



JUNIOR RANGERS

RAINFORESTS

ACTIVITY

BOOK




Parks
VICTORIA

Sharing
Nature's
Stories

THE OLDEST FORESTS IN VICTORIA

RAINFORESTS AND FIRE

Rainforests need to be damp all year round to survive. Plants, animals and fungi that live amongst the old growth have very few or NO adaptations to fire – not what you'd expect in fire-prone Australia!

Rainforests and wet forests are the oldest living forests in Victoria and the world!

Earth was very different when dinosaurs ruled the animal kingdom. The air was warmer and wetter, and southern continents like Australia and New Zealand were joined in one giant land mass. This place, called Gondwana, was covered in precious rainforest.

Today, Victoria still has small magical pockets of lush, green rainforests found at the bottom of deep gullies, surrounded by wet forests. To get to a rainforest, you might travel through a wet forest of towering Mountain Ash trees! These tall trees often shade rainforest areas all summer. The dense canopy of dark green leaves keeps the air cool and damp. It also filters sunlight, creating the perfect environment for tree-ferns, mosses, vines and fungi.

Rainforests and Traditional Owners

Aboriginal cultural landscapes are the core of Victoria's parks and reserves. These landscapes show us how Aboriginal people engage with their world and experience their surroundings for thousands of generations of activity, culture and settlement patterns. Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Victoria's cultural landscapes, their continuous care and management of Country on which we learn, play and live.

Where are they?

Have you been to a Victorian rainforest before? Below are some popular rainforests to visit. Use the clues to match the rainforest to its location on the map.

1 At Mitchell River National Park, look closely for the amphibian moving between rocks in the river.

2 At Wilsons Promontory National Park, this creature builds a nest at the fork of moss-covered branches.

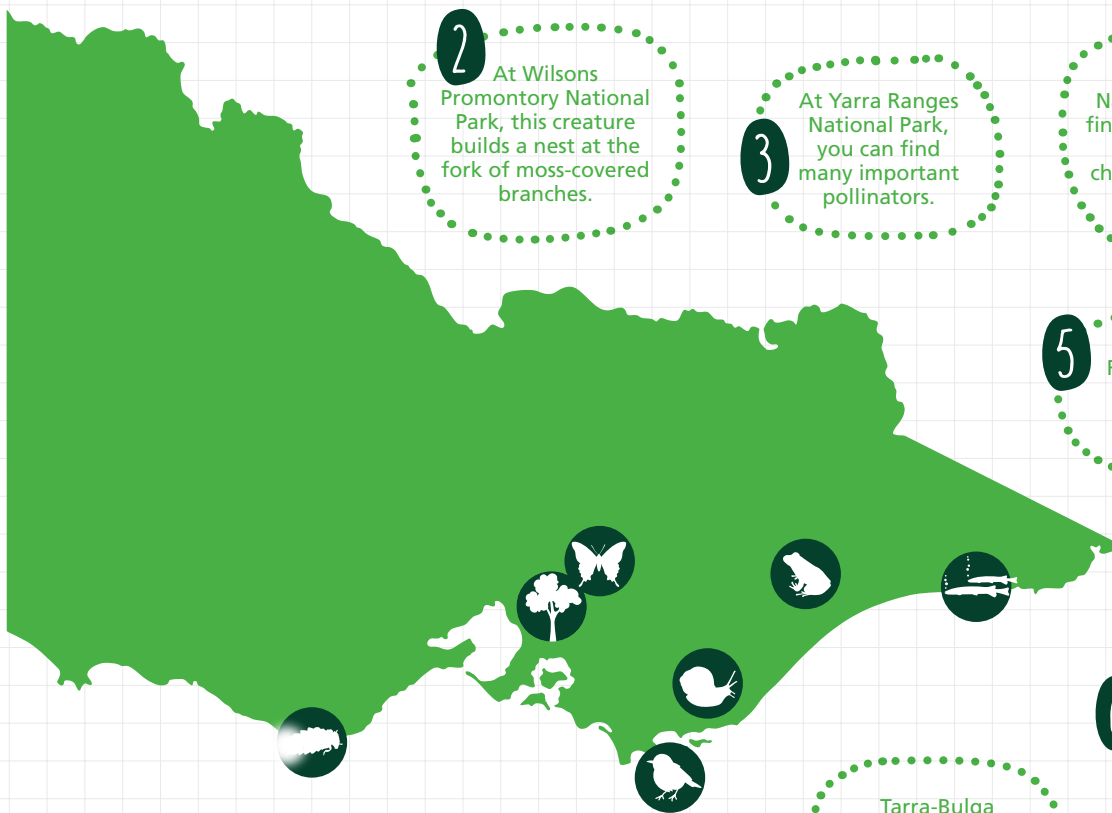
3 At Yarra Ranges National Park, you can find many important pollinators.

4 At Great Otway National Park, you will find a creature our Chief Scientist says make chandeliers of snout that glow in the dark!

5 At Dandenong Ranges National Park, Ranger Julia works among trees up to 450 years old.

6 Bemm River Rainforest Reserve is a great spot to look for shy native swimmers in still or gentle flowing streams.

7 Tarra-Bulga National Park is home to a carnivorous creature, whose Latin name means 'stomach-foot'.



Turn your page upside down to find the answers.
1. Leseur's Frog 2. Pink Robin
3. Macleay's Swallowtail Butterfly 4. Glow-worm
5. Mountain Ash 6. Common Galaxias 7. Strzelecki Snail

ALIVE WITH ACTIVITY

Parks Victoria rangers work hard to keep fire out of rainforests, protecting old trees with hollows! You can help them by putting your campfire out with water when you leave it.

Wet forests and rainforests are full of plant and animal life.

Look up, look down and look all around. If you look very closely, you will notice the shy creatures hiding amongst dense habitat.

Many creatures travel between wet forests and rainforests searching for their favourite snacks. Some animals that live in the canopy rely on giant, ancient trees with hollows to raise their young.



DID YOU KNOW?

A tree needs to be older than 150 years old before a hollow begins to form!

How many animals can you find hidden in the rainforest grid? Names can go left-to-right, right-to-left and top-to-bottom.

P A R K S C V I S U P E R B L Y R E B I R D
 Y T P I L O T B I R D O R I E A S R A I N E
 L F O R E S T R E M N A K N A T G S A R E A
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- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Yellow-bellied Glider | Greater Sooty Owl | Leadbeater's Possum |
| East Gippsland Galaxias | Greater Glider | Pink Robin |
| Long-footed Potoroo | Superb Lyrebird | Otway's Cray |
| Caddisfly | Mountain Dragon | Rufous Fantail |
| King Parrot | Pilotbird | Satin Bowerbird |
| Whipbird | Glow-worm | Long-nosed Bandicoot |
| Agile Antechinus | Little Forest Bat | |

ECOSYSTEM ENGINEERS

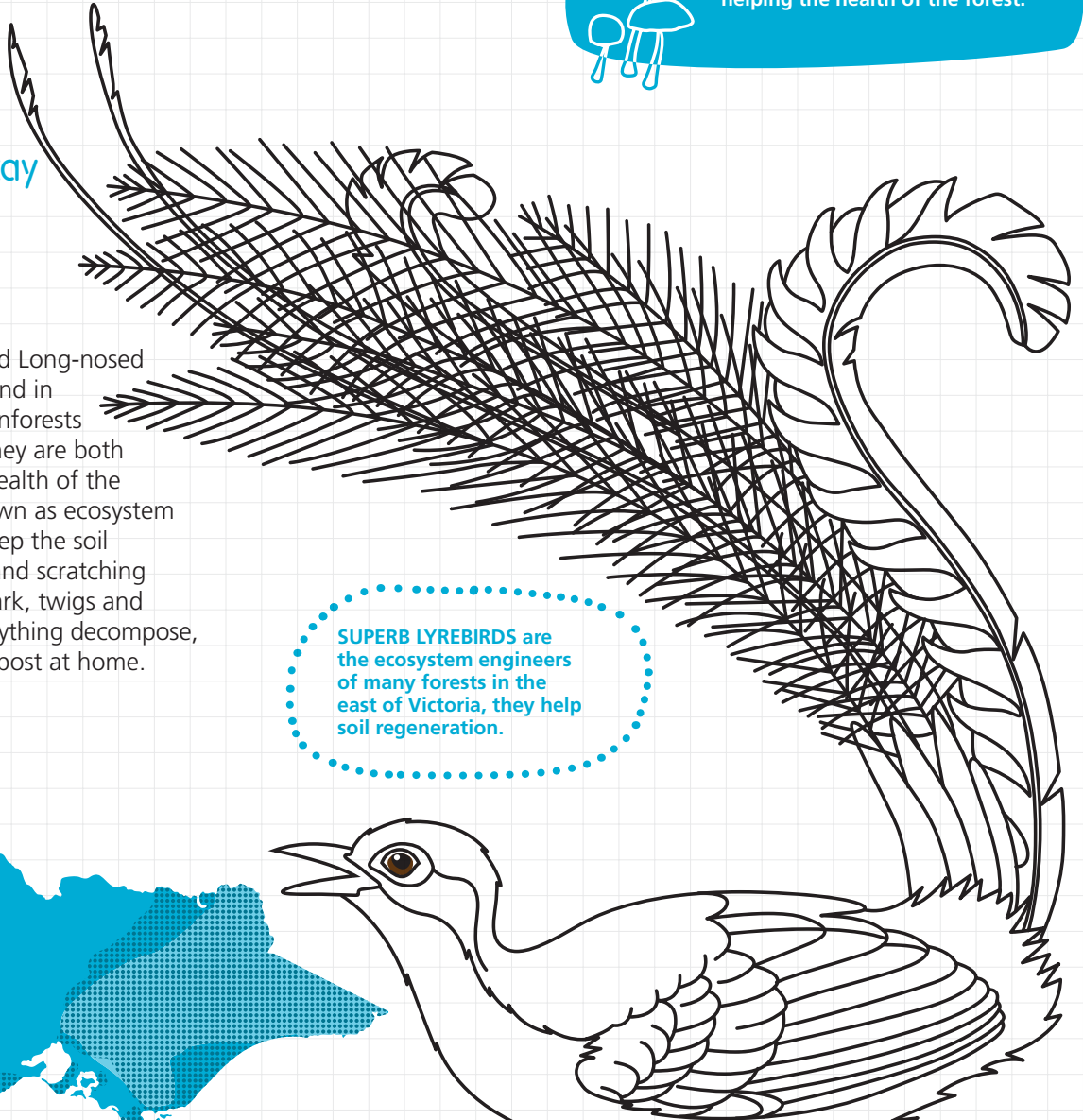
FUN FACT

Lyrebirds and bandicoots LOVE to snack on FUNGI! Both animals will scratch the soil, scavenging and filling their bellies full of truffles and mushrooms. Plants depend on fungi in the soil, so our ecosystem engineers are helping the health of the forest.



How do wet forests and rainforests stay healthy?
ECOSYSTEM ENGINEERS!

Superb Lyrebird and Long-nosed Bandicoots are found in wet forests and rainforests around Victoria. They are both important to the health of the forest and are known as ecosystem engineers. They keep the soil healthy by raking and scratching up fallen leaves, bark, twigs and soil. This helps everything decompose, a bit like your compost at home.



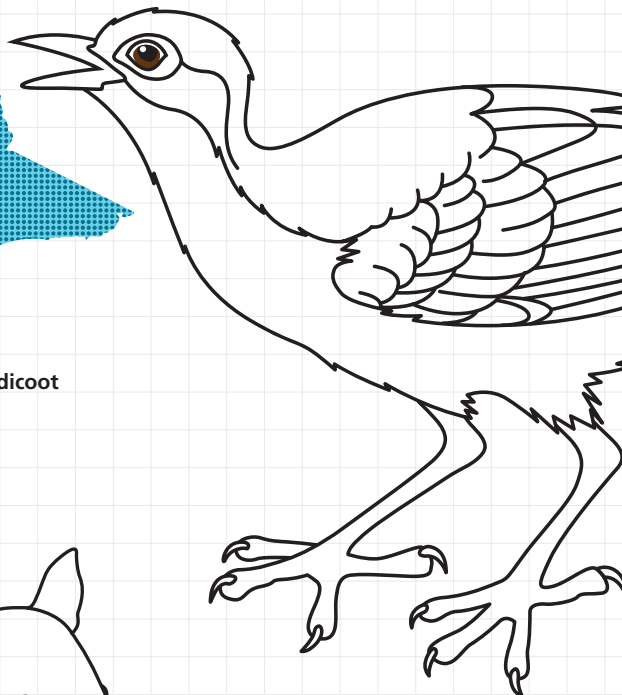
SUPERB LYREBIRDS are the ecosystem engineers of many forests in the east of Victoria, they help soil regeneration.



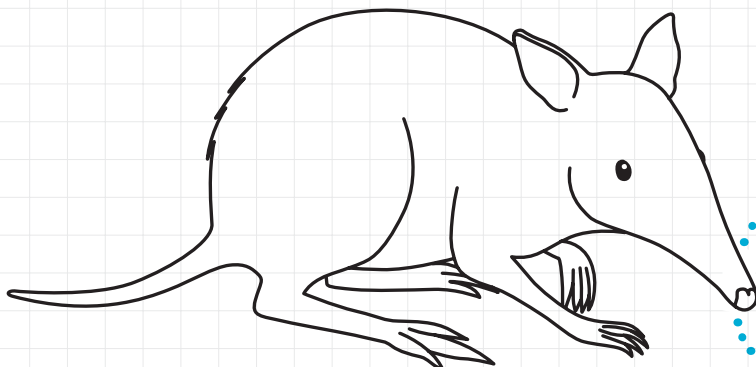
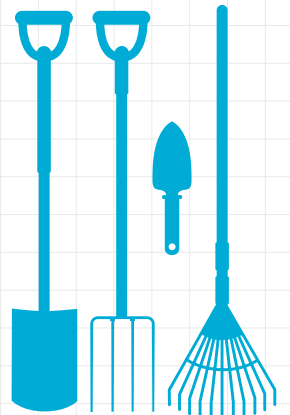
Superb Lyrebird



Long-nosed Bandicoot



LONG-NOSED BANDICOOTS prefer dense undergrowth in the west and east of Victoria. As they explore, munch, turn soil and spread fungi, they help to balance nutrients in the forest soil.



FANTASTIC FUNGI AND BRILLIANT BRYOPHYTE

FUN FACT

Fungi are not plants. In fact, fungi are more closely related to humans than plants.

In 1953 Kara Moana Healey became a caretaker of a rainforest.

As Victoria's first female ranger, Kara sketched and wrote descriptions of lots of fungi and bryophytes in Tarra-Bulga National Park. She documented many species throughout her time as a ranger and noted two species of fungi that were unrecorded in Western science!

Kara was dedicated to protecting the rainforest. Her research has helped Parks Victoria rangers in managing the land today.



Ranger Kara Moana Healey

ACTIVITY



Head out on a fungi foray between April and August. Can you make scientific observations like Kara and help care for the rainforests? You can send your sketches to juniorrangers@parks.vic.gov.au



Be careful to not touch bryophyte or fungi, many are super fragile and some can be poisonous!

Left: Kara's sketches of fungi

Fungi and bryophyte keep rainforests healthy. They love to feed on all the decaying material.

Fungi are living things that are not plants or animals. They can make large networks of tiny, microscopic threads underground. The parts we mostly see are the fruiting bodies sometimes called mushrooms, truffles or toadstools.

Bryophytes are very simple plants like mosses, liverworts and hornworts. They usually live low to the ground and come in spectacular green colours.

Sketch bryophytes here

Sketch fungi here

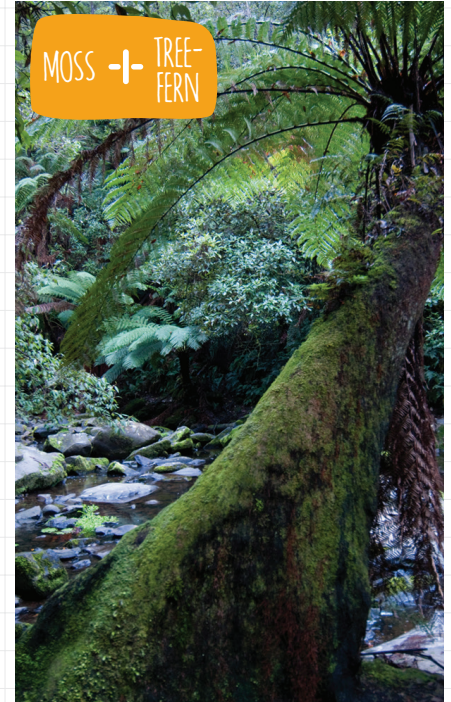


LIVING AND THRIVING TOGETHER



Plants, animals and fungi live intertwined within wet forest and rainforest environments

All plant, fungus and animal species that belong in a wet forest or rainforest, help to keep it healthy. They depend on each other for survival. When one species disappears, it can change the forest in many different ways.



Let's take a look at how things live together.

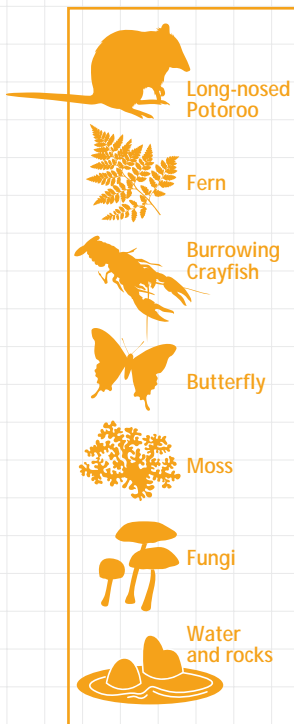


Myrtle Beech Orange is a beautiful fungus that grows in round shapes only on Myrtle Beech trees. This fungus feeds from the tree but does not harm or help the tree to grow.



Southern Sassafras smells just like nutmeg. The Macleay's Swallowtail caterpillar loves to feed on the leaves and the butterfly pollinates its flowers. They depend on each other to survive.

Inside the stem of a tree-fern is a tiny habitat! Look closely, you might spot plant species like moss, lichen or a seedling beginning to sprout. The tree-fern provides the perfect place to grow.



Can you draw a rainforest full of the plants, animals and fungi that thrive together? Take a photo of your design and send to: juniorrangers@parks.vic.gov.au



Sometimes vines, fungi and moss will grow onto the path in a forest. Protect the undergrowth by treading lightly with your feet and staying on the track.



INCREDIBLE INVERTEBRATES

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



Hiding in rainforest creeks are some of the most innovative creatures!

Can you hear water trickling? Many rainforests have a high amount of yearly rainfall and the streams, creeks and rivers flow all year.

Sneaky snails

Victorian rainforests are home to two very interesting native snails. These shiny black snails are carnivorous! That means they won't bother your veggie garden, their diet includes other snails, slugs, leeches, earthworms and insect larvae.

The Otway Black Snail is found in the west.



© Adnan Moussalli



The Gippsland Black Snail is found in the east.

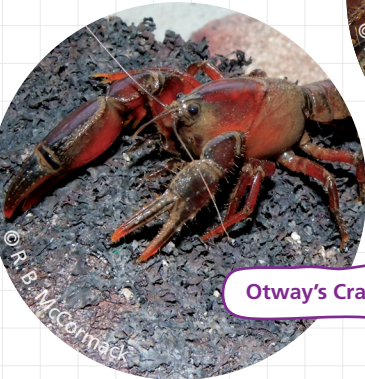
Crazy crayfish

At Wilsons Promontory National Park, the Lilly Pilly Burrowing Crayfish has adapted to venture from its home in the streams and climb up into the trees! Over at Tarra-Bulga, the Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish make little chimneys for the entrance to their burrow. Turning to west Victoria, the Otway's Cray burrows deep into the mud all throughout the Great Otway's National Park.

Use the clues to match the adventurous invertebrate to their habitat.



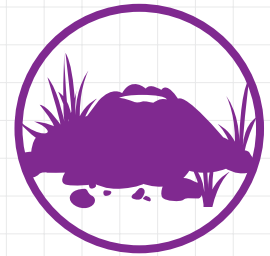
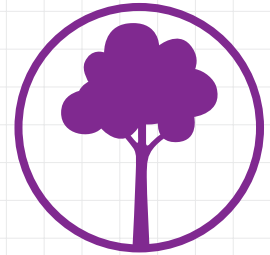
Lilly Pilly Burrowing Crayfish



Otway's Cray



Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish



AFTER DARK



Glow-worms are not worms! They are the larvae of a fly.

Glow-worms are only found in areas where it is permanently wet!



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.

At night, rainforests around Victoria are alive with sounds and sights of many animals big and small.

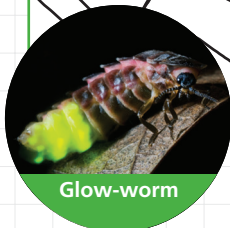
Listen to the scream of a Greater Sooty Owl, the whoosh of a Greater Glider whizzing past and the trickle of rain on the leaves. If you look extra closely, you might even see a luminescent light. Glow-worms live amongst the soil embankments along the walking track at Melba Gully.

Create a rainforest wonderland. Draw a waterfall on this embankment, add fungi, glow-worms, moths and other rainforest plants and animals to complete the picture. Where would you find them in this habitat?

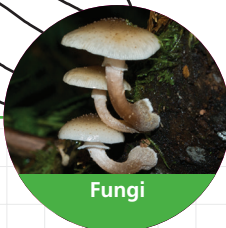


Glow-worms can look like glowing strands of snot – they are like snotty chandeliers!

© Joaquin Baldwin



Glow-worm



Fungi



Moth