

WILD FAMILIES



Enjoying, learning and looking after nature with the family

WILD FUN: BIRD DETECTIVES

Being a bird detective with the family is easy. Just step outside and look for birds!

It's also a great family opportunity to discover and learn together - birds have so much to teach us! Children of all ages can enjoy discovering the habits of birds.

If you want your bird detective work to go a little deeper try:

- Being very still and quiet like a detective, so that more birds will show themselves.
- Using binoculars to get a close-up look, just like a scientist! It's worth a little research to ensure children have a pair of binoculars they can use. Lower magnification, light weight and waterproof binoculars are generally best for children.
- Try to identify the birds you see by looking at their size, body shape, beak shape, leg shape, colour and listening to their calls.
- Use an Australian bird book or app to help identify what you see. There are many available online.
- For older children try discussing what the birds you see would need for life and where they might live.
- Make up your own story about what the birds are up to.

Adventuring with Clancy and Uncle Egg. By Trace Balla



Illustration copyright © Trace Balla

You can look for birds anywhere, including your backyard, school yard, local parks, forests and creeks.

Areas such as wetlands and open waterways can be good places to see larger birds that can be easier to get a good look at.

There is no need for adults or children to have any specialist knowledge to do this activity, just a keenness to learn, wonder and discover together.

Record your bird detective activity together on page 3.

This edition of Wild Families was produced by the Victorian National Parks Association with support from Parks Victoria, Hobsons Bay City Council and Jawbone Marine Sanctuary Care Group.



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Photo: 'Zebra Fish', courtesy Phil Watson

EXPLORE & LEARN

WILD SPOT: JAWBONE, WILLIAMSTOWN

The Jawbone Marine Sanctuary and flora and fauna reserve are special places in Williamstown to enjoy nature.

They include spectacular underwater marine life, grasslands, saltmarshes, seagrass beds, mangrove forests and fascinating birdlife.

Popular activities:

- Snorkeling and watching marine life such as the Six-spined Leatherjacket, Zebra Fish, Sea Stars and Banjo Rays.
- Birdwatching from bird hides or on the beach where you could spot Pelicans or migratory birds such as Red-necked Stints.
- Rockpool rambling - check out the limpets and mussels on the rocky platforms but make sure you keep an eye on the tides.
- Walking and cycling along the Bay Trail admiring mangroves, lakes, beaches and saltmarshes.
- Beach play - enjoy the sand and sea.

For information on local groups see www.williamstownwetlands.org.au or www.jawbone.org.au.

Remember to consider safety on outdoor adventures.



I wonder what this could be?

Environmentalism and marine scientist Rachel Carson told us that if a child is to keep alive their inborn sense of wonder, they need the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with them the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

Photo: Courtesy of Hobsons Bay City Council



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DRAW A BIRD

KIDS ACTIVITY 1

Draw a bird you have seen with as much detail as you can. Give your bird a name. This could be its species name or a made up name.

KIDS ACTIVITY 2

Draw some things your bird needs to live (they could be researched and real or made up). You might like to include things like a home, food, friends and family.

ADULTS ACTIVITY 1

Draw a bird you have seen with as much detail as you can.

ADULTS ACTIVITY 2

Draw some things your bird needs to live.

Email your drawings to us at vnpa@vnpa.org.au to be published on our social media and your chance to win a copy of VNPA's 'Life on the Rocky Shores'.



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Photo: Courtesy Beach Patrol

LOOKING AFTER NATURE: LITTER CLEAN-UPS

Cleaning up litter is a very valuable way to look after nature.

Litter can harm our wildlife, including fish in our seas and birds in our skies. Sometimes wildlife gets caught in litter or they eat it. Plastic is particularly harmful. Street litter generally ends up in our waterways and eventually our seas.

You can join one of 21 local groups through Beach Patrol to help keep your beach or streets clean and protect our local wildlife. Just one hour a month can make a difference in your community while you meet other like-minded families.

It's also very positive to learn about environmental issues by solving them.

MORE INFO

- Visit www.beachpatrol.com.au to learn more about Beach Patrol. The site has great safety tips for litter clean ups at www.beachpatrol.com.au/Health-and-Safety-Requirements



Photo: Martin Griffiths

BEING PART OF A PELICAN FAMILY

If you were a Pelican, you would have the longest bill of any bird and would eat mostly fish. You may even eat as part of a 'feeding flock' of more than 1000 other Pelicans.

The parents in your family would take turns sitting on eggs in the nest, warming them with their feet. Your parents would look after you until you were about 30 days old, then

you would head off to a 'crèche' with up to 100 other young Pelicans. Your parents would still bring food to you at crèche. You would attempt your first flight at around three months old.

In Victoria, your parents would probably have headed to Mud Island in Port Phillip Bay to breed. If you were a Pelican at crèche on Mud Island, where would you go once you were strong enough to fly?

Wild Families is a Victorian National Parks Association program with support from Bank Australia.



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