

September 2018

Volume 1, Issue 8

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Items for Observing

Nesting Birds:

- Camera
- Binoculars
- Bird Field Guide
- [Bird Song ID App](#)
- Nature Journal
- Pencils



Nature Study Australia

Spring

Nature Science for Aussie Families

Spring Watch

Spring has officially arrived and we've been admiring the golden wattle display and searching for the first spring wildflowers to appear. Our orchid hunt is underway and we've spotted a few Caladenia's.



Grasses begin to emerge and flower as do the weeds. We can expect to see a flush of brilliant yellow Cape Weed and we're already fighting the Stinging Nettle which is delicious sautéed in butter and garlic.

Our world has exploded in colour and song as the birds begin to choose nesting territories and partners for the season. Mudlarks and Swamp Hens are feeding their nestlings while Willie Wagtails, Song Thrushes, Bowerbirds, Butcher birds, Flycatchers and Orioles build nests. Migrant birds are returning to the north and south of Australia.

Reptiles are basking in the warm, spring sunshine, and will begin mating soon while new butterfly species begin to explore our gardens. We saw our first Painted Lady Butterfly of the season this week.

Deciduous trees are given new life as fresh leaves unfurl from their protective winter buds. Lemons, apricots and plums are flowering.

As the flowers bloom insects begin to invade their loveliness. Bees will swarm to their nectar and pollen, while caterpillars munch merrily away. Beetles will join the spring parade before long while millipedes invade our homes.

Spring is the best time of year to explore. Don't miss it. Get outdoors!

Nesting Birds Links:

[Begin recording your bird observations in the Bird Journal.](#)

[Beach Nesting Birds | Bird Life Australia](#)

[Birds Nests | Nature Documentary](#)

[Drawing Birds | John Muir Laws | Video](#)

[How to Paint a Birds Nest Tutorial](#)

Pictures of the Month



Discovering Wildflowers by Tracey



Trapdoor Spider by Jo B.



Enjoying the Snow by Sarah



Hello Rosella! By Jo



Turtle spotted in N QLD by Rachael McKay

[Nature Science for Aussie families](#) is a F.B. Group where outdoor mamas share their adventures, explorations and activities to motivate, encourage and support one another. We'd love to have you [come along side us](#) and share in our joy or [#naturestudyaustralia](#) on Instagram.



Rainbow Lorikeet feasting on Banksia by Joanna

Show & Tell



Exploring in the Snow by Nini



Fun in the Snow by Jamie-Lee



Rainbow Lorikeets by Has Sani



Observing Snails by Nini



Bush Walk by Has Sani



Studying Banksias by Kathryn



Scouting for Wattles by Tamra



Spring Wildflowers, WA by Tracey



Digging into Streams by Tracey



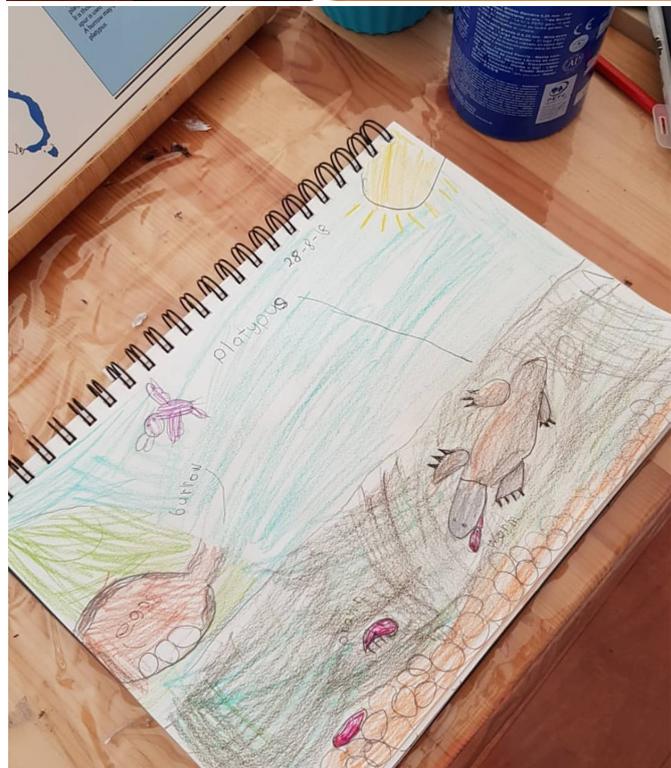
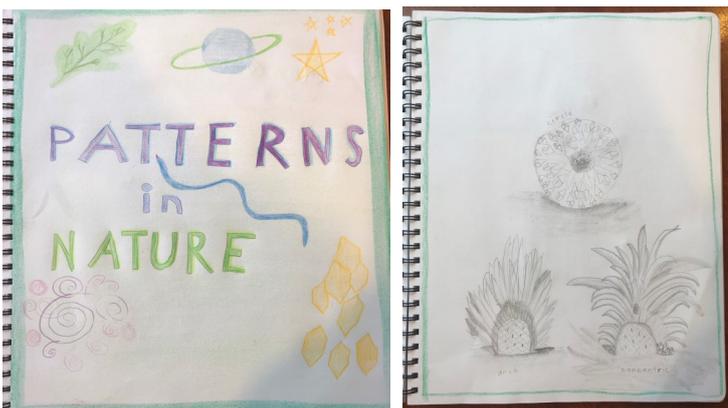
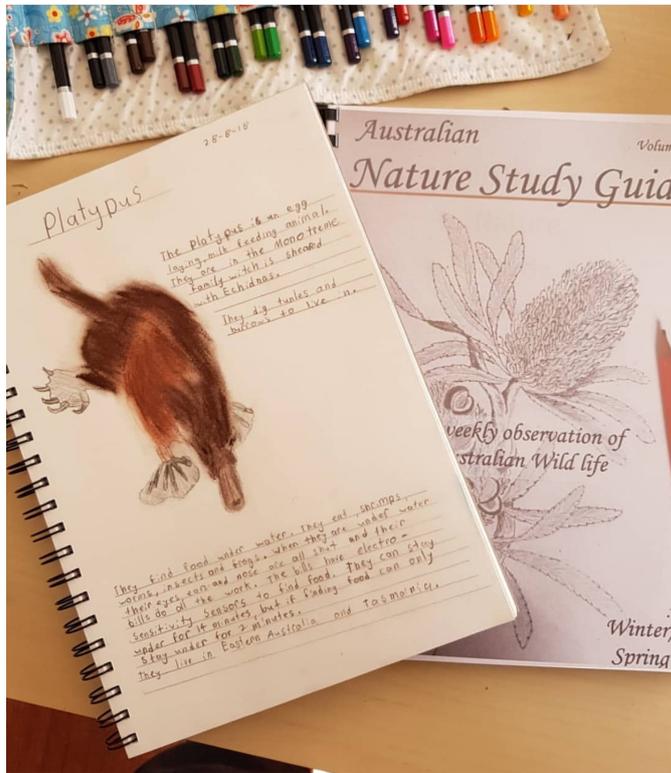
Frog in Car by Naomi

Do you have an activity, story or adventure to share with us? You could ignite a spark of inspiration for someone else! Together, we can encourage and support one another as we explore nature. Send your article and photographs to : marie@naturestudyaustralia.com.au.

Show & Tell



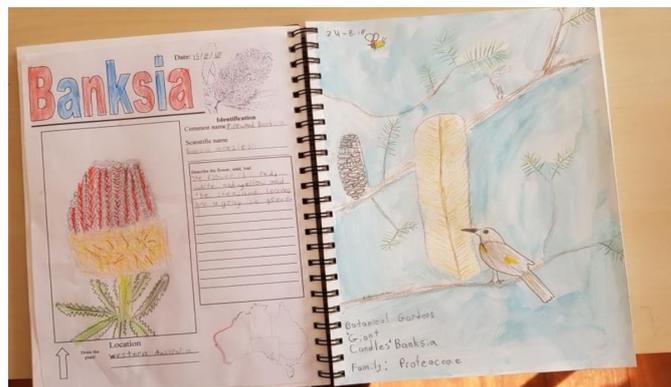
Jo and Family Journal Platypuses.



Platypus journal entries by Kim B. and Family.



Elke and family Search for Patterns in Nature.



Banksia journal entry by Kim B.



Observing Nesting Birds

Nesting birds are setting the stage for spring; dressed to impress in their new plumage while singing and dancing to attract partners for the season. Interestingly, birds sense and notice the changes in weather and the length of days which motivates them to build nests and search out helpers to raise the next generation.

Nesting season begins in July and runs through to November. This is a great time to observe their behaviour and habits as they choose nesting territories, partners and begin building mind blowing nests with their fascinating engineering skills.

While bird watching this season search for couples who are in a courtship, others may be building nests and some may be raising and feeding nestlings. Choose a couple to observe through the season. What are their courtship behaviours? Where did they choose to build a nest? What kind of nest are they building? What materials are they using? How many eggs did the female lay? What colour are the eggs? How long did the female incubate the eggs before they hatched? Who is feeding the nestlings? Male, female, both? What are they serving? What happens when they feel threatened? Who are their predators? How long does it take the nestlings to fledge? Do the parents still feed and protect them once they're out of the nest? What else do you wonder about nesting birds? Get outdoors to find the answers.

Compare the engineering skills of birds with other species. What methods and materials are they using that is different from one another? Then create a nest map for your area. [Here's some inspiration](#). You can also collect damaged nests for your nature table. Examine the materials and methods used to make the nest and match it to its creator.

Once the fledglings have flown the nests, the birds won't return to live in it. The nest is a tool they use to raise chicks for the season. Some birds may return to their nests the following season but most don't return preferring to create a new nest for a new season.

Tip: Help birds build their nests by providing materials for them to use in your backyard like hay, peat moss, feathers, hair, yarn, ravelled hessian and sheep fleece. Leave twigs, leaves, lawn cuttings, bark and pine needles in the yard for the birds to use. Keep checking your stock. Which nesting material are the birds using most?

"In order to see birds, it is necessary to become part of the silence." Robert Lynd



Swooping Birds

- Look out for swooping Magpies, Noisy Miners and Butcherbirds.
- Some magpies become aggressive towards people during the nesting period in an effort to protect their young.
- Almost all swoops are carried out by male magpies defending their eggs and chicks from July through to November.
- Swooping intensifies as the nestlings become older and stops once they've left the nest.
- A magpies defence area is within 110m for pedestrians and 150m for cyclists.

staying safe

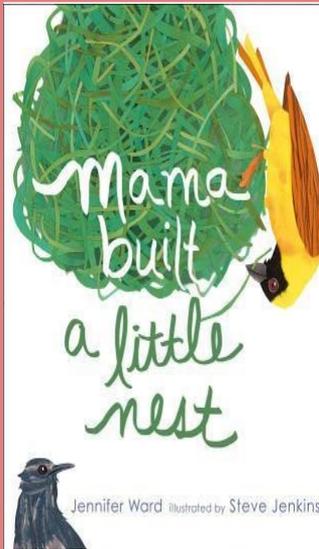


- Wear sunglasses and wide hats to protect your eyes, ears and face.
- Rather walk than cycle if a magpie targets you on a bike.
- Avoid defence zones or walk in groups.
- Waving flags or sticks in the air will deter swooping magpies.

Unique Nesting Birds

[Bowerbirds](#) are fascinating to watch as they collect shiny, blue items to decorate their bowers in an effort to attract and impress females. If a female appreciates his efforts, they'll partner up and raise a brood.

[Mallee fowls](#) are extraordinary nesters. They build mounds out of decomposing leaves and sticks which generate heat to incubate the eggs. The fowl has an inbuilt thermometer on its beak where it can judge the temperature and adjust it accordingly by either making openings for heat to escape or closing it to generate more heat. Choose a nesting bird to study this month.



There are so many different kinds of birds and those birds build so many different kinds of nests to keep their babies cozy. With playful, bouncy rhyme, Jennifer Ward explores nests large and small, silky and cottony, muddy and twiggy--and all the birds that call them

home!



[Nature Study Guide](#)

[Spring/Summer](#)

Coming

October 2018

On Sale for

just \$10

BIRDS IN BACKYARDS SPRING SURVEY

September - October 2018



[Get Involved Here!](#)



Jacob's Adventures

Recently we went on an excursion to Doctors Swamp near Murchison in Victoria, which is about 25 minutes from where we live. I was hoping to find birds such as pardalotes and the Yellow-rumped Thornbill. Mum was hoping to find wildflowers.

When we arrived, almost as soon as we stepped out of the car, a big shrieking ruckus began from a combination of Sulphur Crested Cockatoos and Long-billed Corellas, as they were sending a warning across the entire swamp area. The noise was deafening and continued for most of the time we were there, which scared off many birds.

We continued on our excursion though and I was still able to spot and photograph several birds species. An amazing photo that I captured was of a White-plumed Honeyeater attacking a Dusky Woodswallow. My favourite photo I took though was of a pair of Laughing Kookaburras, which were certainly doing a lot of laughing, in a moment when the Cockatoos and Corellas were quiet.

Mum didn't spot any wildflowers, but we did see lots of native grasses beginning to shoot after having been dormant. We will plan another excursion for wildflowers soon where there is more chance of seeing them.

Some other sightings we had were bird tracks in the mud near the edge of the swamp; trees with burls that stood out amidst the other flora and many stumps that may be the remains of trees cut down in colonial times.

Doctors Swamp is a place we often visit and each time we make new discoveries.



Identification Challenge

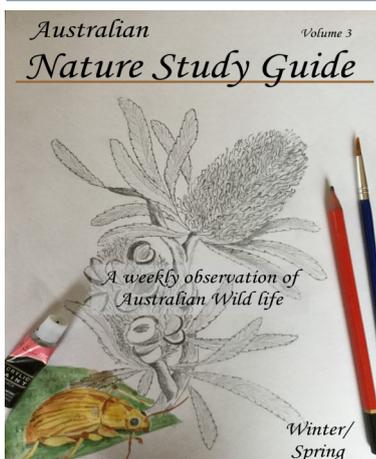
Can you find the identity of this bird? Let me know by email at: marie@naturestudyaustralia.com.au. Who will be the first to guess and receive a **Steve Parish colouring book?**

Australian Nature Study Guide

Winter/Spring

Come along, explore with us...

Owls | Wildflowers | Nesting Birds



September Nature Watch Chart

Use the simple ideas in this chart to encourage outdoor explorations.

<p>Enjoy a spring picnic.</p> 	<p>Keep an eye out for swooping birds.</p> 	<p>Observe male birds; their behavior and new plumage.</p> 	<p>Which wildflowers are blooming this month?</p> 
<p>What flowers are blooming in your neighbourhood?</p> 	<p>Measure and observe the growth of the veggie seedlings you planted.</p> 	<p>Observe the rising and setting times of the sun.</p> 	<p>Can you find nesting birds?</p> 
<p>Blow bubbles! Which direction are they going?</p> 	<p>Go beachcombing!</p> 	<p>Notice the types and times of weeds emerging and do some weeding.</p> 	<p>Listen for the sounds of birds, frogs and insects.</p> 
<p>Have you noticed reptiles warming in the sun?</p> 	<p>Investigate deciduous trees. What do you see?</p> 	<p>Look out for caterpillars.</p> 	<p>Listen to bird calls and identify them.</p> 

Keep an eye out for:

- Wildflowers
- Flowering Grasses
- Bush Orchids
- Tree Orchids flowering
- Nesting Birds
- Caterpillars
- Butterflies
- Busy Bees and Ants
- Active Bowerbirds

Journal Topics to Explore:

- **Begin a Migratory Bird Timeline and List.**
- **Start a Nesting Bird Timeline for your area.**
- **Discuss and plan safety precautions for swooping birds.**
- **Observe the Spring Equinox 23rd Sept.**

SPRING NATURE TABLE IDEAS:

Bird Nests | Eggs | Wildflowers | Spring Books | Feathers | Build Your Own Nest | Nature Prints in Playdough | Spring Bulbs | Bird Nest Sensory Bin

Photography Ideas:

Wildflowers | Orchids | Birds | Nests | Hatchlings | Baby Animals | Search for the Golden Ratio in Nature | Swirls | Pink | Blossoms | Spring Days



Nesting Birds Journal

Draw your field sketches and write your observations here.

Date:	Time:	Place:
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My Observations:-

Identification:

Temperature:

Wind Speed and Direction:

Habitat:

Eating Habits:

Count:

Feather Colours:

Courting/Nesting:

Nesting Materials:
Mud/Grass/Hair/
String/Spider Web/
Sticks/Moss

Nest Type:
Burrows/ Cavity/
Platforms/Cups/
Adherent

Egg Colour:



Nesting Birds Journal

<p>Identification:</p>	<p>Draw your field sketches and write your observations here.</p>
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<p>Weather:</p>	<p>Habitat:</p>	<p>Eating Habits:</p>
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<p>Count:</p>	<p>Feather Colours:</p>	<p>Courting/Nesting:</p>
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<p>Nesting Materials: Mud/Grass/ Hair/String/Spider Web/Sticks/ Moss</p>	<p>Nest Type: Burrows/ Cavity/ Platforms/Cups/Adherent</p>	<p>Egg Colour:</p>
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<p>Date:</p>	<p>Time:</p>	<p>Place:</p>
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