



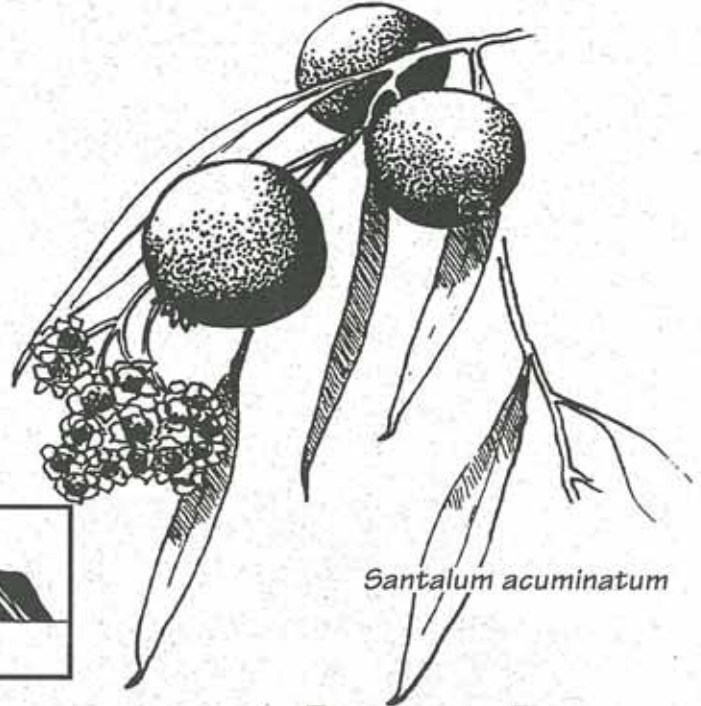
Junior Ranger

Review

JUNE - JULY 1996

On the Brink!!!

In the 1870's, parties led by Ernest Giles and William Gosse explored the country around Kings Canyon and Ayers Rock. Both of these explorers wrote in their diaries about the many Quandong trees growing in the area. Now, many of these trees have gone!



Santalum acuminatum

Quandongs are good tucker

Quandongs are good tucker. The red fruits make terrific pies and tangy jam.

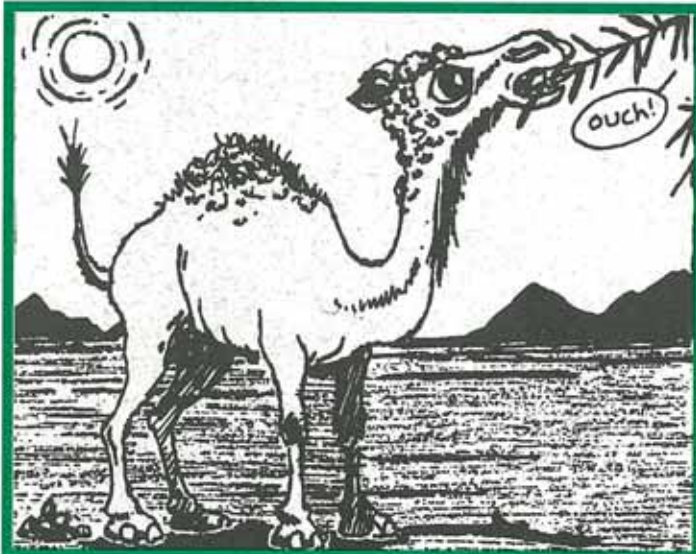
That's the good news! The bad news is that cattle, camels and rabbits also

think Quandongs are good eating. They love the leaves. These animals have eaten the trees out of existence in many parts of the Northern Territory. As soon as new seedlings sprout, they get nipped off at the roots. New trees are not able to grow and replace the ones dying of old age.

We can still save the Territory's Quandongs, but it's too late for many of our

native animals. We have a terrible record for animal extinction. Did you know that 10 Territory mammals have become extinct this century? A number of others are endangered. Some of our birds are also on the brink.

This edition of the Junior Ranger Review is about some of these furred and feathered Territorians:



The Parks & Wildlife Commission wants all Territorians to care for our native wildlife and our land because

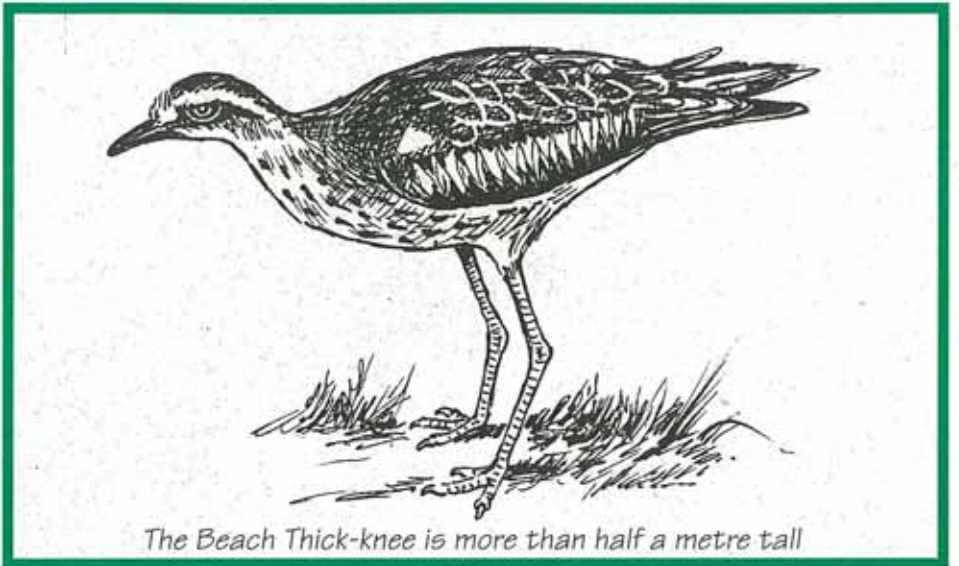
Extinction is forever

Birds on the brink

This beach bird is quite tall, but you're not likely to see it next time you go for a swim. It's nocturnal and hides during the daytime.

However, you may hear its mournful, wailing call on the beach at night. If you do, then count yourself lucky indeed. There's probably only 1 000 of them left in Australia.

Beach Thick-knees have disappeared from southern Australia as towns have cropped up along the coast in so many places. Some birds have survived along Australia's north coast. They live on quiet stretches of beach near rivers and mangroves.

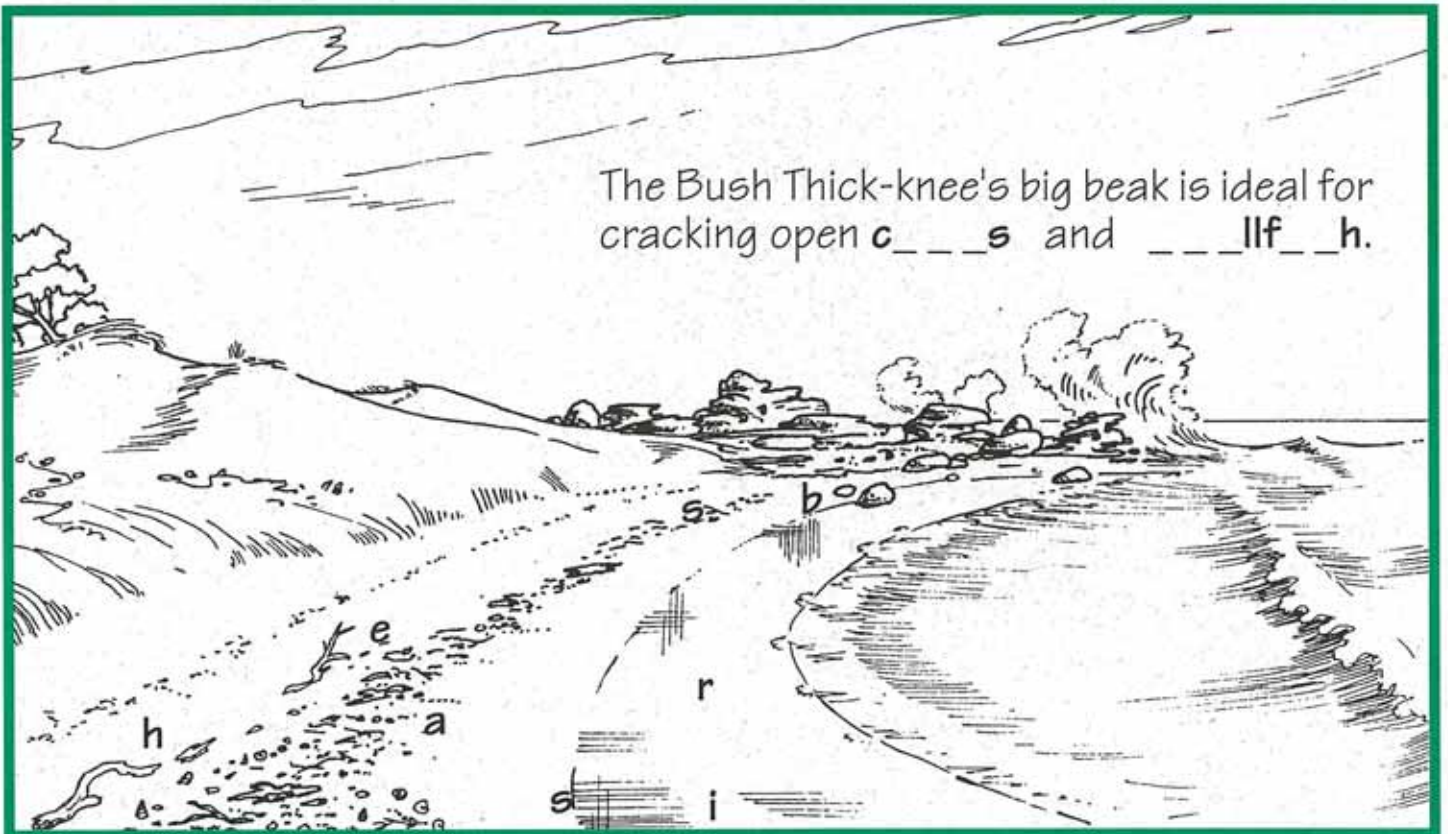


The Beach Thick-knee is more than half a metre tall

CAN YOU WORK OUT WHAT THESE BIRDS EAT?

The missing letters are scattered on the sand in this picture.

The Bush Thick-knee's big beak is ideal for cracking open c _ _ _ s and _ _ _ llf _ _ h.



CRACK THE CODE

Use this number code to work out the names of three more threatened birds

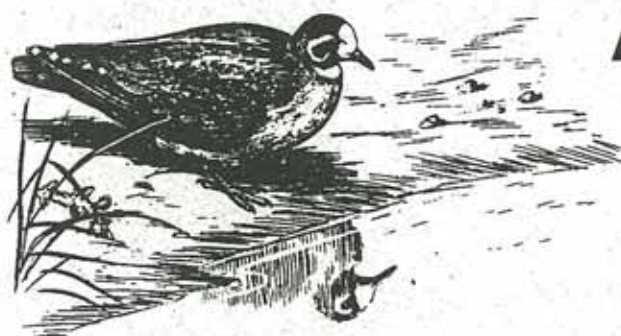
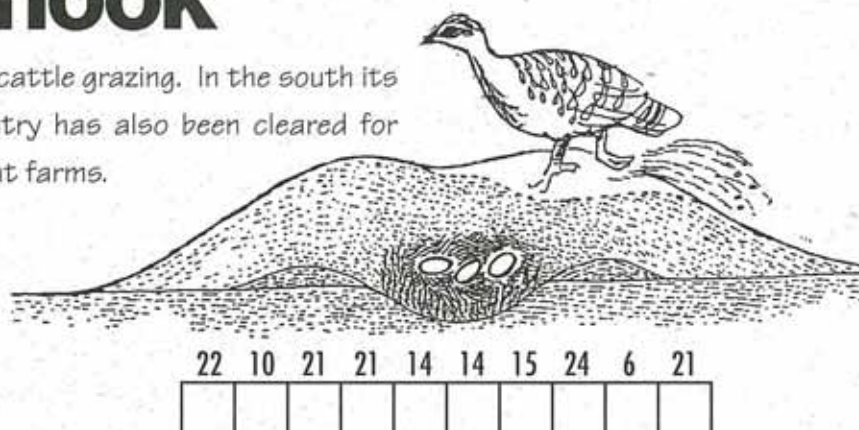
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

The Ozzie Chook

This Australian chook used to be very common in the dry mulga and mallee country of southern Australia.

It spends many hours raking up leaves and soil to build a mound where it lays its eggs. A lot of its habitat has been destroyed by sheep

and cattle grazing. In the south its country has also been cleared for wheat farms.



A very wild pigeon

The Barkly Tableland is one of the last strongholds of this pigeon. As the sun sets on these grassy plains, they fly to dams and waterholes to drink. They nest on the bare ground between grass clumps. The trampling feet of sheep have wiped them out in southern Australia.

15 21 24 12 20

--	--	--	--	--

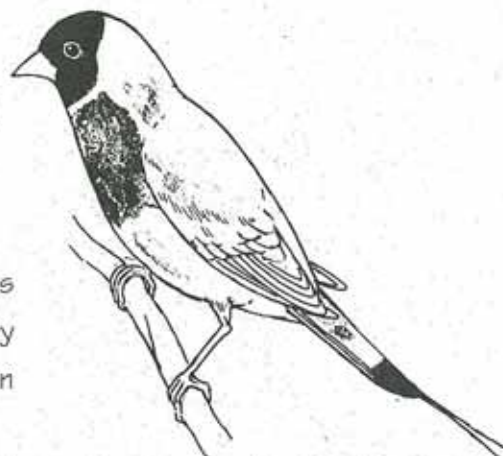
11 1 24 23 9 14 6 18 23 16

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

30 years of changes, disease & trapping

This colourful bird has been pushed to the brink of extinction in the last 30 years. It's a popular aviary bird but has become quite rare in the wild. It's only found in a couple of places

in the Top End. Changes to its habitat, disease and trapping by collectors have all taken a toll on this species.



16 24 4 21 13 18 10 23

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

15 18 23 12 17

--	--	--	--	--

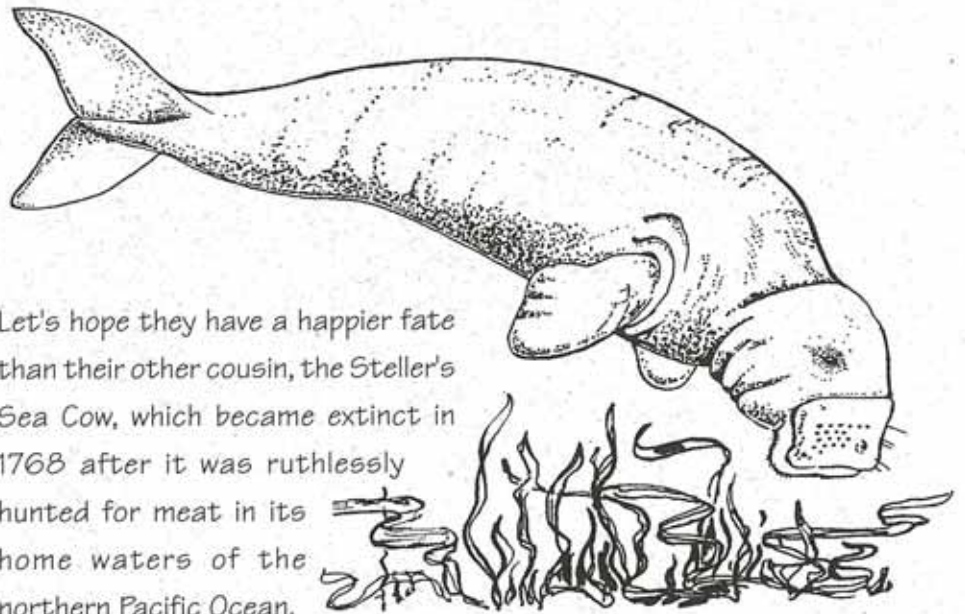
Saving the Dugong

The Dugong remains a mystery to most Australians. Saving its ocean habitat is the key to its survival.

The Dugong and its relative the Manatee from the West Indies and Africa, are the only herbivorous mammals that are completely marine.

Approximately 2 metres long, they live in warm coastal areas and estuaries.

Today the Dugongs and the Manatees are considered endangered.



Let's hope they have a happier fate than their other cousin, the Steller's Sea Cow, which became extinct in 1768 after it was ruthlessly hunted for meat in its home waters of the northern Pacific Ocean.

Did you Know...

Dugongs look like seals but their closest relatives are elephants!

Dugongs breathe air like us. They only spend a few seconds at the surface, but they suck in enough air to stay underwater for as long as 8 minutes!

Dugongs are grass eaters. Seagrass, that is! They dig out clumps with their big top lip, then they suck them up like a giant vacuum cleaner.

BABY DUGONGS SUCK MILK FROM THEIR MUM'S BREASTS. THESE ARE NEAR HER FLIPPERS!

Even though they're plain and dumpy, Dugongs inspired the legend of the mermaids. Sailors thought they were women with tails like fish!



Junior Ranger

DISCOVERING
OUTDOORS
SHEET

Australia: Land of the Parrots

You can spot parrots all over Australia. No other country has as many of these birds as we do.

strong curved
beak for crushing
seeds and nuts

round head

brilliant coloured feathers

parrot foot prints



two toes pointing forward
and two pointing back

long tail



A Patriotic Parrot

The Budgerigar is our best known parrot. You can see large flocks of them in outback areas after good falls of rain.

Budgies are very popular cage-birds all over the world. Many different colours have been bred. But the native birds from

"Budgies are very popular cage-birds all over the world"

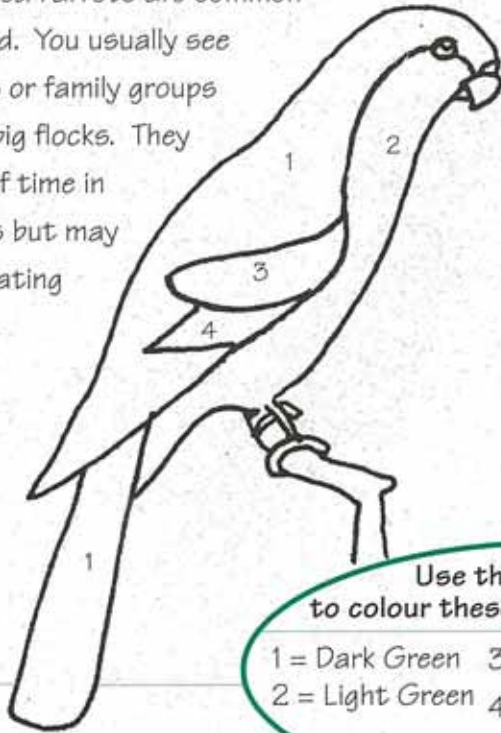
They're a spectacular sight as they twist and turn together in the air without ever bumping into each other.

the Australian bush wear our national colours, **green and gold**. They're very patriotic.



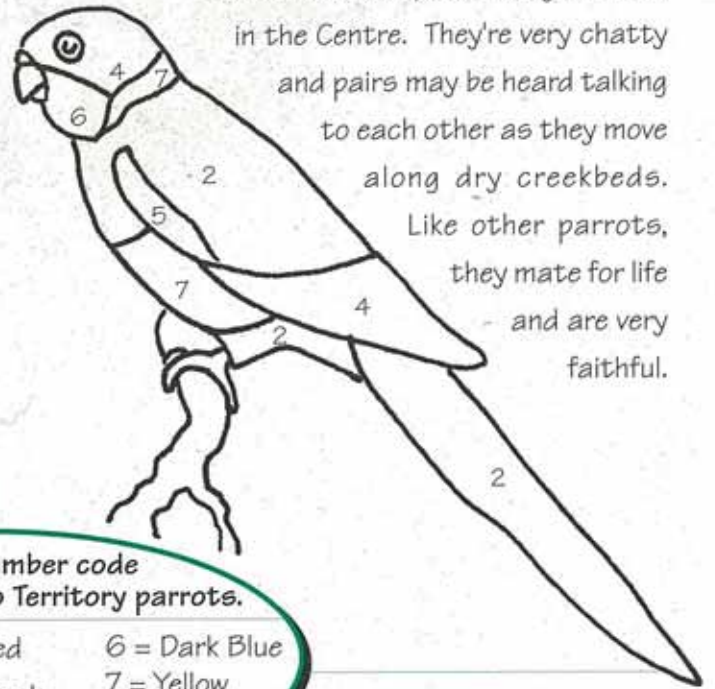
Red-shouldered Parrot

Red-shouldered Parrots are common in the Top End. You usually see them in pairs or family groups rather than big flocks. They spend a lot of time in the tree tops but may be spotted eating seeds by the roadside.



Port Lincoln Parrot

Port Lincoln Parrots are very common in the Centre. They're very chatty and pairs may be heard talking to each other as they move along dry creekbeds. Like other parrots, they mate for life and are very faithful.



Use this number code to colour these two Territory parrots.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1 = Dark Green | 3 = Red | 6 = Dark Blue |
| 2 = Light Green | 4 = Black | 7 = Yellow |
| 5 = Light Blue | | |

What's my name?

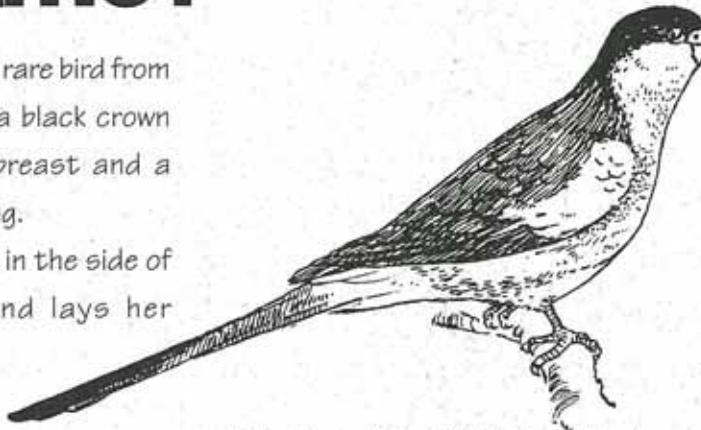
This beautiful bloke is a rare bird from the Top End. He has a black crown and back, turquoise breast and a yellow patch on his wing.

His mate chews a hole in the side of a termite mound and lays her eggs there.

These parrots eat

grass seeds. Unfortunately, cattle grazing and too much dry season burning have affected their food supply. Now they're restricted to a few places

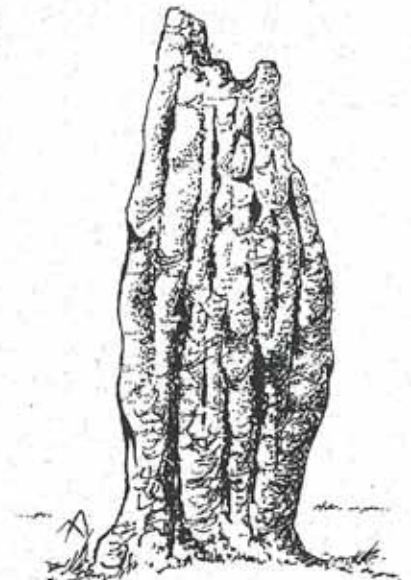
in Kakadu and Nitmiluk National Parks. There are stiff penalties for people caught trapping them and smuggling them out of the country.



To work out the bird's name change each letter into the one that comes after it in the alphabet.

G	N	N	C	D	C

O	Z	Q	Q	N	S
P	A	R			



Written by Stuart Traynor and illustrated by Bob Whiteford



Junior Ranger

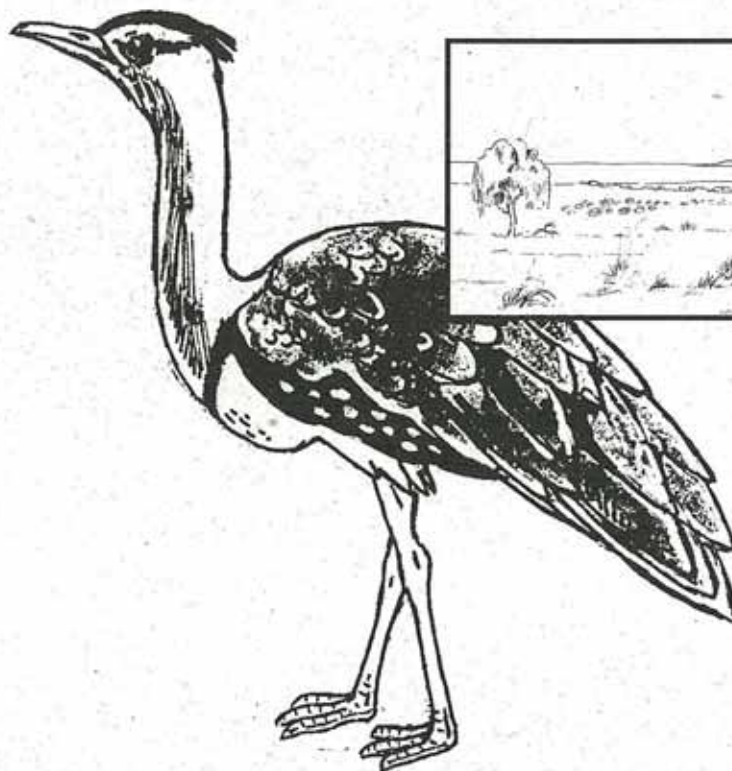
DISCOVERING
OUTDOORS
SHEET

Poor Bustard!

Once, this large and unusual bird could be found almost anywhere there was open country. Now it is only common on the Barkly Tableland, Cape York and the Kimberley.

The Bustard is also known as the Bush Turkey.

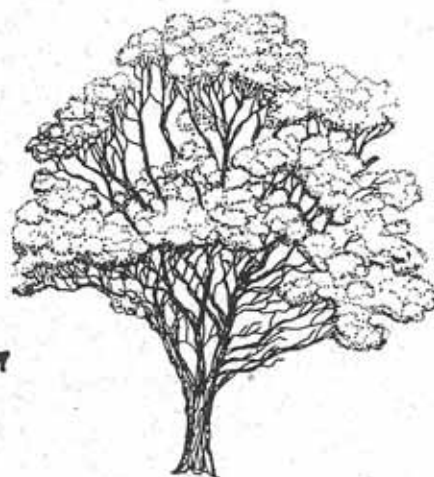
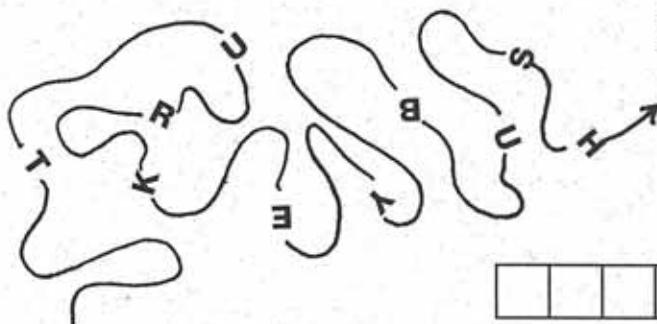
Tall, long-necked Bustards might be spotted walking along the ground in grassy areas of the north. They're nomadic birds that move around the country like Emus. But unlike the Emu, they can fly very well.



WORK OUT ITS NAME

During the hot part of the day Bustards shelter under shrubs. One shrub they like in the Top End has beautiful pink flowers during the dry season.

Work out its name
by tracing the Bustard's
track to the shrub and writing
down each letter you
come across.

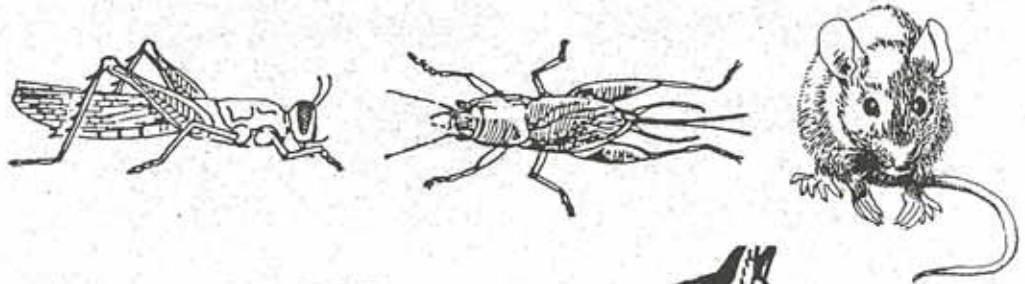


--	--	--	--	--	--

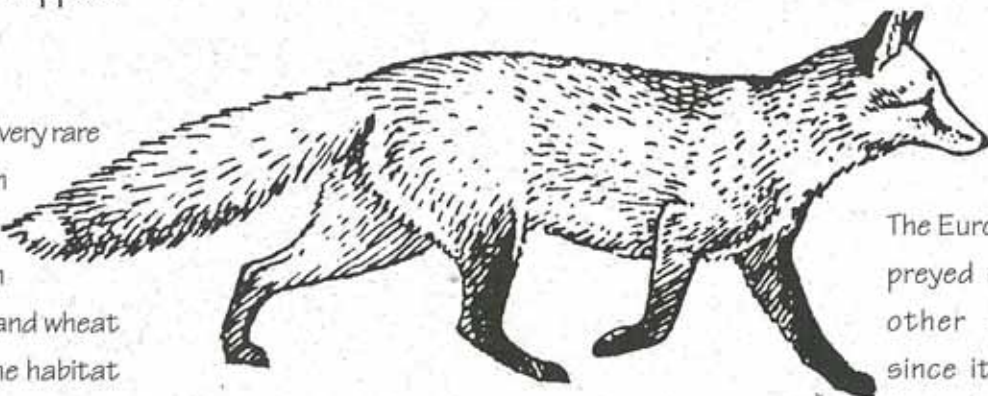
--	--	--	--

What's for dinner?

Bustards are birds of grassland areas. They eat seeds and fruits, as well as large numbers of crickets, grasshoppers and mice.



Bustards are now very rare in the southern half of Australia. The introduction of sheep, rabbits and wheat farms changed the habitat where they used to live.



The European Fox has also preyed on Bustards and other native animals since it was brought to Australia in the 1840's.

THE WIPE OUT CODE

Use this number code to work out what else has helped wipe out the poor Bustard.



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

13 1 14 25 [] [] [] []	5 14 4 5 4 [] [] [] [] []	21 16 [] []	15 14 [] []	16 5 15 16 12 5 , 19 [] [] [] [] [] [] []
4 9 14 14 5 18 [] [] [] [] [] []	20 1 2 12 5 19 [] [] [] [] [] []	1 2 15 18 9 7 9 14 1 12 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []		
16 5 15 16 12 5 [] [] [] [] [] []	19 20 9 12 12 [] [] [] [] []	19 8 15 15 20 [] [] [] [] []	1 []	12 15 20 [] [] []
15 6 [] []	20 8 5 13 [] [] [] []			

Hundreds of Dugongs once grazed and bred in Brisbane's Morton Bay. Now they're gone. Many of them were hunted and killed in the early days. But the main reason they disappeared was because something destroyed the seagrass beds where they fed.

WHERE DID THEY GO?

	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

Use this grid to find out what destroyed the seagrass beds.

▲3	●1	■3	●2	★5	◆1	■3

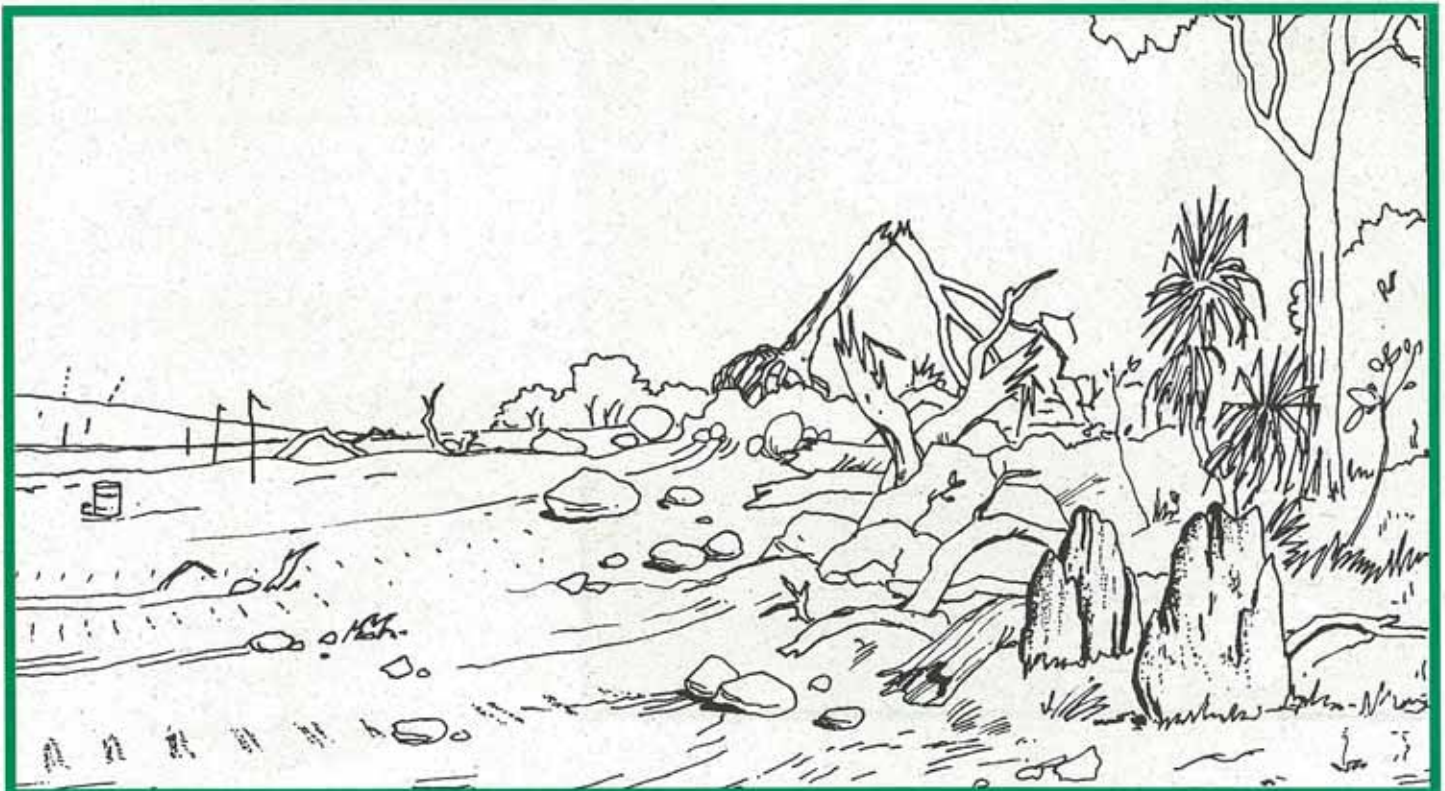
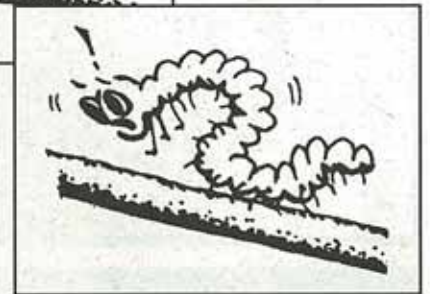
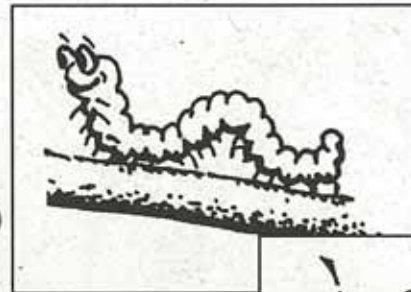
●4	●5	◆2	●5	★2	★5	■1	★3	●5	★4	■5

How do we save our endangered animals & plants?

If we want to keep our wildlife and native plants then we must preserve their natural habitat.

This is why national parks

and marine parks are so important. But we must also preserve habitats on cattle stations and Aboriginal land.



PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER 1



When the first rabbits got off the ships from Europe, us Bilbies showed them some good old Aussie hospitality.

We told them they could share our homes and eat with us for a while until they got settled.



What a terrible mistake that was!

They took over the place, ate all our tucker and made a dreadful mess. Then they kicked us out the front door!



Rabbit Gossip Session (vicious)

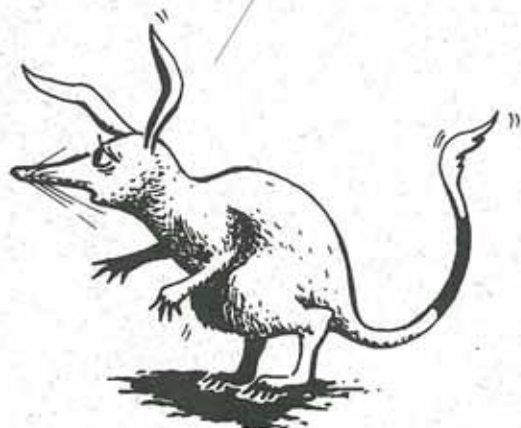
I've had 10 babies this year how about you?

I can better that I've had 20

Ha. I've had 50



And they bred like rabbits!



A battle for survival

Today, you only find Bilbies in places where there are no rabbits and very few cattle or sheep. These animals all compete with the Bilbies for food. It's a battle for survival and the Bilbies have been on the losing side.

In 1979 Northern Territory Government scientists began a program to save the Bilby. Animals were bred in captivity in Alice Springs. Rangers at Watarrka National Park then released them back into the wild.

These cartoons telling the story are by Kaye Kessing. She lives in Alice Springs and is one of Australia's most talented artists and storytellers.

Kaye Kessing



Unfortunately feral cats got them. Now the Parks and Wildlife Commission has started work on ways to control the huge numbers of cats that are

causing havoc in the bush. Unless we can find ways to control rabbits and feral cats then our native animals will not live happily ever after.

Bilbies (Macrotis lagotis) ran free across most of Australia before rabbits came to the country. Now there's only a couple of thousand left. The rabbits have taken their place.



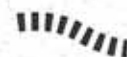
Key



Places where Bilbies survive today.



Part of Australia where Bilbies used to live.



There are no rabbits north of this line.

The missing desert digger

There are now about 200 million European rabbits running wild across Australia. Farmers, cattlemen, rangers and scientists all say they're Australia's greatest environmental disaster. Many native creatures have disappeared since rabbits took over the country. The Bilby is one of them. Here's another one.

Desert Digger Cross-out Puzzle

Can you find these 21 words in the puzzle. They go in all directions: up, down, sideways, diagonally and backwards. Cross out the letters as you go.

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



You should have 16 letters left over. String them together to spell the names of the missing desert digger.

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

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

Clues

ANTS	DRAGON
BANDICOOT	EURO
BAT	FLOWERS
BEETLES	FROG
BILBY	GECKO
BIRDS	GRASS
BUSH	MOTH
CENTIPEDE	PEEWEE
CICADAS	RATS
COCKATOOS	ROO
	TERMITES

The Junior Ranger Review is produced 4 times per year by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory. This edition was written by Stuart Traynor. Design and layout are by Big Picture Graphic Art. Illustrations in this edition are mostly by Bob Whiteford and Kaye Kessing.

Contributions are welcome and should be sent to:
The Editor, Junior Ranger Review, PO Box 496
Palmerston NT 0831