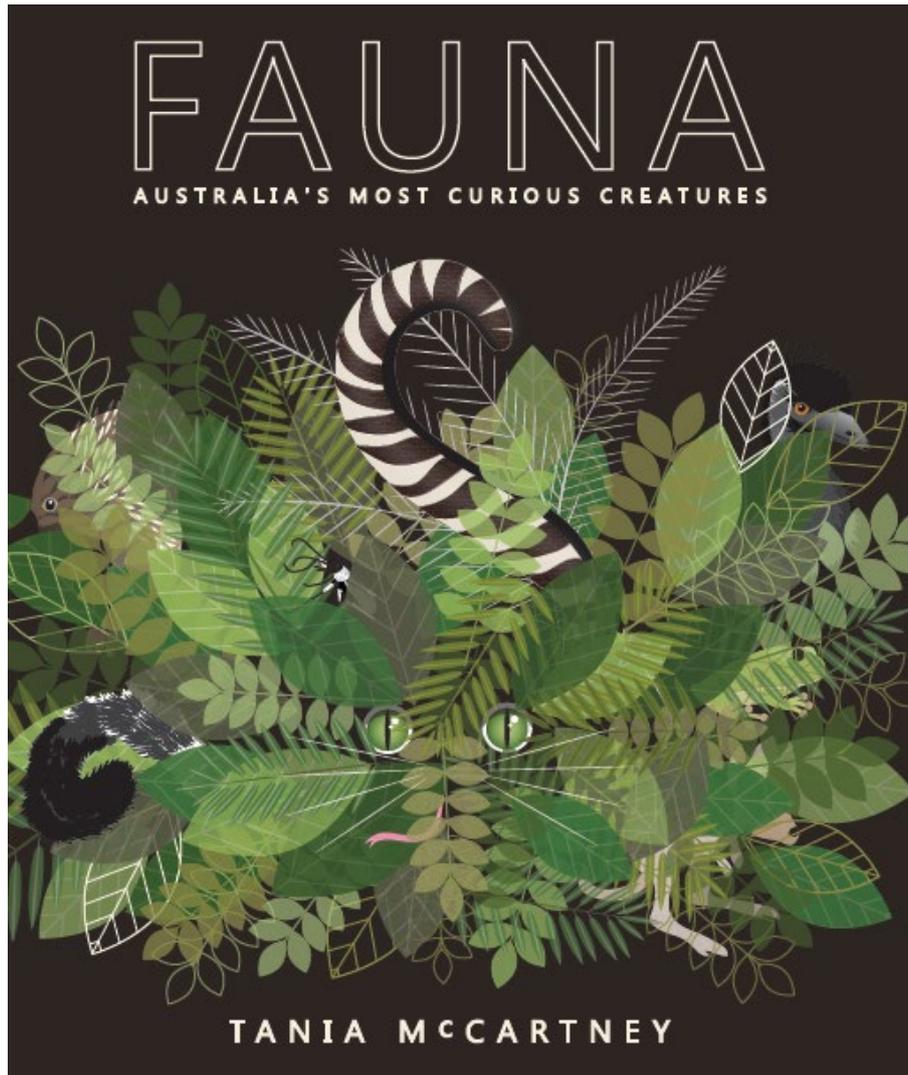


**Fauna: Australia's Most Curious Creatures**  
by Tania McCartney



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Recommended Year Levels: Year 2–Year 5

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**Author: Tania McCartney** [www.taniamccartney.com](http://www.taniamccartney.com)



Tania McCartney adores books and words and pictures. If she could, she would live inside a book and, as an author, illustrator and editor, she kind of already does. Tania has over 40 books in print or in production. Her work has been published in nine countries and recent awards include several CBCA Notable Books, the SCBWI Crystal Kite Award for Australia/New Zealand, and the CBCA Laurie Copping Award for Distinguished Service to Children's Literature. A juvenile literacy advocate, Tania is an ambassador for the Chief Minister's Reading Challenge and the founder of the number one kidlit site on the web, Kids' Book Review. She lives just outside Canberra with a lovely family, a forest of artwork and a mountain of books.

#### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM CONTENT

- Learning Area(s)
  - HASS
  - Science
- General Capabilities
  - Ethical Understanding
  - Personal and Social Capability
  - Critical and Creative Thinking
  - Numeracy
  - Literacy
  - Intercultural Understanding
- Cross-Curriculum Priorities
  - Sustainability
- Digital Classroom
  - Year 3, Australian Symbols, [nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-3/themes/australian-symbols](http://nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-3/themes/australian-symbols)
  - Year 3, Emblems, [nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-3/themes/emblems](http://nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-3/themes/emblems)
  - Year 4, Strange Creatures, [nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-4/themes/strange-creatures](http://nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-4/themes/strange-creatures)
  - Senior Years, Science and Strategy: The Enlightenment, Science [nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/senior/Cook/Science/Science](http://nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/senior/Cook/Science/Science)

## Introductory Activities

These are activities to do before reading to prepare students for the concepts/themes explored in the book. They are not necessarily curriculum based.

- Look at the cover of the book with the class. What do you think this book will be about? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Do you think the contents of this book will be fiction or fact? What makes you think this?
- Which 'curious' Australian creatures do you think it will cover?

## Year 2

### Science

People use science in their daily lives, including when caring for their environment and living things ([ACSH035](#))

### Elaborations

- recognising that many living things rely on resources that may be threatened, and that science understanding can contribute to the preservation of such resources

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- *Fauna: Australia's Most Curious Creatures* features many animals that rely on forests, oceans, waterways and native bushland for their food, water, shelter and nesting places. Discuss what you can do to help protect where these creatures live.

### Activity

- Select your top five scariest, grossest or most interesting creatures from *Fauna*. Make a poster showing where they live and what you can do to protect their environment.
- Write a story about a day in the life of one of your favourite creatures from *Fauna*. What does it do all day? How does it stay safe? Where does it find food, water and shelter?

## Year 3

### Science

Science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions ([ACSH051](#))

### Elaborations

- researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge of the local natural environment, such as the characteristics of plants and animals

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Many of the animals featured in *Fauna* have provided food sources for Australia's Indigenous people for thousands of years. Identify the Indigenous groups in your local area. Discuss what can be learnt from the way Indigenous people farmed and managed the land and the animals that lived in it.

### Activity

- Select a creature featured in *Fauna* that lives in your local area. Find out how the local Indigenous people caught the animal, used it for food and incorporated it into their Dreamtime stories and artwork. Present your findings as a poster, story or presentation to the class.
- Make a classroom wallchart featuring five creatures from *Fauna*. Include their conservation status, their natural habitat, their food and water sources, and possible threats to their environment.

### HASS

Days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia (including Australia Day, Anzac Day and National Sorry Day) and the importance of symbols and emblems ([ACHASSK064](#))

### Elaborations

- generating a list of local, state and national symbols and emblems (for example, club emblems, school logos, flags, floral emblems, the Commonwealth Coat of Arms) and discussing their origins, use and significance

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- *Fauna* presents information about some of Australia's most iconic animals, such as kangaroos, koalas, wombats and emus. Some of these animals appear on Australian flags and coats of arms, both nationally and in the states and territories. Discuss why native animals feature in this way.

### Activity

- Find out which animal or bird is the emblem of your state or territory. Make a classroom wallchart showing where the creature lives, what it eats, its unique features and why it was chosen to represent where you live.
- Design a new flag for Australia featuring your favourite creature from *Fauna*. Select designs and colours that best represent Australia and the people who live here.

## Year 4

### Science

Science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions ([ACSHE062](#))

### Elaborations

- considering methods of waste management and how they can affect the environment
- exploring how science has contributed to a discussion about an issue such as loss of habitat for living things or how human activity has changed the local environment

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- *Fauna* features many animals whose environments are threatened by human activities. Select three animals from the book with a vulnerable (VU) rating and discuss what could be done to make sure they don't become endangered (EN). Discuss how science can help us

understand the connection between loss of animal habitat and human actions such as waste management, tree clearing, urbanisation, pollution and climate change.

### Activity

- Conduct a classroom trivia competition based on information from *Fauna*, with questions exploring such things as the biggest, smallest, most poisonous, rarest, weirdest and most endangered Australian creatures.
- Select one of the animals on the critically endangered list on page 42 of *Fauna* and find out all you can about it. Create a poster titled 'Let's Save the [insert your creature's name]', showing where and how it lives, and what can be done to stop it becoming extinct.

### HASS

The importance of environments, including natural vegetation, to animals and people ([ACHASSK088](#))

### Elaborations

- exploring how vegetation has an important role in sustaining the environment by producing oxygen, protecting food-producing land from erosion, retaining rainfall, providing habitat for animals, sheltering crops and livestock, providing shade for people, cooling urban places, producing medicines, wood and fibre, and making places appear more attractive
- exploring strategies to protect particular environments that provide the habitats for animals (for example, planting bird-attracting vegetation)

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- In *Fauna*, Tania McCartney highlights the conservation status of many unique Australian creatures. Discuss what happens to animals when their natural environment is destroyed through land clearing, building developments and natural disasters. What can you do to help stop this loss of habitat?

### Activity

- Imagine that you are a koala or a wombat that has lost its home in a bushfire, a flood or due to urban infill. Write a story about how you feel, what you do to survive and how human beings can help you.
- Select one of the endangered (EN) animals in *Fauna*. Find out why they became endangered, and make a poster that explores what can be done to ensure their survival, including providing food sources, nesting boxes, etc.

## Year 5

### HASS

The influence of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places ([ACHASSK112](#))

### Elaborations

- exploring the extent of change in the local environment over time (for example, through vegetation clearance, fencing, urban development, drainage, irrigation, farming, forest

plantations or mining), and evaluating the positive and negative effects of change on environmental sustainability

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- *Fauna* includes maps showing the homes of the featured creatures. Find out which of these animals live in your area. Discuss the changes to the environment that have occurred in your local area over the last 50 to 100 years. Look at things like housing density, road networks, population increases, etc. How have these things impacted on the native wildlife, including animals, birds and insects?

### Activity

- Interview an older person who has lived in your district for many years. Write a newspaper article or a blog post recording their observations about how the environment and the creatures that live in the area have changed during their lifetime.
- Draw maps of your local area as it was 50 years ago and as it is now. Highlight major changes in both the natural and built environments, including roads, buildings, housing estates, etc. Identify on the modern-day map the native animals that have been affected by these changes.

The environmental and human influences on the location and characteristics of a place and the management of spaces within them ([ACHASSK113](#))

### Elaborations

- exploring the extent of change in the local environment over time and the impact of change on ecosystems
- investigating a current local planning issue (for example, redevelopment of a site, protection of a unique species), exploring why people have different views on the issue, and developing a class response to it

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Many of the creatures in *Fauna* are endangered or vulnerable. Discuss how protecting these creatures can affect development proposals. Find out about specific examples, such as building tunnels for wombats under highways or changing building regulations—or halting construction altogether—to help protect specific creatures.

### Activity

- Find an example of a vulnerable or endangered creature from your local area that has been protected from a building development. Present the story as a play, a song, a picture book, a newspaper article or a blog post.
- Find photographs and paintings of your local area as it was in the past. What sort of environment did it have (e.g. forest, grass plains, rainforest, desert, etc). Create a collage showing what it was like for native animals to live in your area in the past, compared to what it is like for the animals to live in the area now. Explore what has changed and why, and what effects these changes have had on the native animal population.

The impact of bushfires or floods on environments and communities, and how people can respond ([ACHASSK114](#))

### Elaborations

- explaining the impacts of fire on Australian vegetation and the significance of fire damage on communities

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Some of the creatures in *Fauna* are particularly vulnerable during natural disasters, while others rely on bushfires or floods to regenerate their food sources. Identify creatures that live in your local area whose environment is particularly vulnerable to fire damage. Discuss what makes them vulnerable and how they can be protected.

### Activity

- Find out about a catastrophic fire event such as Black Saturday in Victoria in 2009, Ash Wednesday in South Australia in 1983, Black Friday in Victoria in 1939 or the Canberra bushfires of 2003. What effect did the bushfire have on the local native animal population? Which animals were particularly vulnerable and why? Create a poster warning about the effects of bushfires on native animals.

## All Years F-10

### Cross-Curriculum Priorities

#### Sustainability

Taken from: <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/sustainability/>

The Australian Curriculum places emphasis on Sustainability as a priority for study that connects and relates relevant aspects of content across learning areas and subjects.

Cross-curriculum learning is fundamental to:

- understanding the ways social, economic and environmental systems interact to support and maintain human life
- appreciating and respecting the diversity of views and values that influence sustainable development
- participating critically and acting creatively in determining more sustainable ways of living.

Through the priority of Sustainability, students develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to contribute to more sustainable patterns of living.

#### The Sustainability Cross-Curriculum Priority

Sustainability addresses the ongoing capacity of Earth to maintain all life.

Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Actions to improve sustainability are individual and collective endeavours shared across local and global communities. They necessitate a renewed and balanced approach to the way humans interact with each other and the environment.

Education for sustainability develops the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. It enables individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence.

## Key ideas

### Key concepts

The Sustainability priority has been developed around the three key concepts of systems, world views and futures.

The first key concept explores the interdependent and dynamic nature of systems that support all life on Earth and our collective wellbeing.

The second concept enables a diversity of world views on ecosystems, values and social justice to be discussed and recognised when determining individual and community actions for sustainability.

The third concept is aimed at building capacities for thinking and acting in ways that are necessary to create a more sustainable future. The concept seeks to promote reflective thinking processes in young people and empower them to design action that will lead to more a more equitable and sustainable future.

### Organising ideas

Code Organising ideas	
<b>Systems</b>	
OI.1	The biosphere is a dynamic system providing conditions that sustain life on Earth.
OI.2	All life forms, including human life, are connected through ecosystems on which they depend for their wellbeing and survival.
OI.3	Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems.
<b>World views</b>	
OI.4	World views that recognise the dependence of living things on healthy ecosystems, and value diversity and social justice, are essential for achieving sustainability.
OI.5	World views are formed by experiences at personal, local, national and global levels, and are linked to individual and community actions for sustainability.
<b>Futures</b>	
OI.6	The sustainability of ecological, social and economic systems is achieved through informed individual and community action that values local and global equity and fairness across generations into the future.
OI.7	Actions for a more sustainable future reflect values of care, respect and responsibility, and require us to explore and understand environments.
OI.8	Designing action for sustainability requires an evaluation of past practices, the assessment of scientific and technological developments, and balanced judgements based on projected future economic, social and environmental impacts.

OI.9 Sustainable futures result from actions designed to preserve and/or restore the quality and uniqueness of environments.

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- The maintenance of a sustainable environment is central to the survival of the creatures featured in *Fauna*. Discuss why native animals are important for maintaining a sustainable environment and what will happen if we continue to lose significant populations of Australian native creatures.

### Activity

- Select one of the animals on the critically endangered list on page 42 of *Fauna* and find out all you can about it. Create a poster showing what can be done to help save it from extinction by creating a more sustainable environment.
- Select a number of iconic Australian animals from *Fauna* that are endangered. Write a newspaper article or blog highlighting the impact that the demise of these creatures would have on our sustainable environment.

### Creative Responses

#### Writing

- Design a postcard featuring one of your favourite creatures from *Fauna* and their habitat. Write a message on the back of the postcard to one of your friends or family members telling them some interesting facts about this creature.
- Write or illustrate a poem about your favourite creature in *Fauna*. Combine the poems to create a class book of poems about Australian creatures. Select an appropriate title for your book.
- Find other books by author-illustrator Tania McCartney in your school library. Write a book review of the book you have chosen, and present it to the class, explaining why others should read the book.

#### Art

- Select one of the collective nouns for a curious creature in *Fauna* (e.g. a colony of koalas, a bask of crocodiles, a dash of cassowaries or a lounge of lizards) and draw or paint a picture that could appear in a humorous picture book on collective nouns for animals. Include a couple of lines of text about your creatures using alliteration and onomatopoeia.
- Discuss the layout of the book *Fauna*. While most of the pages feature just one animal, others feature a range of animals. Select one of the creatures from pages 18, 24, 30 or 36 and create a double-page spread for that particular creature. Include images, captions, text and diagrams.
- Make a list of the best-known native Australian animals featured in *Fauna*. Make a wall map of Australia showing where these animals live and what their conservation status is.
- Tania McCartney has used digital images to illustrate *Fauna*. Select one of your favourite creatures from this book and create a portrait of the animal and its environment using one of the following media: paint, texta, pencil, watercolour or collage.

## Further Reading

- Books
  - French, Jackie and McCartney, Tania, *This Is Home: Essential Australian Poems for Children*. Canberra: NLA Publishing, 2019
  - Macinnis, Peter, *Australian Backyard Explorer*. Canberra: NLA Publishing, 2009
  - McCartney, Tania, *Australia Illustrated*. Sydney: EK Books, 2018
  - McCartney, Tania, *Eco Warriors to the Rescue*. Canberra: NLA Publishing, 2013
  - McCartney, Tania, *The Gum Family Finds Home*. Canberra: NLA Publishing, 2018
  - Newton, Gina, *Amazing Animals of Australia's National Parks*. Canberra: NLA Publishing, 2016
  - Pascoe, Bruce, *Young Dark Emu: A Truer History*. Broome, WA: Magabala Books, 2019
  - Rees, Leslie, *Shy the Platypus*. Canberra: NLA Publishing, 2011
  - Rowan, Ellis, abridged by Stephanie Owen Reeder, *Bill Baillie: The Life and Adventures of a Pet Bilby*. Canberra: NLA Publishing, 2018
  - Wheatley, Nadia and Rawlins, Donna, *My Place*. Sydney: Walker Books, 2012
- Websites
  - [nla.gov.au/Digital-Classroom](http://nla.gov.au/Digital-Classroom)
  - [natgeokids.com/au](http://natgeokids.com/au)
  - [nationalgeographic.com.au/tv/wild-australia](http://nationalgeographic.com.au/tv/wild-australia)