



AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS

Alex's story behind the facts

We've all heard people say, "What amazing and unique native animals Australia has." Yes, I agree! Australia has some awesome animals, so I decided to find out exactly WHAT is SO amazing about a few of our native animals. This is what inspired me to investigate, then write my favourite fast facts about Australian animals.

I've seen kangaroos, wallabies and emus in the wild or running free in large wildlife sanctuaries, which was great.

Here's a true emu-encounter story ... We were on a family holiday, sitting on the ground having a picnic, when an emu snuck up behind Mum and snatched a whole peeled banana right out of her hand! We sat in amazement, watching that emu swallow Mum's banana whole. It just slid down its long skinny neck!

Iggy (my little brother) started stretching his neck out both sides and making strange noises while saying that he thought he might be able to do the same thing. That was a worry!

Anyway, while in Tasmania I saw a wombat and an echidna in the wild, which was really cool. I also saw a Tasmanian devil in a zoo (not the cutest of animals) but I'm sure they also have an important role in Australia's ecosystem.

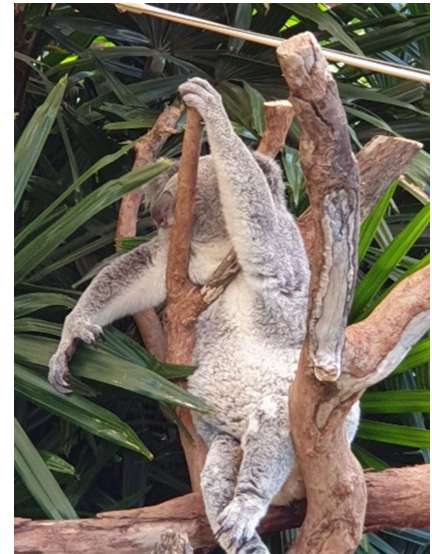
I have seen a dingo, which looked a lot like a dog (but not like our dog, Nick!).

While in Queensland, I was also able to study a koala up close, very close, which was great! That koala was sleeping in a REALLY interesting position. It didn't look very comfortable, just 'hanging' there in the tree.

I was fascinated to see its long, sharp claws, needed for quickly scampering up trees. It was soooooo soft and fluffy. You can't see the back of the koala in the photo, but did you know that koalas don't have tails?

Then the koala woke up and started chomping on delicious eucalyptus leaves. (Why not check out the little video clip I put up on the website too!)

I think that one of Australia's most unique critters is the platypus, and I had never seen one. I decided I wanted to see a real, live platypus in the wild.





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Alex's story behind the facts

So, I heard of a place, inland from the Sunshine Coast, that apparently had a platypus or two living in a creek that ran through the town.

It wasn't long before Mum and Dad took us there for a visit and we found a nice spot near the creek and waited and waited and waited.

It wasn't long before Iggy shouted, "There's one!", but it was only a fish!

I reminded Iggy that platypus are shy creatures and probably wouldn't come out at all if he shouted like that every time there was a bit of movement in the water.

Then a local lady came by and told us about a special spot where we were likely to see a platypus, but we had to go late in the afternoon.

Dusk came and we stood, staring into a local waterhole, along with about 10 other people, who were also eager to see a platypus!

Again, Iggy called out, "There's one!" but it was a false alarm (again) and everyone frowned at him because he was making so much noise. Sooooo embarrassing!

A couple of minutes passed before I actually saw a platypus. It came up from under the water, did a few barrel-rolls and then disappeared under the water again. It was way too quick for me to take a photo, BUT at least I saw one!

Iggy started crying because he missed seeing the platypus. Mum thought it was a good time to exit because people were upset due to the noise Iggy was making!

Iggy continued to cry and complain because he didn't see a real, live platypus.

Soooo, Mum bought him a stuffed one, that vaguely (and I mean really vaguely) 'resembled' a platypus, but Iggy was happy! PHEW!

He then told everyone we met that he saw a platypus and it looked just like his stuffed one! Sooo embarrassing!

Mum just calmly told Iggy not to make up stories, but do you think he listened?

Why not check out my 'Australian animals (including one thought to be a joke!) favourite fast facts' to discover fascinating facts you may not know about a few of our unique animals.