

Australian Animals

Australia is a large country with lots of interesting natural wildlife. Read on to find out some fascinating facts about some of its more well-known animals.

Where Is Australia?



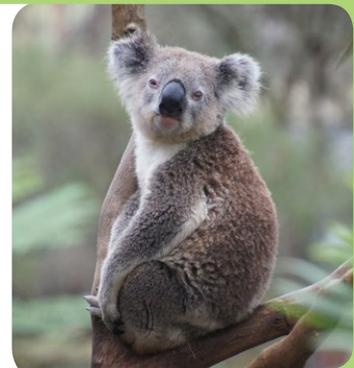
Types of Australian Animals

Many animals in Australia can't be found anywhere else in the world. There are more than 800 species (types) of birds, 4000 species of fish and 50 species of ocean mammals in Australia.

Koalas

Although many people call them 'koala bears', koalas aren't actually bears. They are a type of animal called a **marsupial** (the same kind of animal as a kangaroo).

Koalas even have a pouch, like a kangaroo!



Dingoes

Dingoes are related to wolves.

Some people in Australia think dingoes are pests because they attack farm animals. In 1855, a fence was built to keep dingoes out of the south-east of the country. At over 3000 miles long, it is the longest fence in the world!

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Wombats

Wombats are also a type of marsupial, like koalas.

They have a pouch but it is backwards-facing. This is because wombats spend a lot of their time digging and it stops them flicking dirt on their babies!



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Kangaroos

Kangaroos are the largest marsupial.

They can be very dangerous because of their powerful back legs and their claws.

Baby kangaroos are called **joey**s. Joeys will often jump head-first into their mother's pouch when they are scared!

Crocodiles

Both freshwater and saltwater crocodiles can be found in Australia.

Saltwater crocodiles are the biggest crocodiles in the world. Males can grow as big as five metres long!

They have the strongest bite of any animal in the world.



Endangered Species

Australia has many endangered species, with 86 types of animal being **critically endangered**. This means they are at risk of becoming **extinct** (when there are no more left in the world). It is important that they are protected so we can make sure they don't disappear from the world altogether.

Questions

1. How many species of birds are there in Australia? Tick one.

- 300
 4000
 800

2. What type of animal is a koala?

3. Draw a line to match these facts with their animal.

wombat

Males can grow as big as five metres long.

dingo

Some people think they are pests.

crocodile

They have a backwards-facing pouch.

4. Find a word in the text that means the same as **strong**.

5. What does it mean when an animal becomes **extinct**?

6. Do you think it is important to protect critically endangered animals?

Answers

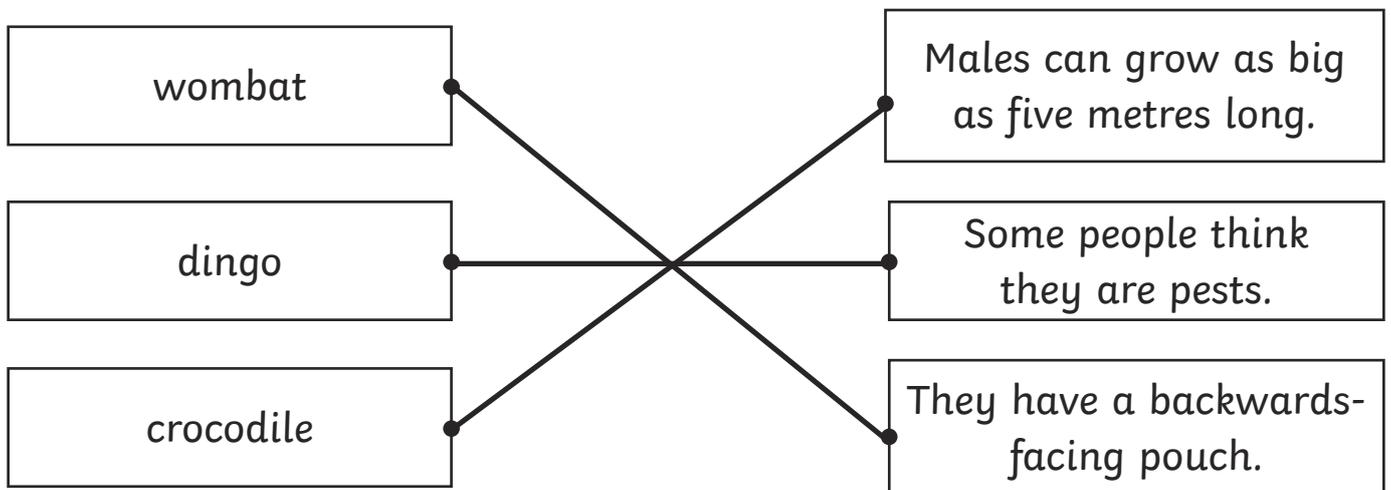
1. How many species of birds are there in Australia? Tick one.

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2. What type of animal is a koala?

A koala is a marsupial.

3. Draw a line to match these facts with their animal.



4. Find a word in the text that means the same as **strong**.

powerful

5. What does it mean when an animal becomes **extinct**?

It means when there are no more of that animal left in the world.

6. Do you think it is important to protect critically endangered animals?

Various answers.