



GREAT OCEAN ROAD  
COAST & PARKS AUTHORITY

# Watching wildlife

Every living thing, including plants, animals and even you and I are all part of our world's biodiversity.

This activity helps you play the role of an ecologist, a scientist whose job is to watch and study different living things to learn how they eat, hunt, shelter, have young, move, animals they live with and special adaptations or features they might have to help them survive.

## THIS IS YOUR CHALLENGE!

Find an animal in or around your house – this could be a beetle, fly, mosquito, butterfly, moth, possum, magpie, wattlebird etc.

On the following pages record information about your animal's ecology. This might mean watching your animals at different times of the day, in different weather and up close. If you can't print off or use this on your tablet or computer, you can use any spare paper or exercise books to make your own booklet. All the observations you make of an animal can lead you to understand the fascinating life of wildlife in your home and backyard!

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Something to take or draw pictures and notes with
- Internet or reference books (see last page for a list of online resources)
- A keen eye
- A curious mind
- Patience.



<b>ANIMAL NAME:</b>		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b> E.g., rose bush, tree, lawn
<b>Features (what does it look like?)</b>		<b>Notes/sketches/pictures</b>
<p>What colour/s is your animal?</p> <p>Are there different colours or patterns on different parts of the body?</p> <p>Describe and draw these.</p>		
<p>What sort of body covering does it have? e.g. fur, feathers, scales, shell.</p> <p>Draw and/or describe them.</p>		

Features (what does it look like?)	Notes/sketches/pictures
<p>Can it camouflage (blend in) with its habitat?</p> <p>What can it blend in with?</p>	
<p>How big is it?</p> <p>You can use a ruler to measure or estimate the length.</p> <p>How big is it compared to something else <i>e.g., as big as a pea, the size of your thumb, as long as a banana.</i></p>	
<p>Does it have legs? How many?</p> <p>Draw or describe them</p>	
<p>If it doesn't have legs, what does it use to move?</p>	
<p>Does it have hands and/or feet?</p> <p>How many toes and fingers does it have?</p> <p>What shape are they?</p> <p>Draw and/or describe them</p>	

Features (what does it look like?)	Notes/sketches/pictures
<p>Does it have a tail?</p> <p>What does it look like? <i>eg. size, shape, covering</i></p>	
<p>Does it have eyes?</p> <p>Draw or describe them</p>	
<p>Does it have feelers or whiskers or antennae?</p> <p>What do they look like?</p>	
<p>Does it have wings?</p> <p>What do they look like?</p>	
<p>What does it use to eat or find food?</p> <p>Does it have a beak, tongue, teeth, big mouth, small mouth, pinchers?</p> <p>Draw and/or describe them.</p>	
<p>Add your own notes/sketches of any other animal features</p>	

Behaviour (what does it do?)	Notes/Sketches/Pictures
<p>What is it doing?</p> <p>Is it eating, drinking, cleaning itself, resting, nesting?</p>	
<p>How does it move?</p> <p>Does it walk, fly, swim, slide?</p> <p>Is it fast or slow?</p>	
<p>Is it awake during the day (diurnal) or the night (nocturnal)?</p>	
<p>Does it interact or share its habitat with any other animals?</p> <p>Make a list of these.</p>	
<p>Does it make sound? Try to describe this.</p>	
<p>Add any other interesting observations you make.</p>	

Habitat (where does it eat, shelter, live?)	Notes/sketches/pictures
<p>What is it doing?</p> <p>Is it eating, drinking, cleaning itself, resting, nesting?</p>	
<p>Does it live on or in the ground? Where/How?</p> <p>Describe or draw it.</p>	
<p>Is it in a nest?</p> <p>If yes, describe or draw what it looks like and what it is made of.</p>	
<p>Does it live somewhere else?</p> <p>Describe or draw it.</p>	
<p>What does it eat?</p> <p>Where does it find its food?</p> <p>Describe or draw the animal finding or eating its food.</p>	

Extra questions	Your thoughts, feelings, ideas
<p>Why do you think the animal is in/around your house?</p> <p>Why would it like or use your house?</p>	
<p>What do you think is this animal's 'job' or role in the ecosystem?</p> <p>Is it a hunter, food for someone else, does it pollinate flowers?</p>	
<p>Do you want the animal to stay around your house?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p>	
<p>What could you do to make a better home for the animal?</p>	
<p>What other questions or interesting facts have you learnt about your animal?</p>	

## Online resources

### All animals

Australian Museum <https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/animals/>

Backyard Buddies <https://www.backyardbuddies.org.au/explore-backyard-buddies>

### Birds

Australian Museum: Urban Birds  
<https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/animals/birds/birds-in-backyards-top-30-urban-birds/>

Royal Botanic Gardens  
[https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/documents/RBGV\\_Birds\\_of\\_the\\_Melbourne\\_Gardens\\_-\\_2017-FINAL.pdf](https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/documents/RBGV_Birds_of_the_Melbourne_Gardens_-_2017-FINAL.pdf)

### Insects and spiders

Australian Museum: Beetles  
<https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/species-identification/ask-an-expert/common-identifications-beetles/>

Backyard Buddies: Explore Bugs & Insects  
<https://www.backyardbuddies.org.au/explore/bugs-and-insects>

Backyard Buddies: Butterflies  
<https://www.backyardbuddies.org.au/fact-sheets/butterflies>

CSIRO: Insect Families  
<http://anic.ento.csiro.au/insectfamilies/>

Spidentify: App store <https://identify-spiders.com/>

### How to make an animal friendly garden

Backyard Buddies: Create <https://www.backyardbuddies.org.au/create>

Gardening Australia: Backyard Biodiversity  
<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/backyard-biodiversity/11260610>

Wildlife Rescue <https://www.wires.org.au/wildlife-information>