



Ararat Rural City

Native Fauna Guide



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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Ararat Rural City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, the Eastern Maar, Barengi Gadjin (the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, and Jupagulk peoples of the Wotjobaluk Nations), and Wadawurrung peoples, and recognise their connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.





Introduction

Ararat is home to an incredibly diverse array of native wildlife, including a documented 239 bird, 40 mammal, 31 reptile, 31 amphibian, 10 fish, and over 500 invertebrate species (since 2000). These native species inhabit remnant patches of habitat including woodland, forest, grasslands, wetlands, and rivers, as well as the more disturbed environments of Ararat city and surrounding townships, agricultural and industrial land.

96 of these species are listed as threatened, or form part of communities which are threatened, under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, including the Victorian temperate-woodland bird community.

This document provides a snapshot of some of the incredible rare and common native species which can be found across the municipality. More information about what native animals have been recorded where can be found on the Biodiversity Map page on Council's website.



Key

Abundance (2023-2025 survey):

- Very Rare: <5 records
- Rare: 5-20 records
- Uncommon: 20-50 records
- Common: 50-200 records
- Widespread: 200-1,000 records
- Very widespread: >1000 records
- NM: not measured

Activity time:

- Diurnal: active during the day
- Crepuscular: active during dawn and dusk
- Nocturnal: active at night

Status:

- LC: Least Concern
- VU: Vulnerable
- EN: Endangered
- Aus: Listed under the Australian EPBC Act only
- Vic: Listed under the Victorian FFG Act only



Birds



Woodland Birds



Crimson Rosella (*Platycercus elegans*)

A medium sized, colourful parrot. Primarily feed on seeds, fruit and flowers of primarily eucalypts, as well as bottle brush and gums. Consumes some insects. Forages on ground, in shrubs or trees, usually in pairs or small flocks.

- Very widespread
- Forest, Woodland
- Diurnal
- LC



Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)

Small and richly coloured finch. Feeds exclusively on the ground, on grass and herb seeds, green leaves and occasionally insects and larvae. Can be found on farmlands with scattered trees, in flocks of 5 to 40 birds or more.

- NM
- Grassland, Heathland, Woodland
- Diurnal
- VU (Aus, Vic)



Gang Gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)

Small, stocky cockatoo. Inhabits tall mountains forests in summer and moves to lower altitudes in drier open forests in winter. Found in gardens and forests, eating seeds from native and introduced trees and shrubs. Require tall trees for nesting hollows.

- Rare
- Forest, Urban, Woodland
- Diurnal
- EN (Aus, Vic)



New Holland Honeyeater (*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*)

Small sized honeyeater. Long slender beak and tongue which allows them to collect nectar from native Banksias and Grevilleas, often from gardens. Also consumes fruit, and preys upon insects and spiders. Builds a cup shaped nest from bark and grasses, bound with spider web.

- Very widespread
- Forest, Heathland, Urban
- Diurnal
- LC



Superb Fairywren (*Malurus cyaneus*)

A small insectivorous bird known for the male's brilliant blue breeding plumage. Exists in small groups, usually with many females and a single dominant adult male. Is regularly found in urban parks and gardens, where dense cover and low shrubs are available.

- Very widespread
- Forest, Grassland, Heathland, Urban, Woodland
- Diurnal
- LC



Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoo (*Zanda funerea*)

The largest Australian parrot. Has a characteristic loud, wailing call. Often found in flocks, perched in large eucalypt and pine trees. Feeds on tree seeds, and occasionally insects (such as tree-boring grubs).

- Common
- Forest, Woodland
- Diurnal
- LC

Wetland and Water Birds



Australian pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*)

Large bird with a characteristically long, pouched bill and a wingspan of over 2m. Bill is used to locate and catch fish. Often feed and breed in colonies (occasionally exceeding 1000 birds), where they work together to herd schools of fish into the shallows for capture.

- Rare
- Wetland, Lake, River
- Diurnal
- LC



Brolga (*Grus rubicunda*)

A very large grey crane: one of only two in Australia. Exists in wetlands and grassy plains, as well as irrigated farms, where it feeds on both plants and animals. Mate for life, with pair bonds established by sophisticated courtship rituals. Ararat's wetlands provide crucial breeding and flocking habitat for one third to half of south-west Victoria's brolga population (between 200-300 individuals). These birds can be seen around Lake Bolac, Streatham and Willaura between December and May.

- Common
- Farm, Grassland, Wetland
- Diurnal
- EN (Vic)



Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Medium sized water bird with unusual large, lobed toes. Opportunistic feeder able to consume plants, invertebrates, fish, seeds, and occasionally eggs of other birds. Can form groups of hundreds or thousands of birds (one such group can be found at the Alexandra Gardens!)

- Widespread
- Lake, River, Wetland
- Diurnal
- LC



Hooded Plover (*Thinornis cucullatus*)

Medium sized insectivore found around bodies of water both coastal and inland. Lays eggs in shallow, lined pits on banks between August and March each year. Parents will quickly leave eggs if disturbed by people, cars, dogs or other predators. Can live for over 20 years.

- Rare
- Salt Lake, Wetland
- Diurnal
- VU (Vic)



Musk Duck (*Biziura lobata*)

Male musk ducks are the largest Australian duck and get their name from the scent which comes from a gland on the rump. Diving for food, they consume primarily aquatic invertebrates, fish and frogs. Has a noisy and remarkable courtship ritual.

- Common
- Lake, Wetland
- Diurnal
- LC



Pink-Eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*)

Medium sized duck with striking pink patch behind the eye. Prefers temporary, shallow waters as well as open wetlands where it can be found in large flocks. Has a fringed beak designed for filter feeding micro flora and fauna.

- Uncommon
- Lake, Wetland
- Diurnal
- LC

Birds of Prey



Brown Falcon (*Falco berigora*)

Medium sized raptor. Often seen perching on scattered trees and telephone poles. Actively hunts small mammals, reptiles, invertebrates and occasionally other birds, killing with a bite to the spine. Long legs allow them to chase prey on the ground if necessary.

- Rare
- Grassland, Farm
- Diurnal
- LC



Eastern Barn Owl (*Tyto alba subsp. delicatula*)

Large, relatively common, owl with a distinctive long screeching call. Roosts in caves, logs, and dense trees during the day, and hunts mainly small mammals during the night. Other subspecies of the Barn Owl are found on every continent except Antarctica.

- NM
- Grassland, Farm, Heathland, Forest, Urban
- Nocturnal
- LC



Laughing Kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae*)

Large kingfisher with a well-known territorial chuckling call used to warn other birds away. Requires tree hollows to nest and are believed to pair for life. Feeds on invertebrates (worms and crustaceans) as well as small reptiles, birds, mammals and amphibians.

- Widespread
- Forest, Woodland
- Diurnal
- LC



Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*)

Medium sized nightjar which preys mainly upon insects, worms, slugs and snails as well as small reptiles, birds, mammals and amphibians. Occasionally seen perched low down on tree branches during the day, where they are well camouflaged. Have very small, weak feet.

- NM
- Urban, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- LC



Wedge Tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*)

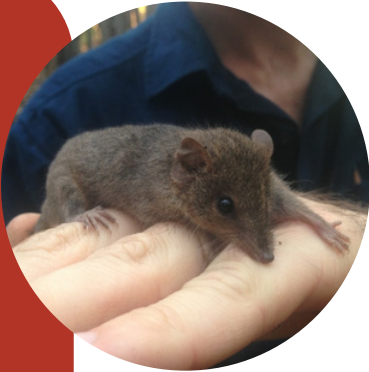
Australia's largest raptor species. Feeds on both dead and live prey (mainly mammals and lizards) and can carry up to 5kg of prey in the air. Monogamous pairs mate for life and often reuse the same nest for years. Can fly to heights of over 2000m, and often works in pairs or small groups to hunt.

- Common
- Forest, Grassland, Woodland
- Diurnal
- EN (Aus)

A grey kangaroo is standing upright in a grassy field. It has large ears and is looking directly at the camera. A small joey is visible in its pouch. The background is a blurred green field.

Mammals

Mammals



Agile Antechinus (*Antechinus agilis*)

Small carnivore, weighing up to 40g as adults. Nests in tree hollows and logs, and hunts on the ground for spiders, beetles, cockroaches, small reptiles and birds. Also consumes fruits and nectar. Females weave ball-shaped nests for their young.

- NM
- Forest, Heathland, Woodland
- Diurnal/ Nocturnal
- LC



Brush-Tailed Phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*)

Small, tree-dwelling mammal with a black brushy tail as long as their body. Diet consists mainly of invertebrates (insects and spiders), as well as nectar and other small animals. Occur in low densities and have very large home ranges extending to 70 hectares for females, and 100 hectares for males. Live and nest in tree hollows.

- NM
- Forest, Heathland, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- VU (Vic)



Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*)

The largest, and most commonly encountered, possum in Australia. Has a broad diet comprising leaves, shoots, flowers, seeds, fruits, invertebrates, bird eggs, and rubbish. Widely distributed, can be found in roof cavities, campgrounds, urban parks as well as reserves. Very territorial with distinct home ranges.

- NM
- Farm, Forest, Urban, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- LC



Eastern Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*)

The most common kangaroo species in Victoria. Consumes mostly grass and herbs, and occasionally shrubs, and can go long periods without drinking water. Found in groups called 'mobs', often of multiple females and a single dominant male. Multiple mobs often congregate in a single area.

- Widespread
- Farm, Forest, Grassland, Scrub, Woodland
- Crepuscular, Nocturnal
- LC



Short-Beaked Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)

Spine covered insectivore, and one of only two egg-laying mammals in Australia. Feeds on ants and termites which they catch with long, sticky tongues. Usually solitary, will form 'trains' of a single female and up to 10 males during breeding periods.

- Rare
- Forest, Grassland, Heathland, Woodland
- Diurnal/ Nocturnal
- LC



Swamp wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*)

Dark coloured, solitary, timid wallaby smaller than their kangaroo relatives. Often found on edges of bushland, feeding on young plants, fungi, ferns, shrubs and grasses. Prefer to inhabit dense undergrowth of forests and swampy areas.

- NM
- Forest, Woodland
- Crepuscular
- LC

Microbats



Lesser Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus geoffroyi*)

Microbat with characteristic large ears. Roosts either alone or up to 3 individuals in tree hollows, under bark, in unused bird nests, ceiling cavities, and occasionally in caves. Hunts near the ground, catching moths, crickets and grasshoppers mid-flight as well as on leaves and on the ground.

- NM
- Farm, Forest, Grassland, Urban, Wetland, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- LC



White Striped Freetail Bat (*Austronomus australis*)

One of the very few microbats whose call can be heard by humans. Roosts in hollows, under loose bark, in dead stumps and in ceiling cavities. Lives in colonies of up to several hundred individuals. Hunt moths, beetles and other invertebrates above the canopy of trees.

- NM
- Farm, Forest, Grassland, Urban, Wetland, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- LC

Reptiles



Lizards and Skinks



Jacky Lizard (*Amphibolurus muricatus*)

Also known as the Jacky dragon. Mainly tree-dwelling and are often found perching on fallen or standing timber. Feeds on a wide range of invertebrates including beetles, crickets and spiders, as well as other smaller lizards. Similar to other dragons, can run upright using only the back legs when chased.

- NM
- Forest, Woodland
- Diurnal
- LC



Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*)

The second largest monitor lizard in Australia, growing up to 2m in length. Use their strong claws and agility to quickly climb trees when threatened. Hunts insects, reptiles, mammals, birds and bird eggs. Will also forage through urban rubbish bins and chicken coops.

- NM
- Forest, Urban, Wetland, Woodland
- Diurnal
- LC



Marbled Gecko (*Christinus marmoratus*)

Tree dwelling geckos often found hunting insects around external lights at night. Hides under the bark of trees and fallen logs during the day. Usually occur in groups of up to 10 individuals. Drops tail to avoid predators, which take about 8 months to grow back.

- NM
- Forest, Urban, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- LC

Lizards, Skinks and Snakes



Southern Water Skink (*Eulamprus tympanum*)

Medium sized, common skink inhabiting environments near fresh water. Hunts invertebrates, tadpoles, small frogs and other small lizards. Mates in spring and give birth to live young during mid to late summer. Can lose their tail to escape predators, but cannot grow it back like some other skinks.

- NM
- Forest, Grassland, Lake, River, Wetland, Woodland
- Diurnal
- LC



Little Whip Snake (*Suta flagellum*)

Small, thin snake reaching up to 50cm in length. When threatened, will whip around and emit a foul smell. Often live in small groups. Hunts mostly small lizards (such as skinks) and invertebrates but will also prey upon frogs and small mammals.

- NM
- Forest, Grassland, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- LC



Lowland Copperhead (*Austrelaps superbus*)

The Australian snake with the highest tolerance to the cold, and the largest of the copperheads. Primarily hunts insects, frogs, lizards (mostly skinks) and lizard eggs, and other snakes. During breeding season, males fight by intertwining bodies.

- NM
- Farm, Forest, Grassland, River, Scrub, Urban, Wetland, Woodland
- Diurnal
- LC

Snakes and Turtles



Tiger Snake (*Notechis scutatus*)

Snake common to southern Australia, often banded with visible stripes. Lives solitary and only group up for mating. Are able to swim and are often found near watery areas, and can climb up to 10m above ground. Preys upon frogs, rodents and other small mammals.

- Rare
- Farm, Forest, Grassland, River, Urban, Wetland, Woodland
- Diurnal/ Crepuscular
- LC



Eastern Snake Necked Turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*)

Medium sized turtle which is the most common turtle in Victoria. Lives in a range of freshwater environments, feeding on invertebrates, tadpoles and small fish. Often called 'stinker', ejects smelly secretions from glands when handled or disturbed. Occasionally seen walking on land between waterbodies.

- Rare
- Lake, River, Urban, Wetland
- Diurnal
- LC



Amphibians

Amphibians



Common Eastern Froglet (*Crinia signifera*)

Tiny but common frog species, which is often heard but rarely seen, being only 3cm in length. Breeds any time of the year. Ground dwelling, and hunts small insects such as mosquitos, moths, cockroaches, spiders and flies.

- NM
- Forest, Lake, River, Urban, Wetland, Woodland
- Diurnal/ Crepuscular/ Nocturnal
- LC



Eastern Banjo Frog (*Limnodynastes dumerilii*)

Large frog, also known as the pobblebonk due to the loud bonk call they make similar to plucking the string of a banjo. Will form large groups in the right conditions for mass breeding. Burrows during the day and dry periods. Feeds on most invertebrates.

- Common
- Farm, Forest, Grassland, Urban, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- LC



Eastern Sign-Bearing Froglet (*Crinia parinsignifera*)

Small, ground-dwelling frog very similar to the Common Eastern Froglet. Preys upon small invertebrates including beetles. Prefers still or slow-moving bodies of water, primarily living on the edges. Can often be heard calling from leaf litter or under logs, regularly found in groups.

- Uncommon
- Grassland, Woodland, Forest, Farm, Urban
- Nocturnal
- LC



Ewing's Tree Frog/ Southern Brown Treefrog (*Litoria ewingii*)

A small and agile frog, able to leap and catch insects mid-flight. Preys on mostly flying insects such as mosquitos, moths and flies. Excellent climbers, often found on trees, walls and windows. Unlike most frogs, they are able to live distances away from permanent water sources.

- Rare
- Farm, Forest, Grassland, Heathland, Urban, Woodland
- Nocturnal
- LC



Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*)

A large, bright green frog, once common and widespread across Victoria. Their growling call attracts prey, including a range of invertebrates, small lizards, frogs, fish, tadpoles and other frogs. Often travels hundreds of meters in search of suitable breeding habitat, which includes still or slow-moving water that is present for at least 6 months of the year, aquatic plants and minimal trees.

- Rare
- Farm, Grassland, Urban, Wetland, Woodland
- Diurnal
- VU

Fish





Obscure Galaxias (*Galaxias oliros*)

Small sized fish which, like other galaxiids, is able to breath air. Feeds on aquatic insects, crustaceans, molluscs and worms, as well as land dwelling insects and spiders. Prefers shallower water when young, moving to deeper, open waters as adults. Tolerates a range of water conditions and qualities.

- NM
- Lake, River, Wetland
- Diurnal
- LC



Southern Pygmy Perch (*Nannoperca australis*)

A tiny, relatively short lived (3-5 years) freshwater fish endemic to south-eastern Australia. Found amongst the highly vegetated verges of still or slow-moving waterbodies. Feeds on a range of aquatic crustaceans, insects, and larvae. Usually found in small groups.

- NM
- Lake, River, Wetland
- Diurnal
- LC



Southern Shortfin Eel (*Anguilla australis*)

Common and widespread eel, growing to over 1m in length in adulthood. Adults live in still, low-lying freshwater. Migrates to sea to breed (sometimes over 3,000km!), juveniles gradually migrate back up rivers as they mature. Diverse diet including worms, insects, crustaceans, molluscs and aquatic plants.

- NM
- Estuary, Lake, River, Sea
- Nocturnal
- LC

A large crayfish is shown in its natural habitat, underwater. The crayfish is dark green with prominent white stripes along its back and legs. It is positioned in the center-left of the frame, facing right. The background is filled with dense, green, feathery aquatic plants. The water is slightly murky, and the overall lighting is soft and natural. A red rounded rectangle is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing the word "Invertebrates" in white text.

Invertebrates

Invertebrates



Blue Ringtail (*Austrolestes annulosus*)

A damselfly common across most of Australia. Males have a stunning blue abdomen, while females are mostly brown. Adults hunt smaller flying insects. Juveniles prey upon aquatic invertebrates. Are in high abundances where water is high quality.

- NM
- Lake, River, Wetland
- Diurnal
- LC



Glenelg Spiny Freshwater Crayfish (*Euastacus bispinosus*)

A giant spiny crayfish endemic to Victoria and South Australia. Can live for up to 26 years, taking 6-8 years to reach adulthood. Consumes decomposing vegetation, aquatic plants, algae, invertebrates and small fish. Breeds annually in May.

- NM
- River
- Diurnal
- EN



Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*)

Only 3cm in width, and one of Victoria's rarest insects. Persists in many sites across Ararat where native grassland is intact. Females rarely take flight, and males fly in zigzag patterns during the heat of the day searching for a mate. Larvae live for up to 3 years, feeding on roots of native grass, and adult moths, which do not eat, live for up to 4 days.

- NM
- Grassland, Woodland
- Diurnal
- VU

Key Ways You Can Protect Native Wildlife

Make Habitat

- Gardens full of diverse and native plants provide vital refuge and habitat for native animals; whether that's in town, on the farm, or right next to a nature reserve. Visit the Plant Guide page on Council's website for more information about the plants best suited to your area.
- You can also provide water sources, logs, large rocks, leaf litter and other natural elements in your gardens to promote the presence of wildlife.

Enjoy from Afar

- When you see native animals in the environment, don't approach too closely or too often. Natural caution is vital to the survival of animals, and increased stress due to human interference can impact health, reproduction, feeding and reduce the likelihood of survival.
- Don't feed native animals. It can increase the spread of disease (such as Psittacosis beak and feather disease in parrots), lead to illness or death if the food isn't appropriate for the animal nutritionally or in amount and can cause an increased risk of predation from native and invasive animals.

Reduce Your Impact

- Anything that makes its way into the environment can end up impacting important habitat. Make sure to dispose of waste appropriately (particularly when camping or hiking) and be mindful of chemical use (including detergents, pesticides, and herbicides).
- Keep cats indoors and manage dogs at all times. Both cats and dogs can instinctively chase, injure and kill native wildlife; even if well cared for and fed. While cats are well known to hunt native animals, dogs can also displace native animals by chasing, scent marking, and barking.

Volunteer!

- Join local volunteer groups to vegetate and clean-up habitat, rescue and relocate injured wildlife, and participate in citizen science programs.
- These groups include Landcare, Wildlife shelters, research groups, and other environmental networks. You can find local groups [online](#).

Further Reading

- [Birdlife Australia \(2026\).](#)
- [Fishes of Australia \(2026\).](#)
- [Museum of Victoria \(2026\).](#)





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Ararat Rural City

