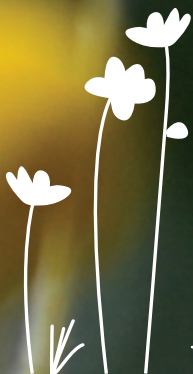


JUNIOR RANGERS

GRASSLANDS ACTIVITY BOOK



 Parks
VICTORIA

Sharing
Nature's
Stories

VICTORIA'S REMARKABLE GRASSLANDS

Grasslands are areas where the main plants are native grasses and herbs with few trees.

Grassy woodlands have some taller trees with large open grassy areas.

Native grasslands used to be common in Victoria, but when Europeans arrived, they were quickly replaced by farms, roads and towns. Only 1% of Victoria's original grasslands remain, mainly in the Murray River floodplain and volcanic plains of south west Victoria.

Grasslands hide their secrets well. Look closely and you'll find an amazing diversity of plants and animals.

Spring is a beautiful time to visit grasslands because they are bursting with wildflowers and buzzing with insects. Some wildflowers only last for a few days, others flower for months. Most Australian grasses flower between October and December. In spring, you might see different flowers every other week!



WHAT IS THAT?

Take a photo of a grassland plant or flower that you can't name. Go to grasslands.ecolinc.vic.edu.au to find out what it is, or ask an adult to download the Grasslands App.

How many wildflowers can you find hidden in this grassland grid? Names can go left-to-right or top-to-bottom. *Words in brackets are not included.*

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

Austral Bugle
 Basalt (*Daisy*)
 Billy Button
 Blue Devil
 Blue Pincushion
 Bulbine (*Lily*)
 Chocolate (*Lily*)
 Clustered Everlasting
 Creamy Candles
 Drumstick
 Eutaxia
 Featherheads

Golden Moth
 Greenhood
 Leek (*Orchid*)
 Lemon Beauty Head
 Leopard (*Orchid*)
 Matted Flax Lily
 Milkmaid
 Mulla Mulla
 Murnong
 New Holland Daisy
 Onion Orchid

Pigface
 (*Running*)
 Postman
 Red Swainson Pea
 Rice Flower
 Sun Orchid

Sunray
 Tall Bluebell
 Tall Sundew
 Tiny Star
 Twining Glycine
 Vanilla (*Lily*)

Interested in more Junior Ranger activities? Download them from the Make and Do page at juniorrangers.vic.gov.au



EASTERN BARRED BANDICOOT



HABITAT

This small nocturnal marsupial was once common in Victoria's grasslands and grassy woodlands. It relies on native vegetation to camouflage itself and shelter from predators, like birds of prey.

DIET

The Eastern Barred Bandicoot is an omnivore. It feeds on seeds, fruits, crickets, moths, earth worms, caterpillars and beetles.

THREATS

The Eastern Barred Bandicoot is critically endangered in the wild due to the removal of grassland habitat and predation by invasive species, such as cats and foxes.

CONSERVATION

Parks Victoria worked with Zoos Victoria to breed Eastern Barred Bandicoots at Serendip Sanctuary. The bandicoots were released into wild and semi-wild sites like Woodland Historic Park, Phillip Island and French Island National Park.

Can you help us by creating an ideal predator-free environment for an Eastern Barred Bandicoot in this box? Include some of the things that bandicoots like in your design.



Kangaroo Grass



Moth



Billy Buttons



Earth Worm



Beetle



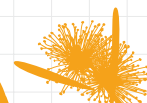
Common Tussock Grass



Ant



Rocks



Acacia

Shallow Wetland

LOOK UP, LOOK DOWN, LOOK ALL AROUND!

On hot days, many creatures shelter underground or beneath logs or branches. Reptiles warm themselves on rocks, roads and fenceposts in the mornings and evenings. Birds are active throughout the day. Eagles and kites soar high in the sky. Many grassland birds perch on branches and fences. Grasshoppers and crickets can often be heard but less often seen, camouflaged in the grass.

In the late afternoon, kangaroos and wallabies leave the shade and wombats come out of their burrows to graze. At night, snakes, spiders, bandicoots and dunnarts hunt among the grass. Owls and bats patrol the sky. Possums and gliders feed up in the trees.

Serendip Sanctuary and Terrick Terrick National Park are great places for a Grasslands Treasure Hunt, but there are other areas of native grassland and grassy woodlands across Victoria, including the Alps and Wilsons Promontory.



SQUEAK!

The Hooded Scaly-foot Legless Lizard loves to hide within cracks in the ground of grasslands. If you listen closely, you might hear a little squeak! This shy little reptile is one of a few that can vocalise! It closely watches other reptiles and copies their behaviour to help survive in the wild.

SQUEAK!
SQUEAK!

Image © Jeremy Tscharke

BORN TO EXPLORE

Junior Rangers are born to explore. If you have an interest in nature, animals and the outdoors then Junior Rangers is for you.

Junior Ranger activities are led by a park ranger and are designed to get families outdoors, have fun and learn about Victoria's wonderful parks.

Visit juniorrangers.vic.gov.au for more information.

BORN TO
EXPLORE



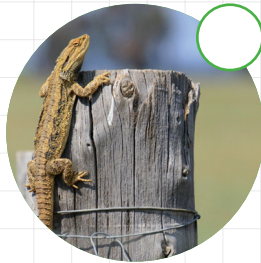
GRASSLAND TREASURE HUNT



Next time you visit a grassland, see how many of these natural treasures you can find. Don't forget to look up, down and all around!



ANT



BEARDED DRAGON



BILLY BUTTON /
DRUMSTICK



AUSTRALIAN
PIPET



CENTIPEDE /
MILLIPEDE



CHOCOLATE OR
VANILLA LILY



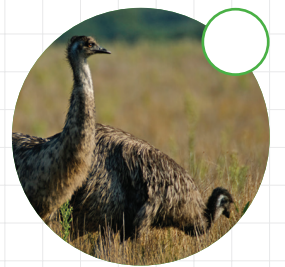
CRICKET OR
GRASSHOPPER



EAGLE OR KITE



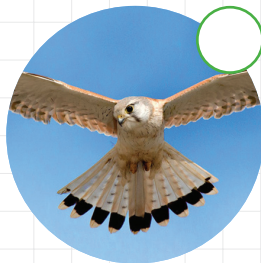
EASTERN GREY
KANGAROO



EMU



KANGAROO GRASS
(TALL SEED HEADS)



KESTREL
OR FALCON



ORCHID
(PINK OR PURPLE)



ORCHID
(YELLOW OR WHITE)



SCORPION



SKINK, BLUE TONGUE
OR STUMPY LIZARD



FAT-TAILED
DUNNART



TUSOCK GRASS
(SHORT OR TALL,
GROWS IN CLUMPS)

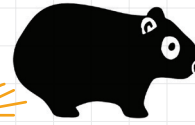
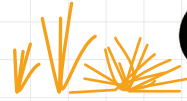


WALLABY GRASS
(TALL, CREAM OR SILVER
SEED HEADS)



MURNONG / YAM DAISY
(STEM BENT BEFORE
FLOWER OPENS)

GRASS-EATING SUPERHEROES!



TONGUE TWISTER!

The wombat wobbled back to her burrow with a belly full of wallaby grass.



Grass is very tough. Animals that eat a lot of it (like kangaroos and wombats) have special bacteria to help digest it. Sometimes, they vomit up the grass back into their mouth, then chew and swallow it again!

Humans usually poo within two days of eating something, but it takes a long time to digest grass. Wombats spend almost a week digesting grass before they poo it out. They have a unique superpower – they make square-shaped poo! Wombats often poo in a very open place, to let other wombats know they are there.

Digesting grass creates a lot of gas, so animals like cows need to fart a lot. Cows and sheep fart so much that their methane gas is contributing to climate change! However, kangaroos and wallabies hardly ever fart. The bacteria in their stomachs turns the gas into energy that they can reuse. Kangaroos can also go a long time without drinking water.

Two very useful superpowers in Victoria's grasslands!

Grass-eating animals tear grass with their sharp front teeth and grind it up with their large flat back teeth. Here are some superpowers that help them thrive:

- teeth that never stop growing so they don't have to worry about wearing them down.
- big ears and good hearing so they can listen for predators hiding in the grass
- long strong legs so they can run or jump away quickly
- some are built like tanks so they can charge at predators!

Imagine that you are exploring a grassland and discover a completely new grass-eating animal! Draw your animal below then send a photo to juniorrangers@parks.vic.gov.au

What superpowers does it have?

What is the name of your animal?

WANDERING THE PLAINS

The Plains-wanderer is a small bird found only in south-east Australia. It is completely unique, with no close relatives. There is nothing else like it in the world!

HABITAT

They are fussy about where they live, needing small clumps of native grass to hide in. If the grass is too tall, thick, or wet, they will move somewhere with more bare, dry ground.

DIET

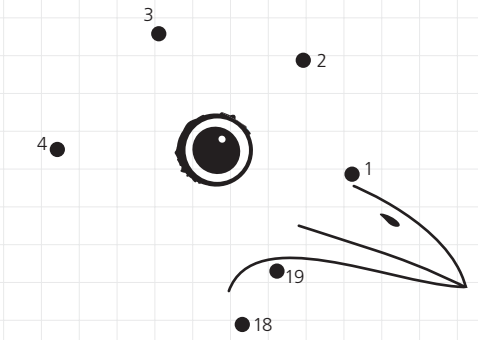
Seeds, leaves, insects on or in the ground.

THREATS

Being critically endangered due to loss of native grasslands and introduced predators, the Plains-wanderer relies on camouflage and stays very still when frightened. Unfortunately, this makes it easy for predators to catch them. They can fly, but it has rarely been seen.

CONSERVATION

People are working together to help Plains-wanderers. Parks Victoria works with farmers to move their sheep in and out of Terrick Terrick National Park to keep just the right amount of grass for them! Researchers in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, carry out regular monitoring and Zoos Victoria also has a captive breeding and awareness program.



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CARING FOR COUNTRY


 Victoria's networks of parks and reserves form the core of Aboriginal cultural landscapes. Parks Victoria acknowledges the continuing connection that Traditional Owners have to these landscapes and recognises their ongoing role in caring for Country on which we learn, play and live.



Image © FFMVIC

For Aboriginal people, fire plays a key role in how they care and manage their Country. Aboriginal people are very connected to their lands. They are the first scientists, who carefully managed the land with fire for more than 65,000 years. The knowledge and skills to care for Country have been passed down from Elders for thousands of generations.

In the cooler months, using traditional fire methods, low intensity fire is added to the many different landscapes creating a patchwork effect. This encourages new growth and helps grasses and other plant species to drop their seeds. As fire trickles gently through the landscape, it is controlled and cooler than a bushfire. This allows many animals and insects to seek shelter and survive all year round.

Once an area is burnt, grasslands sprout with small shoots of new growth, which helps to improve the health and biodiversity of the land and wellbeing of the people.



Fire management in grasslands

'Caring for Country' is a term often used to describe sustainable land management practices and ideas used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Draw a line joining the picture with its name

Common Bottle Daisy

Drumsticks

Chocolate Lily

Bidgee-widgee

Pink Finger Orchid

