

# NATURE PROBE



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# EDITORIAL

Dear Children,

During the rest of the year we are going to learn more about animals and birds that have been brought to Australia from other countries.

Some animals and birds were brought to Australia because the people from England missed them very much. They wanted Australia to be like home, in England.

They did not see the problems that these animals and birds would cause in the future. They did not understand the balance of nature, and how the animals and plant life of a country suit each other.

Many of the animals escaped from farms because the fences were not very good. Lots of animals were let go in the bush when the people were tired of them, or didn't want to feed them anymore. These animals had babies and their babies grew up and had other babies, and the animal became feral. This means that the animal has returned to its wild untamed state.

Elaine Garner.



## Australia Bound

### ANIMALS

|                             |                |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Rabbit                      | Horse (Brumby) |
| Hare                        | Donkey         |
| Cat                         | Pig            |
| Dog (Dingo)                 | Camel          |
| Fox                         | Goat           |
| Water Buffalo               |                |
| Deer ( 6 different species) |                |

### BIRDS

|             |
|-------------|
| White Swan  |
| Indian Myna |
| -----       |
| -----       |

### ACCIDENTLY INTRODUCED

|             |                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Brown Rat   | These three rodents came to |
| Black Rat   | Australia with the settlers |
| House Mouse | on the sailing ships.       |

\* Make your own list of plants and fish that have come from other countries. Over forty different kinds of birds were introduced. How many can you add to the list?



RED FOX



# The *CAMEL*

Many thousands of one-humped camels were introduced into Australia between 1840 and 1907. They were used to carry goods. Some explorers used them on their expeditions.

When the camels were no longer needed many of them were released, and their babies became feral.

The camel is found mainly in the sandy ridge-dunes, in the centre and central-western part of Australia. The camel is well adapted to desert life. It does not lose a lot of water by sweating or when it excretes. Its hump is not water but fat. This is a store house of food.

The camel eats like a vacuum cleaner. It sucks up its feed, especially ground cover plants. It eats bitter and thorny plants that other plant eating animals do not like.

It is thought that there are 25,000 wild camels in Australia.

The full effect of the camel on the balance of desert plant and animal life is not known, but it probably destroys places where small creatures live.





# Happy Birthday Australia. 1988

## NEWS FROM PEKING.

Australia has asked China for a pair of rare Giant Pandas in time for our bicentennial celebrations in 1988.



Giant Pandas live in the rainforests of south-western China and Tibet. Arrow bamboo is one of their staple foods. Each year large areas of bamboo are dying off. The Chinese are worried that the pandas will die of starvation. There are only 1000 pandas living in the wild in China. Australia has offered some red kangaroos, platypuses, wombats and perhaps a few koalas in exchange.

# STARLINGS

The Starling is an introduced bird. It has a jerky walk. It was released in Victoria in the 1850s. It has spread to towns and cities in South-Eastern Victoria. It has also moved into farmland areas and the bush.

In Western Australia the Department of Agriculture has a special project to keep Starlings out of that state. Find out why?

In winter starlings feed in flocks, which gather together at night in roosts. There may be 20,000 birds in a roost.



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Our Cover Thank you to Wilma Prohasky for the drawing on our cover. The animal is a Water Buffalo. Find out which country he came from and where he lives.

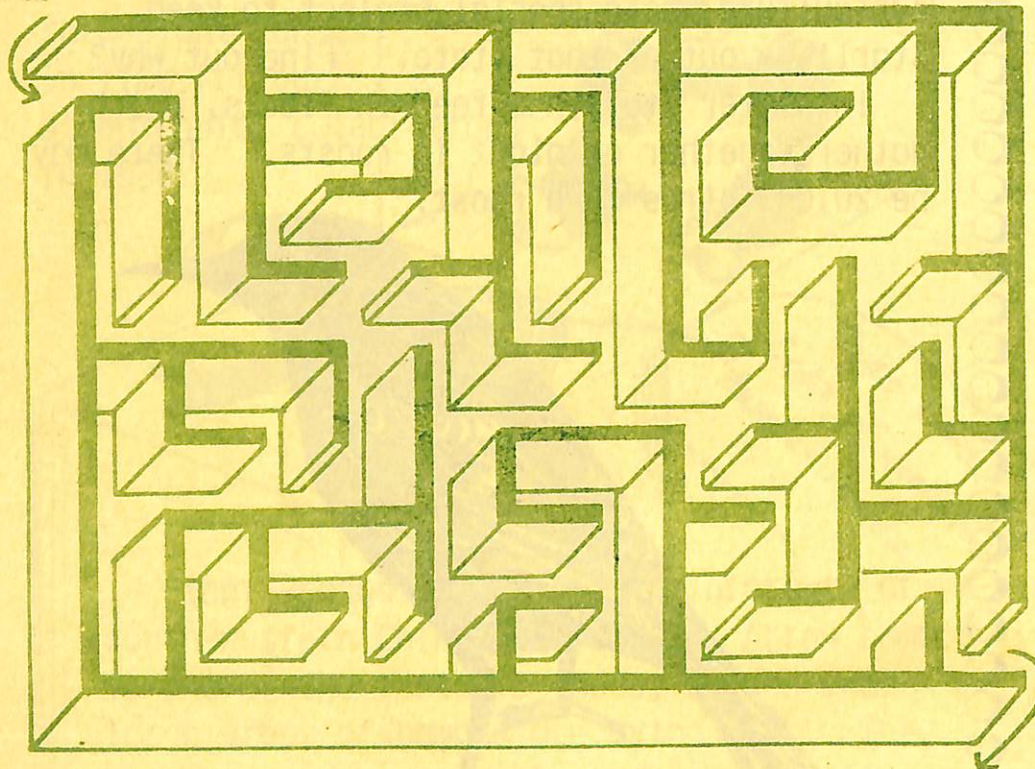


# PUZZLES

Can you read this "secret" writing?

DEER  
DINCO  
BRUMBY  
GOAT  
BIG  
CAMEL  
DONKEY

Answer: Hold the page up to a mirror.



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