



ENABLING HIM TO SWOOP 45 OR 50 METRES BEFORE LEVELLING OUT TO LAND ON ANOTHER TREE



THE GLIDER'S SOFT FUR AND SOULFUL EYES INVITE ATTENTION



BUT BE CAREFUL OF HIS SHARP TEETH AND CLAWS - AND HIS VIOLENT TEMPER



HIS CRIES OF RAGE HAVE BEEN LIKENED TO THE SOUND OF A WHEEZY ALARM CLOCK RUNNING DOWN



THOUGH THIS DAINTY AUSTRALIAN SWEETENS HIS MAIN INSECT DIET WITH NECTAR, POLLEN AND WATTLE GUM,



HE IS NOT BEYOND PREYING ON SMALL BIRDS



SINCE HE CANNOT RESIST SUGAR JAM OR HONEY, HE CAN USUALLY BECOME HAPPILY DOMESTICATED



HANGING BY HIS HIND FEET, A HOME-BUILDER BITES OFF GUM LEAVES



HE TRANSFERS THE LEAVES BY MEANS OF HIS FRONT PAWS TO THE BUNDLE HELD BY HIS TAIL



AND THEN TAKES THEM TO THE EUCALYPT HOLLOW WHERE HE AND HIS MATE ARE MAKING THEIR NEST



BABY GLIDERS LEAVE THEIR MOTHER'S POUCH AFTER 2 MONTHS AND REMAIN IN THEIR NEST FOR ANOTHER 2 MONTHS



THEY BECOME SUCH LIVELY ACROBATS THAT THEY ESCAPE MOST DANGERS



THOUGH IT PAYS THEM TO KEEP A LOOKOUT FOR OWLS

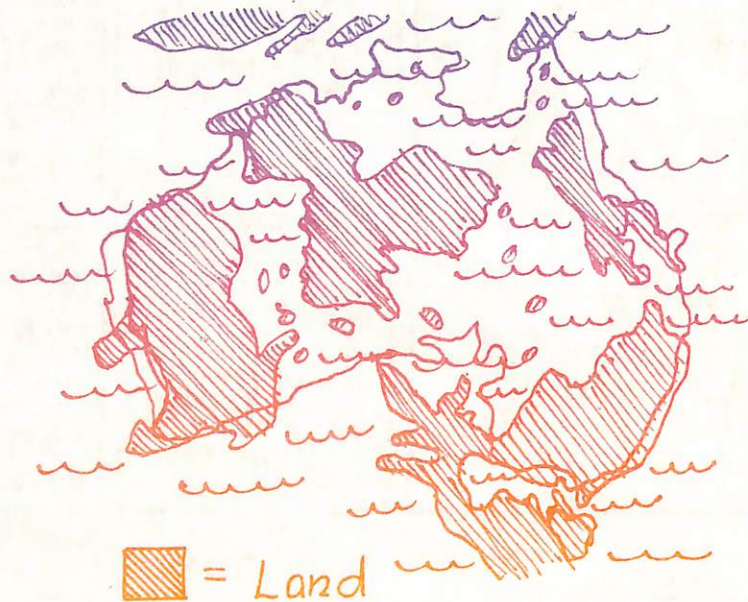
FIND OUT:

What is Australia's smallest gliding possum?
Where do I like to live?
Where do I sleep?
What do I eat?

* Thanks to Haddon & Tregrove's "WONDERS OF WILDLIFE"

Diving

Reptiles originated as land animals, but during their life history several groups took to a permanently aquatic life. Extinct groups were the Ichthyosaurs and the Plesiosaurs. (The Loch Ness monster is thought to be a Plesiosaur still living.) All these animals were flesh eaters and flourished in the sea which once covered inland Australia. They were especially prominent in Queensland, where many remains of these animals have been found.

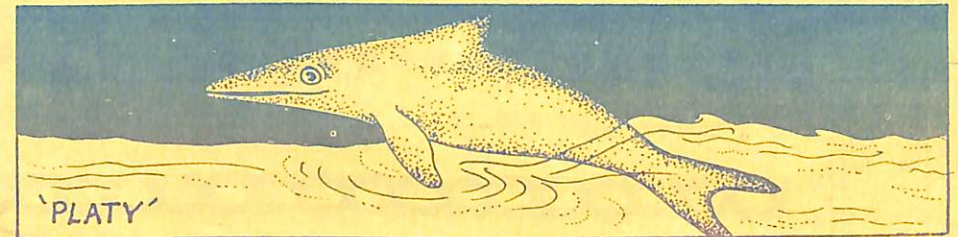


= Sea

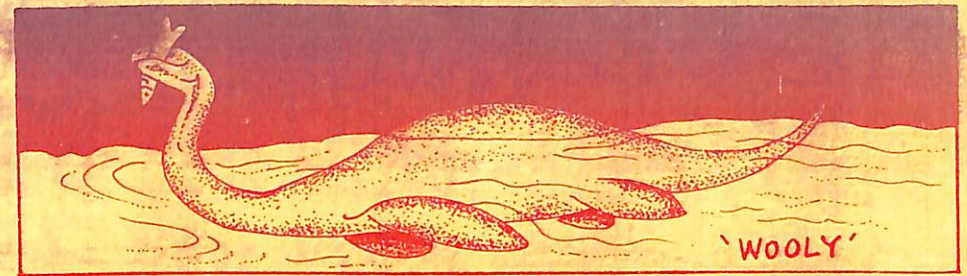
Australia at this time
135 Million years ago.

Dinosaurs

Ichthyosaurs developed a streamlined, fish like shape, very much like sharks and dolphins. This is interesting, to note that many animals can develop a general resemblance between them, when they adapt to a similar way of life.



Platyptergius is one of the largest and most streamlined of all the Ichthyosaurs. It swam by bending its body to and fro, as fish do, and steered with paddles or fins.



Plesiosaurs swam by rowing with their paddles and steering with their tails. They were streamlined animals, and their powerful paddles would have made them fast in the water.

Woolungasaurus is a long necked Plesiosaur.

FIND OUT

- * What does aquatic mean?
- * **What** are some other types of AQUATIC dinosaurs?
- * by Slarty Bardfast.

* THIS IS A CROSS OUT PUZZLE, DON'T TAKE ANY NOTICE
F WALLY!

CROSS OUT

oh, okay ed, whatever you say!



If you cross out the names of 13 Australian animals, you will be left with twelve letters that make up a very special word that is important to EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE !!! Can you figure out what the jumbled word is?

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

HMPH!
STILL NO
ECHOING
I SEE!!



WALLY'S
FIX IT
SERVICE

You can cross out the animals' names forwards, backwards, diagonally, anyway. A few letters are shared by some words.

Here's a list of the
animals, if you get rilly stuck

EURO
KOALA
MOLE
KANGAROO
POSSUM
PLATYPUS
WHALE
IBIS
EGRET
WALLABY
DINGO
BAT
CUSCUS



WARNING

Wally reminds all beach fossickers to REPLACE their 'finds' after they have studied them, especially if they are LIVING things. (Imagine if we all kept our holiday treasures, in a few years time there could very well be NOTHING to collect at ALL!)

yeah!
give us a
go!



OH NO! Wally has been at it again. This time he's jumbled up the names of five Australian eucalypts, and made ridiculous phrases out of them! Can you work out the correct names of these trees?

gear rib on ark
* be lowly ox
* red rum giver
* mugs now
* string by ark



Oh gosh! I've
done it again!

ORDER FORM

Watch out!
It's a big
arrow,
Wally!



Yes, it's reminding us to
order our 1984 Nature
Notes &
Probe
NOW,
Ernie!!



NAME.....

ADDRESS/SCHOOL.....

I wish to order ☐ Nature Notes and/or
☐ Probe for 1984. Please find enclosed
payment of.....

I do/do not require a receipt.

1984
Nature
Notes
&
Probe
\$2.30
\$1.20

**cost
but!
send**

10 issues per year, posted, of Nature Notes
for \$2.70.

10 issues per year, posted, of Probe for \$1.30.

If your order exceeds 50 in total, please
calculate your costs at \$2.30 per Nature
Notes, and \$1.20 per Probe.

Payment and order to:

P.O. Box 28 Ringwood East, Vic 3135.

(Phone 03 879 1263)

Have a safe
and happy
holiday!



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