



Fauna of the Darebin Creek Catchment

The Darebin Creek Catchment is home to a diverse range of fauna. These animals live in a diverse range of habitats including Grasslands, Creek and Wetlands and Woodlands. The number of animal species has declined over time due to degradation of habitat, introduced predators, water pollution, isolation of habitat, urbanisation and past and present land uses. Revegetation works throughout the catchment have improved the vegetation strata of a previously degraded habitat, transforming it into suitable faunal habitat for native species.

Further enhancement of faunal values along the Darebin Creek can be achieved through:

- Active fox, dog and cat control
- Creation of wetlands and other habitat creation including nestboxes
- Improving water quality in the Darebin Creek Catchment
- Revegetation of the creek banks
- Removal of weeds and litter

Birds

The Darebin Creek Catchment is home to over 100 native bird species. Within the Darebin Parklands (Alphington) alone there are over 50 native bird species. Some birds are resident, living in the area all year round, while others are seasonal migrants or are nomadic, visiting when suitable conditions arise. Each bird species have a variety of food and shelter needs and can be grouped according to their habitat.

Woodland Habitat

Preferring a Woodland habitat of mainly River Red Gum and Wattles, the *Grey Shrike-Thrush*, *Brown Goshawk*, *Kookaburra* and *White-plumed Honeyeater* are all common whether feeding in trees or soaring high above them. The *Tawny Frogmouth* is nocturnal and camouflages well in trees within the Woodland habitat. Dense bushes such as Hedge Wattle and Sweet Bursaria provide habitat for smaller birds such as the *Superb Fairy Wren*, *Yellow Robin*, *Grey Fantail*, *Red-browed Finch* and *White-browed Scrub-wren* who feed on insects.

Creek & Wetland Habitat

Creek and Wetland habitat is home to the *Sacred Kingfisher*, who fly just above the surface of the water with their distinct call "kik-kik-kik-kik", while the common *Pacific Black Duck* paddle and dive for fish in wetlands and still water. The *White Faced Heron* wade in

shallow waters feeding on fish and yabbies, while *Dusky Moorhen* swim and peck food from the water. The *Little Pied Cormorant* (pictured) may be seen drying their wings after fishing.



Grassland and Open Habitat

The grassland and open areas are home to raptors such as the *Black-shouldered Kite* who can be seen hovering in open areas looking for prey. Parrots such as the *Galah*, and *Red-rumped Parrot* can be seen foraging on the ground for seeds. The *Masked Lapwing* is a noisy and aggressive bird when breeding and can be heard calling late at night. Their nest is made on the ground making them vulnerable to humans and predators.

Introduced bird species such as *Common Myna*, *House Sparrow*, *Tree Sparrow* and *Common Starling* compete with native birds for nesting hollows.

For a full listing of bird species please refer to "Birds of the Darebin Creek Catchment" Fact Sheet.

Mammals

More than 10 mammal species can be found along the Darebin Creek. Mammals are warm-blooded and usually have fur or hair. Most of the native mammals of the Darebin Creek are nocturnal meaning they are only active at night.

The *Eastern Grey Kangaroo* can be found in the upper reaches of Darebin Creek grazing on grasses by night and resting under trees by day. The Rakali (*Water Rat*) is a semi aquatic rodent and grow up to 37cm in length. With water repellent fur and webbed feet they move through the water easily and are often mistaken for *Platypus*. The Darebin Creek does not have resident *Platypus* but may be found swimming at the Yarra River confluence.

The *Short-beaked Echidna* is a quiet and secretive animal well known for the spines on its back to protect it from predators. They live in grassland or woodland habitat as long as there are ants and termites to eat.

The *Brushtail Possum* and *Ringtail Possum* are both common along the Darebin Creek. They sleep in tree hollows during the day and feed on Eucalypt leaves, buds and soft fruit at night. Nest boxes along the Darebin Creek provide homes for possums as natural hollows are in short supply.

Grey Headed Flying Foxes, are the largest of all bats with a wingspan of 1.3 metres. They are common visitors to the Darebin Parklands feeding singularly or in small groups on nectar, pollen and fruit from native trees. They are social creatures roosting together during the day and feeding by night.

Micro-bats are less than 5cm in length and can be found in open forests and woodlands. Micro-bats such as the *Southern Forest Bat*, *Little Forest Bat* and *Lesser Long-eared Bat* forage for insects close to the ground, while the *Gould's Wattled Bat* feeds on slow-flying

insects and caterpillars found under the bark of trees.

Reptiles

The Darebin Creek is home to about 20 reptile species. There are nine species of skinks in total, and during the warmer months you are likely to see the *Blue Tongue Lizard* sunning itself on rocky outcrops. More elusive is the *Eastern Water Dragon*, a semi-aquatic lizard that is rarely seen along the Darebin Creek. The *Long-necked Turtle* can be found living in ponds, swamps and in the creek. They move slowly through the water hunting for fish and waterbugs. Five species of snakes can be found sunning themselves on rocks in the warmer months. The *Tiger Snake* is a slender striped snake up to two metres long and is found in grasslands and woodlands. This snake is highly venomous and should be left undisturbed. Other reptiles include the *Marbled Gecko* and the *Eastern Brown Snake*.

Amphibians

The Darebin Creek Catchment is home to more than 10 frog species. They prefer a wetland habitat near grasslands or woodlands where they can live and breed. Often you won't see frogs but you can identify them by the male's voice. The *Common Froglet*, a small brown frog is commonly mistaken for crickets with its call being described as 'crik crik crik'. The *Growling Grass Frog* can be identified by its repeated growling sound, while the *Pobblebonk* or *Banjo Frog* has a distinctive 'bonk' call. Tree frogs such as *Ewing's Tree Frog* and *Peron's Tree Frog* spend time calling from the branches of Eucalyptus trees. For more information on frogs check out our frog Fact Sheet.

