

# FUN FACTS

## ABOUT ANIMALS DOWN UNDER

With 80% of Australian animals unique to the continent, there's something special about the wildlife found here. On your Australia vacation, spot certain animals in different regions, like laughing kookaburras in eastern Australia, cassowaries in far North Queensland and dingoes across mainland Australia. Here's a small selection of the wonderful — and sometimes wacky — Australian wildlife waiting for you Down Under.

● LAND ● WATER ● AIR

### KANGAROO

#### GEOGRAPHY

Hop out of the city and find a kangaroo in any rural setting.

#### DIET

Kangaroos are grass-hungry herbivores.

#### FACTS

- Kangaroos are southpaws, using their left hand for 95% of their daily tasks.<sup>1</sup>
- Kangaroos are the most common animal in Australia — they even outnumber humans!



### EMU

#### GEOGRAPHY

Wild emus call woodlands across Australia home.

#### DIET

Emus are omnivores, eating native plants and insects.

#### FACTS

- Emus are the world's second-largest bird.<sup>2</sup>
- These flightless birds reach speeds of 31 mph — faster than Usain Bolt but slower than kangaroos.<sup>2</sup>



### KOALA

#### GEOGRAPHY

A vulnerable species, find koalas in select destinations along the east coast of Australia.

#### DIET

Koalas live on eucalyptus leaves, eating up to two pounds daily.

#### FACTS

- Koalas sleep up to 20 hours daily — sounds pretty nice!<sup>3</sup>
- Don't call them koala "bears" — they're actually koala "marsupials."



### WOMBAT

#### GEOGRAPHY

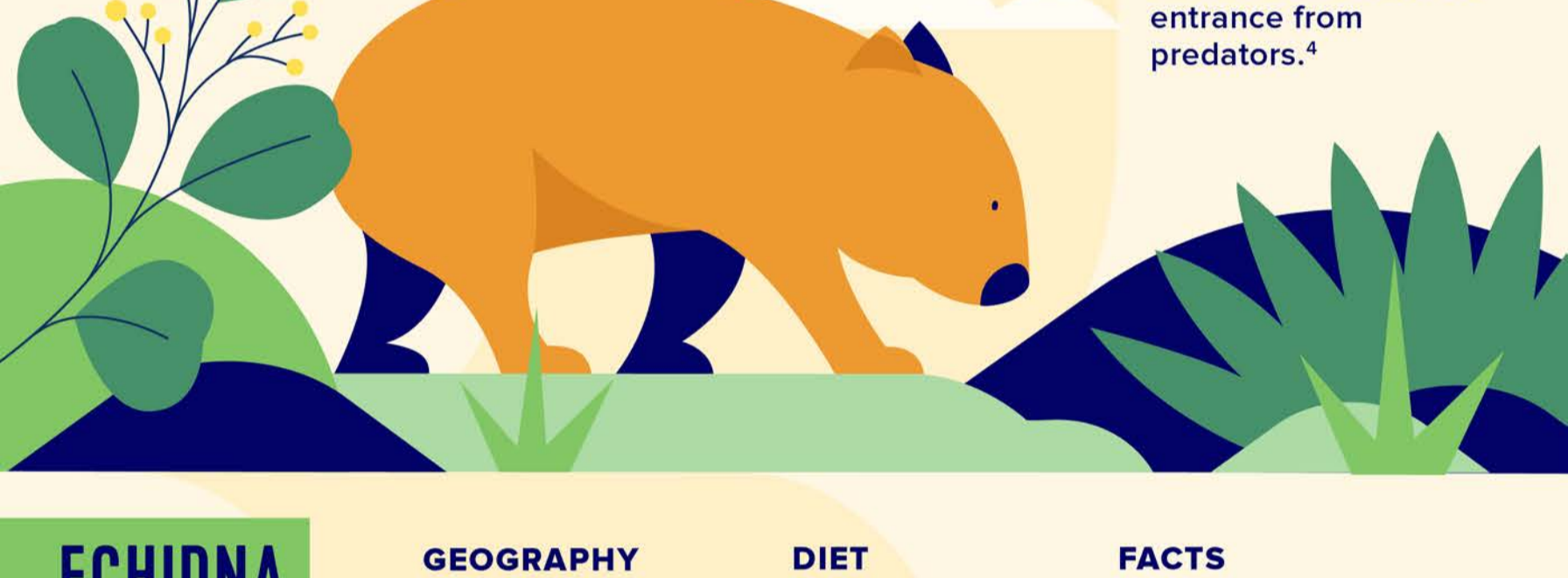
Witness wombats wobbling across southeastern Australia and Tasmania.

#### DIET

They adorably nibble on native grasses.

#### FACTS

- A group of wombats is a wisdom.
- Their butts keep them safe! Wombats dive down into their burrows and use their backsides to block the entrance from predators.<sup>4</sup>



### ECHIDNA

#### GEOGRAPHY

Echidnas are Australia's most widespread native mammal, found in all landscapes.

#### DIET

These unique Australian animals are known as "spiny anteaters" for their steady diet of ants.

#### FACTS

- Echidnas are "ecosystem engineers," constantly digging and moving soil.



### DINGO

#### GEOGRAPHY

Find dingoes across mainland Australia; particularly on K'Gari (Fraser Island).

#### DIET

Australia's largest terrestrial carnivore, dingoes eat other native animals like kangaroos.

#### FACTS

- Dingoes were brought to Australia from Southeast Asia over 4,000 years ago.<sup>5</sup>



### CASSOWARY

#### GEOGRAPHY

Cassowaries only live in the Far North Queensland rainforest.

#### DIET

They enjoy fallen fruit and over 230 plant species.

#### FACTS

- Life finds a way! Cassowaries are dinosaur descendants.<sup>6</sup>



### PLATYPUS

#### GEOGRAPHY

Platypuses inhabit eastern Australian rivers and streams.

#### DIET

They survive on small water animals like freshwater shrimp.

#### FACTS

- Platypuses are one of the only living egg-laying mammals.<sup>7</sup>



### LAUGHING KOOKABURRA

#### GEOGRAPHY

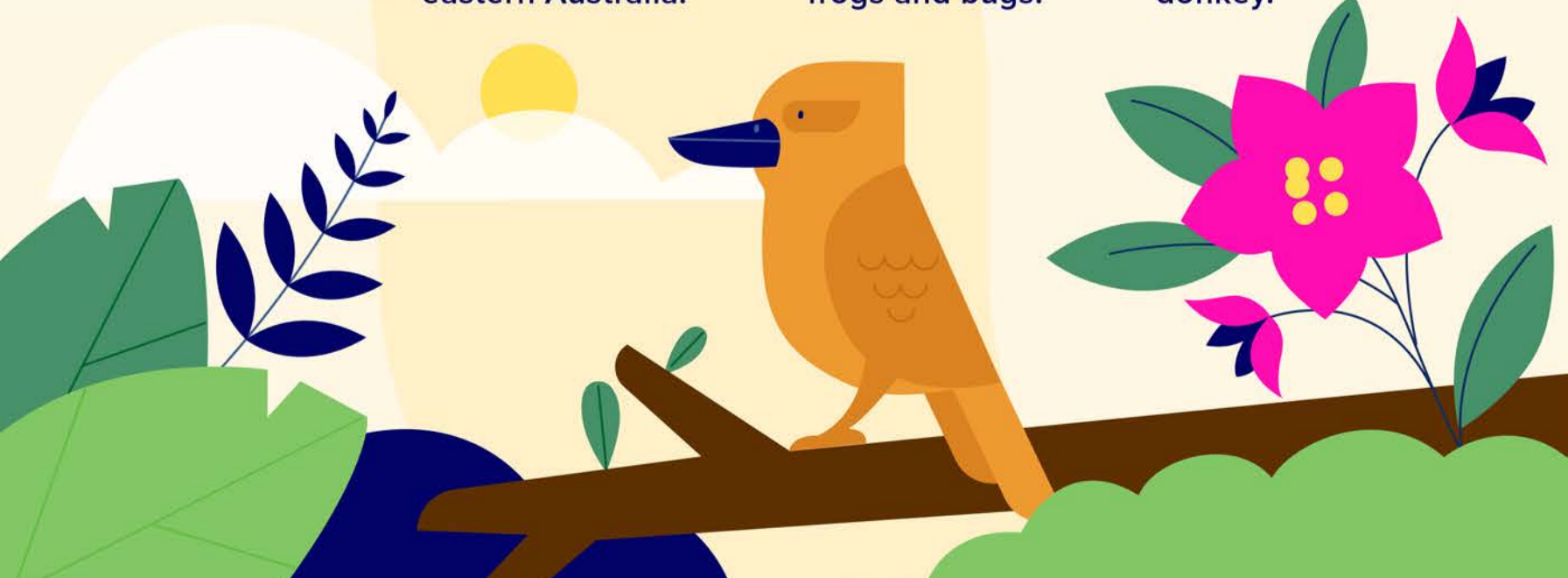
These funny little birds are native to the woodlands of eastern Australia.

#### DIET

They snack on snakes, lizards, small mammals, frogs and bugs.

#### FACTS

- The laugh of the kookaburra is often mistaken for a donkey.



Travel by sea and explore the land searching for unique Australian animals on an [Australian cruise](#).

1. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/150618-kangaroos-evolution-animals-science>

2. <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/emu>

3. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/koala>

4. <https://www.rainforest.com.au/wombat-facts/>

5. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/dingo>

6. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-zoo/2021/06/01/meet-cassowary-brothers-irwin-and-dundee-descendants-dinosaurs/>

7. <https://ucmp.berkeley.edu/mammal/monotreme.html>