

Contents

Where in the world is Australia?	4
What is Australia like?	6
Climate	8
Australia's wildlife	10
Traveling around Australia	12
Traveling through the cities	14
A tour of Sydney	16
The Great Barrier Reef	18
Traveling along the Murray River	20
The Barossa Valley	22
Alice Springs and Uluru	24
The Aborigines	26
Glossary	28
Index	29
Teaching ideas and activities	30



Australia's wildlife

Unique plants and animals

Australia has developed a unique range of plants and animals that have **adapted** to the low rainfall and poor soil. Australia has more than 25,000 species of plants and around 250,000 species of animal life.

The tropical rainforests in the east are some of the oldest **ecosystems** in the world. The tree kangaroo and the birdwing butterfly live in this habitat.

The Australian bush

Near the coast, in the east, south-east, and south-west, are open woodlands. These areas are generally referred to as the Australian bush.

Eucalyptus trees grow here and can withstand drought, bush fires, and poor soil. Gray kangaroos and koalas live only in these areas.

Australia is famous for **marsupials**. These are extinct everywhere else in the world, except for South America. The best known are the kangaroo and the smaller wallaby. Birds, such as kookaburras, parrots, and budgerigars, are also found in the bush.

Dangerous creatures

Australia is the home of more deadly spiders and reptiles than anywhere else in the world. The deadliest spider is the redback and the worst snake is the taipan. The most dangerous animal to humans is the saltwater crocodile of northern Australia.





▲ The gray kangaroo can only be found in the Australian bush.

▼ The web-footed platypus is the size of a small pet cat. It has a bill like a duck's and a tail like a beaver's. It is a loner by nature.

Jenny went to the Cleland Wildlife Park on Mount Lofty, near Adelaide where she lives. She wrote about it in her diary.

The park was an area of bush. We were able to walk among the animals. I saw kangaroos and wallabies, and an emu—a big bird that can't fly. There was also an aviary where we could see the birds close up. But the best part was taking photographs of the sleepy koalas.



◀ Australia has many species of colorful birds, including budgies (left), parrots, finches, and cockatoos.