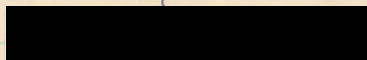


C

Margaret
Best Pike

B + + +

Shirley Sayer,
Lord Lister Junior High School,
New Westminster, B.C.



Which Animals and Birds
in Another Part of the Empire
Would You Most Like to
See? Give your Reasons.

In seeking oddities of nature,
I think I would like to see the
birds and animals of Australia.
Strange looking creatures they are
far more different than any others
in the world. How amazing are
the variations of structure and habit
of this kingdom and how fascinating
is the study! There are nearly a
million known living species of
animals and birds, differing
enormously in size, form, colour and
mode of life — in ways they
get their food; in their adaption
to the struggle of existence, in their
wonderful manifestations of
animal instinct, often surprising
man's power of reason. All this
makes one have or want to have
a certain interest in the animal
and bird life of Australia.

Science is turning a
new page every day in the book
of nature. There is the kangaroo
quite different from any animal
in this world, it is a large
animal and it leaps instead of
running on four legs like most

other animals do, it also has a
 pouch in its stomach to carry
 its young and keep them safe.
 This animal has strong hind
 legs on which to carry him.
 The water mole with a bill like
 a duck is equally curious also
 the emu bird which is queer
 because it walks instead of
 flying. The long sturdy tail of
 the gray opossum of Australia
 is useful to him as a fifth hand.
 By its aid he climbs trees with
 all the agility of a new world
 monkey. This animal is about the
 size of a large cat. Millions of these
 animals have been killed in a
 year for their close soft fur.
 The spiny ant-eater is remarkable
 for being the only living mammal
 in the world (except for its
 relative the duck bill). This creature
 has a long sticky tongue this
 enables it to pick up the
 juicy larva of ants on which
 it chiefly feeds. The dog called
 the dingo which is a wild dog
 is almost the only living higher
 mammal. The wombat the
 koala and the bandicoot are
 the kangaroo cousins they
 have many other relations as
 small as mice. The web-footed

beaver-tailed creature with a
 bird-like beak and the spiny
 ant-eater - both of which are
 egg-laying mammals - are the
 only living creatures which do
 that living in the world. The
 national bird is the emu known
 as the Australian ostrich which
 is far more amusing than any
 other ostriches of the Empire.
 There is the long-legged jerboa
 and the kangaroo mice and the
 massic-tailed rats the scales
 on whose tails are set on
 edge. The marsupials include
 the flying phalangers which,
 leg folds of skin spread out
 when the limbs are extended,
 can prolong their leaps
 from tree to tree over great
 distances; the wombats, large
 nocturnal vegetarians with
 short legs and short flat
 heads. Turtles and crocodiles
 thirty feet long, numerous
 lizards up to eight feet in
 length. Frogs with blue legs
 and golden backs. There are
 many large hornless pythons
 may be found, especially in the
 swampy parts, these animals
 are very educational to see. To
 crown all the swans are black

and the Lores fly.

There are all together six hundred and fifty species of Australian birds while Europe can only boast five hundred and all these birds many and many a person would give anything to see them and so would I.

The parrot, no one could miss this bird for identification with the beautiful plumage it has, with its strongly hooked bill, rather heavy body, relatively large head and peculiar feet, with two toes directed forward and two to the rear combine to identify these birds at a glance. These parrots fly which is the very unnatural thing to do, because no other parrots in the world fly like these do. It would make one feel mightily amazed to see such a thing as this. The Kiwi bird is a very fascinating to see because it has fur covering its body instead of feathers. The laughing jickass and sockatoos laugh and screech instead of sing. Koola birds are members of the kingfish family whose

curious cry and strange habits make it a perpetual source of wonder. All birds in this part of the Empire are not only interesting to see but it thrills a person to hear their sweet and strange tunes. The wagtail is a very small bird but seems to be able to manage a meal of bigger animals than itself such as horses and cattle. The lyre bird with an audience of one or more hens, mounts a low pile of earth, spreads his gorgeous lyre-shaped tail, dances and goes through an amazing repertoire of songs and "impersonations." A superb mimic, he seems to imitate the laugh of the kookaburra, the chatter of parakeets, a locomotive whistle, or a wail of the dingo (wild dog). This bird is not only remarkable for his fine plumage, but if one could see his natural every day life and habits it would make one feel an appreciation of his existing on the earth. The king bird of paradise is a very beautiful bird with a drooping tail of coloured feathers which looks like

a rainbow. The feathers come from under the wings and branches over the back. This is the most beautiful bird of this family.

To write about all these interesting birds and animals would make an never ending book, for words can not express the wonders of this veritable fairyland. This makes one want to see them more than ever.