



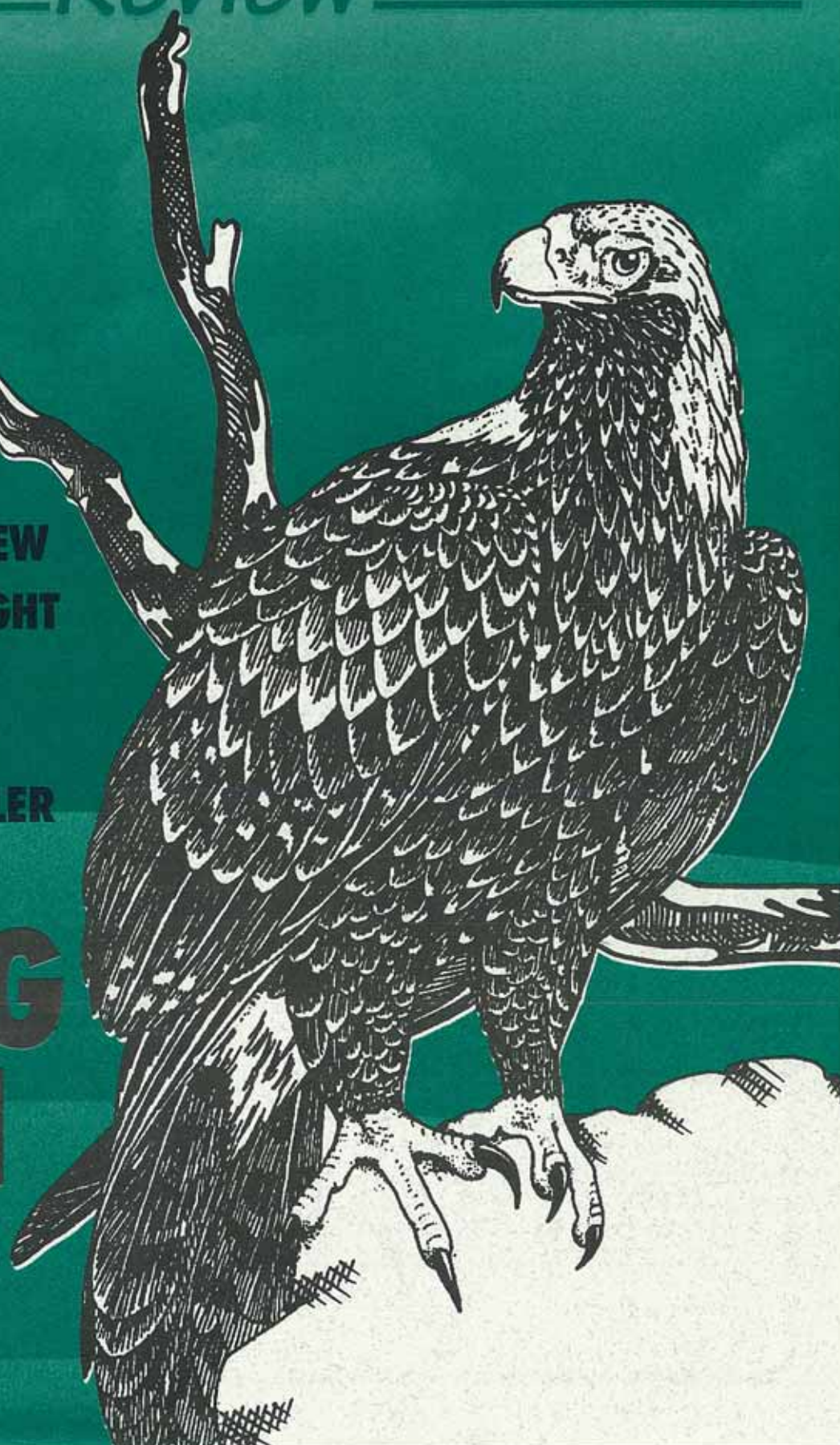
Junior Ranger

Review

July - August 1998

**THE CLEAN UP CREW
EAGLES OF THE NIGHT
NORTHERN
PYROMANIACS
THE GREAT WHISTLER**

**FLYING
HIGH**



The Clean-up Crew



Dead cows and squashed roos smell pretty bad after a day or two in the hot Territory sun. But our Wedge-tailed Eagles don't mind at all. They reckon they're good tucker. Slow down when you see them cleaning up our highways. Just like a 747 jumbo jet, these gentle giants take a while to get airborne. The Wedge-tailed Eagle is the second biggest eagle in the world. (Only America's Golden Eagle is bigger).

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is now a protected bird but for many years it was ruthlessly hunted. Sheep farmers considered it a threat to their lambs.

Bird experts are now certain that the eagles rarely attack healthy lambs. Research has shown that the ones taken by eagles are those in poor health or already dead. Rabbits are the live prey taken most often by the eagles.

Reveal the Club's Name

The White-bellied Sea-eagle may be spotted along the Top End coast. It has a shorter tail than the Wedge-tailed Eagle.

It is the emblem of an Australian football club. Work out this number code to reveal the club's name.



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

22 10 23 21 8

--	--	--	--	--

1 4 16 11 8

--	--	--	--	--

21 14 10 16 4 14

--	--	--	--	--	--

12 21 4 11

--	--	--	--

Whose Foot is it?

A bird's feet can tell you a lot about its lifestyle. An eagle's talons are ideally suited for catching prey but also for carrying nesting material. Eagles build giant nests from sticks which they place in the fork of a tree.



Can you draw 6 lines to correctly match the following feet with their owner on the right? Check on the bottom of this page for the answers.



Answers: magpie (2) parrot (3) emu (1) treecreeper (6) honeyeater (4) ibis (5)

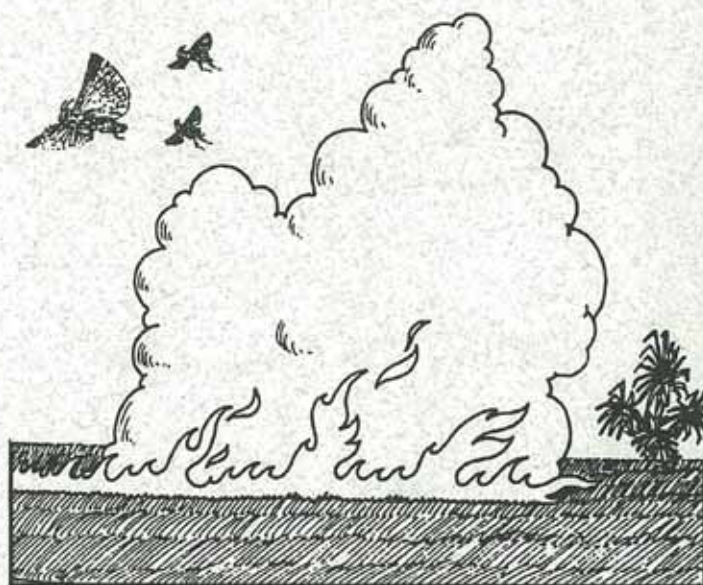
Did you know that ...

Eagles have feathered legs. On a wedgie they go all the way to its feet. But a sea-eagle's feathers don't go down so far. They're more like a pair of long trousers.

You'll also see them hunting around the edges of the grass fires that burn across the Top End during the dry season. They swoop on insects and lizards escaping the flames. People have even seen them picking up smouldering sticks and dropping them in dry grass to spread the fire.



Black Kites may be clever but they're not very classy. They like to hang around near dumps and eat garbage. What's more, they often line their nests with cattle dung!



Use this letter code to reveal more details of their hunting habits.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ZYXWVUTSRQPONMLKJIHGFEDCBA

G S V B S F M G H L X O L H V G L G S V
 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

U O Z N V H G S Z G R M V C K V I R V M X V W
 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Y R I W H H L N V G B N V H T V G G S V R I
 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

U V Z G S V I H H R M T V W
 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []



Another Clever Bird

Do you like eggs for breakfast? Australia's Black-breasted Buzzard loves emu eggs and those of other ground-nesting birds. When it finds one it repeatedly drops a stone on the egg until it breaks.

The Egyptian Vulture is the only other bird to use this trick.

Black Breasted Buzzard

The Black-breasted Buzzard is a bird of the open plains. You often see them in the country around Tennant Creek. They have distinctive white patches under their wings.



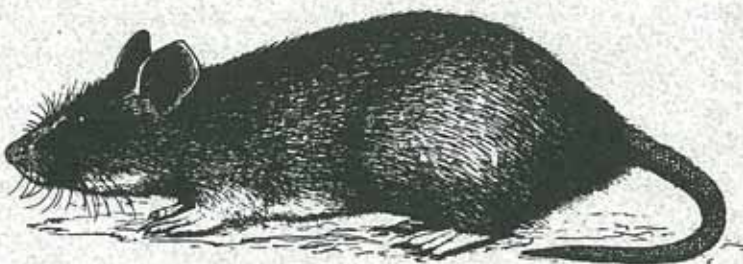
Letter-winged Kite

Another interesting bird of prey from the Barkly is the Letter-winged Kite. It has a white tummy and grey wings, with dark patches underneath.



Tasty Long-haired Rat

The Letter-winged Kite's favourite meal is a tasty Long-haired Rat. These native rodents occasionally reach plague proportions on the Barkly Tableland. When this happens the kite breeds in high numbers.



A Great Whistler

The Whistling Kite gets its name from its prolonged, loud call. It begins with a long whistle followed by a series of sharp, rising notes.

The feathers on its belly and under its wings are paler than those of the Black Kite.

It also has a rounded tail.



The Alphabet Maze

If you work through this alphabet maze, you'll know where to look for whistling kites. (Start at the arrow and keep going until you've gone from A to Z. Then start over again).

START →

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

on the margins
of rainforests

inland waters
and creeks

suburban parks

above rocky hills

From a Distance

From a distance, you can tell an eagle from a hawk by the shape of their wings.

Eagle gliding head-on



Eagles fly with their wing tips swept up into a vee-shape.

Hawk gliding head-on



Hawks fly with their wings swept out horizontal.

High Above the Ocean

At daybreak this bird leaves its nest on the top of a rocky cliff. It soars higher and higher until it's just a speck in the sky. It waits and watches.

Suddenly, far below, it sees a flash of silver. With its head down and wings tucked, it drops like a stone and disappears into the water.

Moments later it emerges. Its strong claws grasp a slippery fish.



The bird's underparts are white but the top of its wings are brown.



Brahminy Kite

This is another bird of prey seen along the coast. It has spectacular chesnut brown wings.

It also lives in India and was named after the Hindu priestly caste called Brahmins.

The problem is that its wings are actually the same colour as the robes worn by Buddhist monks. It seems that the Englishman who named the bird got his priests mixed up.

What's My Name

Fill in the crossword to reveal the bird's name.

an ugly giant

under part of your foot

type of plant

The Great Barrier

a compass direction

a rambling story

	G		E
		L	
	A		M
		E	
		S	
			N

V8 Speedsters of the Sky



Peregrine Falcons are found in all parts of Australia but are not common anywhere. The appearance of a peregrine causes panic among other birds.

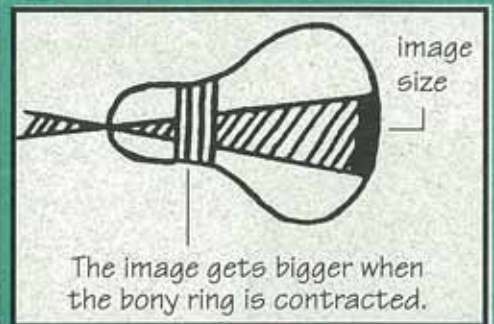
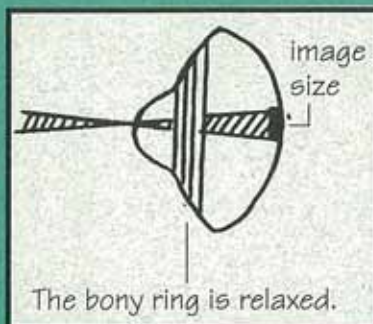
The Peregrine Falcon is one of the fastest birds of prey. It will attack almost any small or medium sized bird, swooping down at speeds of 300kph or more.

The Chinese were the first people to use trained falcons for hunting. Falconry spread to Japan, India, ancient Persia and then Egypt. After conquering Egypt the Romans introduced falconry to Europe.

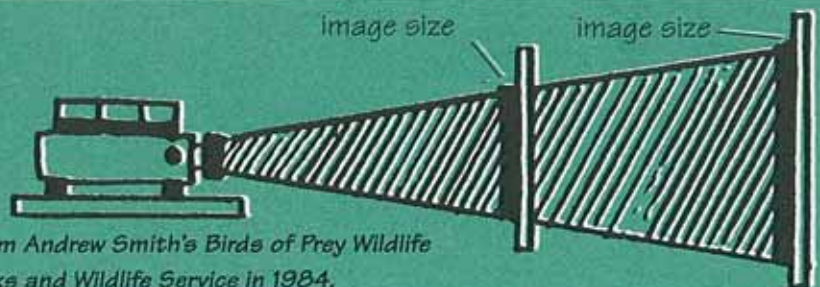
The sport became popular in England after the Norman invasion in 1066. Kings and noblemen used Peregrine Falcons which were a status symbol. People of lower rank hunted with goshawks, sparrowhawks or kestrels.

From the Bird's Eye View

Falcons and other birds of prey have sophisticated binocular vision to accurately pinpoint their prey. Their eyes have a bony ring which can squeeze and elongate their eyeball. This has the same effect as a telephoto lens on a camera.



A similar thing happens when you move a screen further from a slide projector. The size of the image increases.



Acknowledgement: This article is reproduced from Andrew Smith's *Birds of Prey Wildlife Study Kit*, published by Tasmania's National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1984.

What's My Name?

Use this grid to decode the names of two common Territory falcons.

	1	2	3	4	5
●	A	B	C	D	E
▲	F	G	H	I	J
★	K	L	M	N	O
■	P	Q	R	S	T
◆	U	V	W	X	Y



I'm slower than a Peregrine Falcon and hunt differently. I like small mammals and birds but also enjoy lizards, grasshoppers, caterpillars and beetles. I like to sit quietly on a high perch and swoop down to the ground to grab a bite.

I'm called the

●2 ■3 ★5 ◆3 ★4

--	--	--	--	--

▲1 ●1 ★2 ●3 ★5 ★4

--	--	--	--	--	--

I can flutter like a bee and hover like a butterfly. Aren't I clever? It's handy being able to stay over the same spot for several minutes when you're looking for lunch.



The upper side of my wings are a beautiful brown

colour but I'm white underneath. I have a distinctive black bar across my tail feathers.

I'm called the

★4 ●1 ★4 ★1 ●5 ●5 ★4

--	--	--	--	--	--

★1 ●5 ■4 ■5 ■3 ●5 ★2

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Falcon Facts

- There are 38 species of falcon in the world and 6 in Australia.
- All falcons have long pointed wings.
- Males and females look alike but females are usually larger.
- The Australian Hobby is the only Australian falcon to build its own nest. The others use the old nest of a hawk or crow, or a ledge on a cliff face.
- The Ford Falcon car first appeared on Australian roads in 1960.

Eagles in the Night Sky



August is a great time for star watching throughout the Northern Territory. Once you get away from the lights of the towns you'll see the Milky Way in all its glory, provided there's not much moon. At this time of year it stretches from the Southern Cross in the south west, high overhead to the Northern Cross in the north east sky.

Looking South in August at 8pm

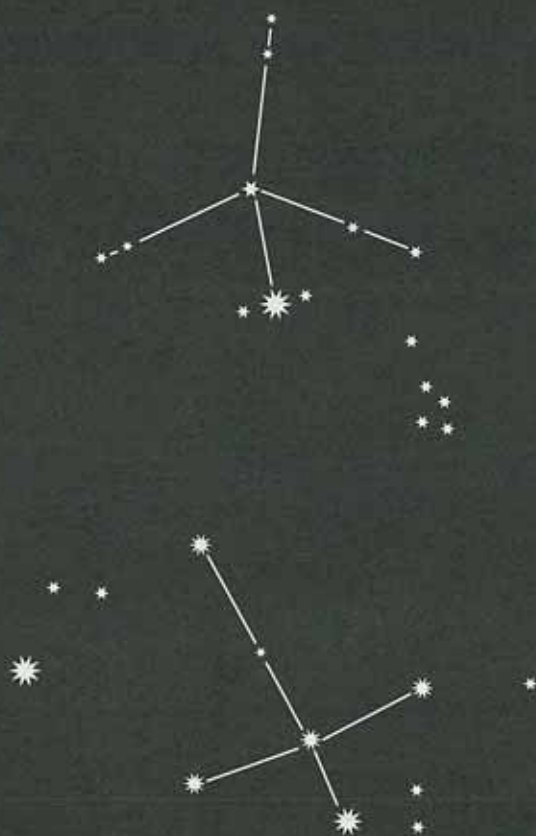


The Magellanic Clouds are two galaxies you can see without a telescope (on a moonless night away from city lights).

So Near, Yet So Far

Can you find the Southern Cross and its two pointers: Alpha Centauri and Beta Centauri. Alpha Centauri is the closest star to the Earth, not counting the sun. It's 4.3 light years (or 41 million million kilometres away). However, it is unlikely anyone will visit it in the near future. That's because it would take 40000 years to get there on the space shuttle.

The brightest star in the northern sky in August is Vega.
It is 50 times brighter than our sun but 26 light years away.



A constellation called the Northern Cross is visible above the northeast horizon in August. Above it lies another constellation called Aquila the Eagle.

According to Greek legend, the god Jupiter turned himself into this eagle and kidnapped the shepherd boy Ganymede. He took the boy to Mount Olympus where he became the water carrier for the gods (and known from then on as Aquarius).

Can you find the eagle in the night sky?
Looking North in August at 8pm

A Black Hole

The Northern Cross has another name: Cygnus the Swan. This part of the sky contains a mysterious invisible object which astronomers believe must be a black hole. They've named it Cygnus x-1.

While we can't see it, we can detect the effect it is having on a supergiant star nearby.

The supergiant is 6500 light years from

Earth and 30 times the size of our sun. However, it is mysteriously losing matter which astronomers believe is being sucked into the black hole.

Before the material disappears across the black hole's event horizon, it gets heated strongly and emits x rays. These x rays have been detected on Earth.

Eagles, Hawks & Falcons



How good a
word sleuth are you?
These hidden words go in
all directions and some are
written backwards. Colour
the boxes as you find
each letter.

BILL
BRAHMINY
BUZZARD
CALL
CHEST
EAGLE
EGG
EYE
FALCON
FEATHER
FLY
FORKTAIL
GOSHAWK
HARRIER
HAWK

HOVER
KESTREL
KITE
NESTS
OSPREY
PEREGRINE
PREEN
PREY
SCAVENGER
SEA
SOAR
TALON
TOES
WEDGETAIL
WING

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

You should have 15 letters left over. String them
together to spell the name of this beautiful white kite.

Australian

—

Kite

The Junior Ranger Review is produced 4 times a year by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory. This edition was written by Stuart Traynor and Design and layout are by Big Picture Graphic Art. The cover was Designed by Emily Ward. Illustrations in this edition are by Bob Whiteford, Joanne Van Os and Sharon Hillen.

Contributions are welcome and
should be sent to:

The Editor, Junior Ranger Review
PO Box 496
Palmerston NT 0831