

# Native animals need our help!

## EARTH FIRST

By Peter West, ECCO

How well do you know the native animals of your area?

It may surprise you to know that the Orange district hosts a wide range of native wildlife species including 200 bird species and many native animals that only emerge at night.

Orange is a biologically diverse area. Take a look around and you will see many fascinating creatures. Our creeks and waterways contain shy platypus, breeding frogs, freshwater turtles and dragonflies. Our woodlands contain echidnas, insect-eating tree frogs, sugar gliders, ring-tailed and brush-tailed possums, owls, wallabies, wombats and sacred kingfishers. Our grasslands contain eastern grey kangaroos, black-shouldered kites, peregrine falcons, blue-tongue lizards and shingle-back skinks to name a few.

Orange even attracts migrating birds, such as Superb Parrots, and an occasional sea-eagle that hunts for fish in our dams and reservoirs. And on quiet rural roads at night, you may even spot a Boobook Owl, Barn Owl or Tawny Frogmouth scooping up mice from the roadway.

Many of these species can be observed in our parks and reserves, however even our own backyards, farm blocks, greenways, and school grounds provide habitat and homes for these unique species.

Unfortunately, in the Central West there are over 120 species that are threatened with extinction. These species have been granted special protection status by both state and federal governments, and include endangered ducks (Freckled and Blue-billed Ducks) migrating Parrots (such as Superb Parrots, Swift Parrots and Turquoise Parrots), and nocturnal insect-eating bats.

Orange is even home to a population of threatened Squirrel Gliders just south of Orange – the last strong-hold of the species in our district.

These iconic wildlife species require special protection and dedicated conservation programs to ensure their survival for future generations.

### Key threats to our native wildlife species:

- Clearing of native vegetation and Box-Gum woodlands
- Removal of hollow-bearing trees, dead wood and dead trees
- Land development, urbanisation and in-fill.
- Competition with feral honeybees, common myna birds and common starlings

- Predation by foxes and feral or domestic cats
- Firewood collection

**What we can do to protect our native wildlife for future generations:**

- Protect native vegetation and trees containing hollows
- Keep your cat indoors at night
- Resist tidying up or burning fallen logs – they are habitat for small native animals
- Find out about activities in your local area such as community tree-planting events and National Tree Day (on Sunday August 2)
- Fence off waterways and creeks from stock.
- Plant trees to create wildlife corridors
- Contact the Central West Catchment Management Authority, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Orange City Council if you suspect a threatened species inhabits your local area.

**For more information**

Threatened wildlife in NSW -

[http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/kingdomtype\\_list.aspx?type=Animal](http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/kingdomtype_list.aspx?type=Animal)

Key threats to biodiversity -

[www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/home\\_threats.aspx](http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/home_threats.aspx)

Attracting wildlife -

[http://www.ruralresidentialliving.com.au/printer\\_friendly/printer12.pdf](http://www.ruralresidentialliving.com.au/printer_friendly/printer12.pdf)

**Green dates for the calendar**

National Tree Day - community tree planting event – Sunday, August 2

National Threatened Species Day – September 7.