

November 2018

Volume 1, Issue 10

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Items for Observing

Reptiles:

- Camera
- Reptile Field Guide
- Field Journal
- Pencils

Nature Study Australia

Early Summer

Nature Science for Aussie Families

Reptile Watch

Spring is leaving as summer draws in with a profusion of insects, spiderlings and reptiles. We've seen stumpy-tailed lizards sunning on road and pathways while snakes slither across roads and escape into the safety of long grass. This makes me nervous, perhaps you celebrate it.

Moths and beetles begin to flurry about night lights while the Common Brown butterflies flutter from flower to flower. Honey bees are collecting pollen and nectar as they support the honey factory with their selfless efforts. Wasps accumulate, chase spiders and build colonies.

We've observed birds courting, building nests and feeding their nestlings. Now the sounds of fledglings fill the air as they hop from branch to branch while the parents continue to feed them. Many birds begin to moult.

Bandicoots dig holes in the backyard searching for grubs while echidnas hunt ants. Berries begin to ripen and grasses are seeding.

On the coast, seas hares lay egg strings in rockpools, mutton birds lay eggs in burrows while red and blue jelly fish appear in bays.

Harvesting has begun on the farms and combine harvesters can be seen in the paddocks through the night as farmers bring in the grain or bale hay for the dry months ahead. This will help feed the animals until the autumn rains.

Would you like to embrace the coming season and celebrate the emergence of all things complex like the life cycles and processes of caterpillars and butterflies, dragonflies and cicadas? How about knowing the dangerous spiders and snakes in your locality? [Come with us](#) as we venture into Aussie wildlife as summer approaches with its dangers.

The Study of Reptiles Links:

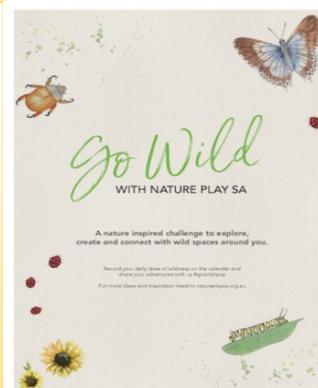
[Reptiles | Australian Museum](#)

[Reptile Quiz](#)

[Reptiles of Australia Poster](#)

How to Draw [Snakes](#) and [Scales](#) | John Muir Laws

[National Field Guide Apps](#)



Pictures of the Month



Ladybug by Rhiannon



Visiting Echidna by Sally. A Family of echidna's moved into Sally's shed. Upon further investigation, white ants were found near by. Since echidna's are solitary animals, it is thought that they are a breeding parade.



Cream Proteas by Joanna



Blue Bottle Jelly Fish by Anne

[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.

Show & Tell



A nesting map was created after a culmination of nature walks searching for nests in the neighbourhood.

A spider preparing a caterpillar for dinner by Jo.

By Rachael McKay



Joanna GI and family explored Dandenong Ranges and celebrated spring by designing a Spring Nature Table and wreath

Indigo continues to explore for platypuses. Images by Sarah.



Johanna and family made Nettle Gnocchi from Stinging Nettles after a weed foraging adventure.



Kim and family had fun exploring weeds, baking dandelion cookies and creating weed identification cards.

Inspired to Journal

We had such fun with the 5 Day Nature Journal Challenge last month. It was wonderful watching mums and children journal nature alongside one another. We gave away a Steve Parish colouring book everyday of the competition. Winners were Clare Hugo, William McKay, Haley Thorn, Kim Brough and Sally Farrelly. Congratulations to Belinda Geissler who won Keeping a Nature Journal by Clare Walker Leslie.



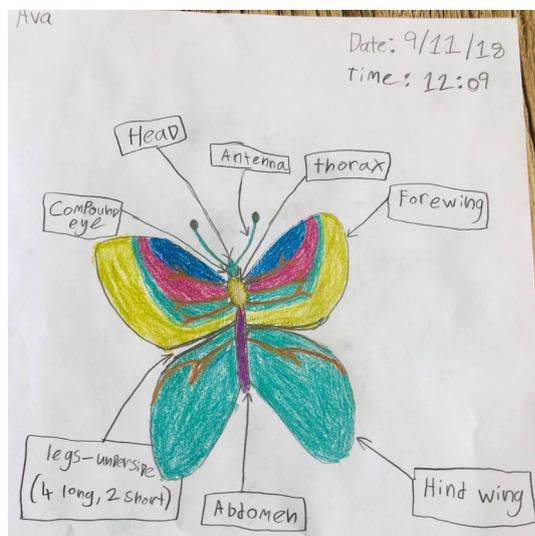
Here's a few beautiful samples of Belinda journaling alongside her child.

Kathleen and family joined in the nature journaling fun with these lovely entries. They're pretty special.



Nature Journal November 2018 © Marie Viljoen 2018

Nikki and family visited the Botanical Gardens for an Orchard Hunt.



Katarzyna and family searched for butterflies but didn't see any. So they created their own beautiful specimens and studied butterfly anatomy.



Sally and family journaled happy Hippeastrum into their diaries.



Here's some smashing nature journaling by Kim and family.



Angie and family braved sketching birds and they did a beautiful work. Awesome job!



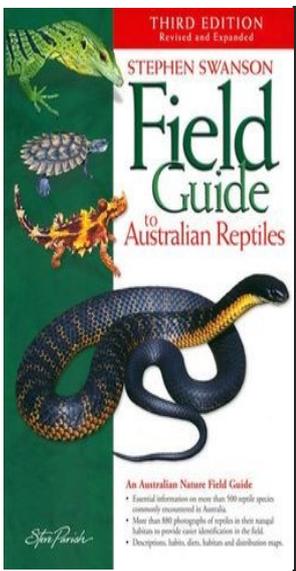
Fantastic diary entries by Christina and family. They're absolutely lovely.



Lavender was painted on a 'wintery' day in Clare's home. I'm sure these colours warmed up the day. Great job by mum, 7yr and 5yr olds.



Gorgeous nature journal entries of weeds in Johanna's home.



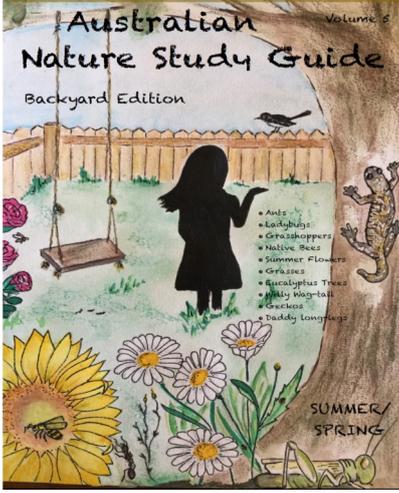
This visually splendid, fact-packed *Field Guide to Australian Reptiles* is perfect for both amateur reptile enthusiasts and experienced herpetologists. It contains full-colour photographs and biological information to accurately identify reptiles, with information on the creatures diet, habitat and reproduction habits. Take a look [here](#).



Identification Challenge

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

So! What's Next?
Australian Nature Study Guide
Backyard Edition
Coming January 2019!



- Ants
- Ladybugs
- Grasshoppers
- Native Bees
- Summer Flowers
- Grasses
- Eucalyptus Trees
- Willy Wag-tail
- Geckos
- Daddy Long-legs

Spring
Wild Pollinator Count
 11th—18th November
 Join the
Counting Carnival [Here](#)

Be Snake Wise!

As summer approaches, most of us worry about the dangers that come with it as snakes awaken and warm up after a period huddled in a torpor state during the freezing months. We're relieved to step out of winter and enjoy the sunshine and thaw out a bit as the snakes are basking in the sun and searching for mates. They are the most dangerous as they emerge hungry, deprived and frozen. So take care when you're outdoors. I'm sure you've already heard reports of snake bites this season.

Be wise and prevent snake bites by leaving snakes alone and calmly walking away when you encounter them. Wear long jeans and protective footwear when bush walking.

Also take the time to tidy the yard, removing dead branches, piles of leaves, rocks and cut the grass short. Fill in holes and clear overhanging shrubs. Stack outside toys neatly and remove clutter.

My Bush Adventure

My latest adventure was at a bush block which we own. We stayed for two nights in our caravan so that we could plant about 300 native plants to revegetate. I'm also hoping it will attract lots of birds, including Rufous Whistlers, Restless Flycatchers, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Jacky Winters, White Necked Herons and hopefully lots of Superb Fairy Wrens. I really enjoyed observing and photographing all of the birds and I identified at least 15 species in 2 days.

Whilst Dad planted about 250 plants and Mum planted about 50, I collected bits of machinery, wire, branches and rocks to make a garden ornament for near the dam. I enjoyed the challenge and being able to create something from scratch.

We also started the Aussie Backyard Bird Count one evening and it was relaxing sitting on the new seats Dad had made from fallen trees, on the bank of the dam, as we observed, identified and counted birds. We were surprised when a White Necked Heron arrived.

We hope that a lot of our plants survive, so that the block will be like a sanctuary for us to visit for many years to come.



Jacob is an inspiring young man on a mission. He's taken his passion for photography and birds to create a Bird Field Guide for his local Bushland, [Cussen Park](#).

Jacob has also launched his new [website](#) and [Facebook Page](#), [Digital Journey Photography](#). Hop on over to say 'Good on ya, young man,' and support him by liking his page. I hope his story inspires many young people to go out and do likewise.

Read his story [here](#).



Buff-rumped Thornbill

Restless Fly Catcher



Varied Settella



Garden Seat made by Jacob's Dad



Jacky Winter



Garden Sculpture

Herping? What's that?

With the onset of summer, reptiles have emerged to explore, feed and reproduce. It's the right time to investigate your environment for reptiles and observe them in their natural habitat while igniting an interest in a new hobby. Amateur enthusiast observers of reptiles are known as herpers which comes from the word Herpetology. This is the scientific study of reptiles and amphibians. Herpetology originates from the Greek word 'Herpeton' meaning 'creeping animal.' Who knows! This hobby may inspire you to become a [herpetologist](#). Herping is an enjoyable activity that anyone can engage in.

The [four groups of reptiles](#) are the crocodiles, snakes, lizards and turtles. Do not place your life in danger by exploring dangerous and potentially deadly herpetofauna. It is a wise idea to familiarise yourself with [dangerous reptiles](#) in order to stay safe within boundaries and know what to expect should you stumble upon one. Most snakes are happy to be left alone and they don't purposely hunt humans to hurt them. However, snake bites do occur and knowing what to do could save a life. Read this [snake bite first aid pamphlet](#) and add it to your backpack.

There are five families of lizards in Australia. They are the skinks, dragons, monitors, geckos and legless lizards. [Backyard Buddies](#) has a selection of lizards you can use to start investigating or start with the last reptile you saw in your backyard.

Successful herping requires a little research before exploring a habitat for reptiles. There's a few things you'd like to know so that you're searching in the right place at the right time. Consider the following questions:

- Is the reptile diurnal or nocturnal? What time is it most active? Most lizards can be seen in the early morning basking in the sun in an effort to warm up.
- What kind of habitat does the reptile prefer? Search in leaf litter, around rocks and timber. Beware of snakes as they often share the same habitat as lizards and emerge at night. Always wear gloves and lift rocks and timber toward you so that you're protected in the event that you've located a venomous creatures abode.
- What behaviours can you expect to see? Perhaps, if it's a fairly hot day, a lizard will be found cooling off under the leaves of a tree or searching for a cool drink.
- What does the reptile like to eat? Small mammals, insects, frogs or fruit?

Once you've spotted a reptile and it's safe to observe, watch it in its natural habitat for about ten minutes. In your notebook, record what the reptile is doing after every minute. It may be inactive, moving, foraging, drinking, bathing, basking, hiding or climbing. Once you have observed your reptile, return the area to its original state if you have disturbed it in your search. Remember to take photographs of your prize finds and consider sketching what you notice in your field notebook.

Would you like to know more about Australia's venomous snakes and spiders? Join us as we explore these potentially deadly creatures and prepare our families with action plans should we encounter them this summer. We'd love to have you [come along](#) and join in our fun as we explore wildlife with the [Australian Nature Study Guide | Spring/Summer](#).

Refresh Parched Creatures!

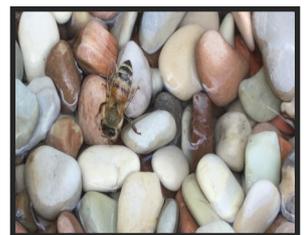
As summer approaches and the heat intensifies, remember to place water bowls outdoors for parched creatures such as lizards.



Butterflies love to puddle and bees bath. So set up a bee bath for the season which will help the insects get by during the dry days.



We simply poured pebbles into a plant pot saucer and added water.



The bees loved us for it.

Australian Nature Study Guide Spring / Summer

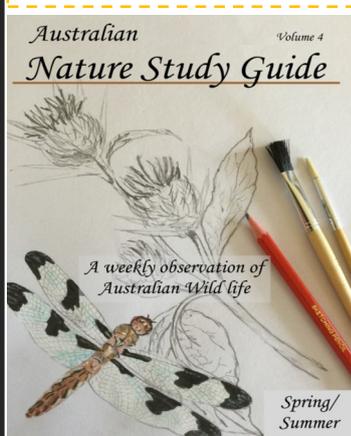
Come along, explore with us...

Butterflies | Dragonflies | Spiders | Snakes | Cicadas | Bats

The Spring / Summer Nature Guide

Is an *epic, exciting* discovery of Australia's *most dangerous spiders and snakes*. We'll learn how to prepare for those unpredictable, *scary encounters* with them. We'll *track and search for elusive* cicadas and *bats* and discover just how brainy parrots actually are.

Join us for an epic journey through Australian wildlife.



[Download Free Lesson](#)

[Download Colouring Page](#)

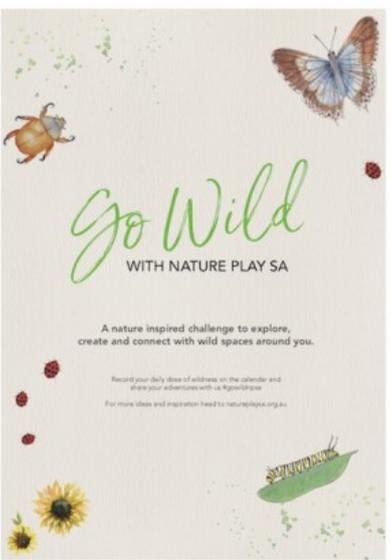
NATURE STUDY GUIDE REVIEWS

'Absolutely love the activity books. My whole family can learn together and it's Australia based.

Highly recommend!' ~ Sarah

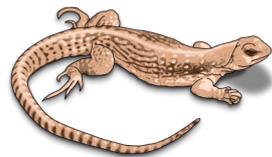
'We didn't find out about the program until about half way through term, so we played catch up most of the time. I love how open ended the lessons are, but with enough structure to work well for those children needing such a program. We have been able to cover much of the required curriculum whilst enjoying the activities we love. Your program has been such a blessing to us, because we needed a change to our home schooling lessons which would still cover curriculum, but would enable us to relax and enjoy "school" together. Thank you.' ~ Cheryl

Take the
Go Wild
Nature Play
Challenge
this
November.
[Here!](#)



November Nature Watch Chart

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

<p>Watch blooming flowers for pollinators.</p> 	<p>Observe fledging bird behaviour.</p> 	 <p>Can you find a basking lizard?</p>	 <p>Craneflies emerge. Will you be the first to spot one?</p>
<p>Stick Insects appear on tree tops. Go search for one!</p> 	<p>Watch your vegies grow. Harvesting draws near.</p> 	<p>What moths are visiting your night lights this month?</p> 	 <p>Keep your eyes peeled for echidnas on bush walks.</p>
<p>Do bandicoots visit your garden? Find out! Search for traces.</p> 	 <p>What gums are</p>	<p>Do you notice termites building nests?</p> 	<p>Take a torch And search For bats Feeding on Mangroves.</p> 
 <p>Do you notice new</p>	<p>Be aware that snakes are active.</p> 	<p>Watch A storm build.</p> 	<p>Birds are moulting. Collect feathers.</p> 

Keep an eye out for:

- Lizards
- Snakes
- Mulberries
- Ballooning Spiderlings
- Common Brown Butterfly
 - Xenia Butterfly
 - Ichneumon Wasps
- Flowering Paperbark
- Butcherbirds hatch

Journal Topics to Explore:

- **Begin a Reptile Timeline.**
- **Torpor**
- **Hibernation**
- **Reptile Groups**
- **Herpetology**
- **Ectothermic**
- **Endothermic**

SPRING NATURE TABLE IDEAS:

Dragonfly Cases | Raise Silkworms | Reptile Field Guide | Reptile Reference and Picture Books | Snake Skin | Feathers | Gum Blossoms | Insect Specimens

Photography Ideas:

Lizards | Spiders | Butterflies | Early Summer Blossoms | Berries | Storm Clouds | Lines | Purple | Eyes | Native Bees



My Reptile Journal

Zoom In

Zoom Out

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:

Count:

Colour:

Eating Habits:

Lays eggs/young:

Egg Colour:

Texture:

Legs: Present/
Absent

Behaviour:

Inactive/Active/
Eating/Drinking/
Bathing/Hiding/
Climbing/Basking

My Reptile Journal



Identification:	Draw your field sketches and write your observations here.
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Weather:	Habitat:	Eating Habits:
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Count:	Texture: Smooth/Rough	Colours:
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Behaviour: Inactive/Active/ Eating/Drinking/Bathing/Hiding/ Climbing/Basking	Lay eggs/young:	Egg Colour:
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Date:	Time:	Place:
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