

Teacher Notes

Themes

- Adaptations
- Animal conservation
- Australian birdlife

Key learning outcomes

- Understand how animals use camouflage and adapt to their environment to survive.
- Learn about what scientists are doing to try to save endangered species.
- Understand how climate change can affect animals' habitats.

Key curriculum areas

(Australian Curriculum 8.4)

- **Science:** Science Understanding (Biological sciences), Science Inquiry Skills, Science as a Human Endeavour
- **English:** Language, Literacy
- **The Arts:** Visual Arts
- **Cross-curriculum Priority:** Sustainability

Publication details

On the Trail of the Plains-wanderer: A Precious Australian Bird

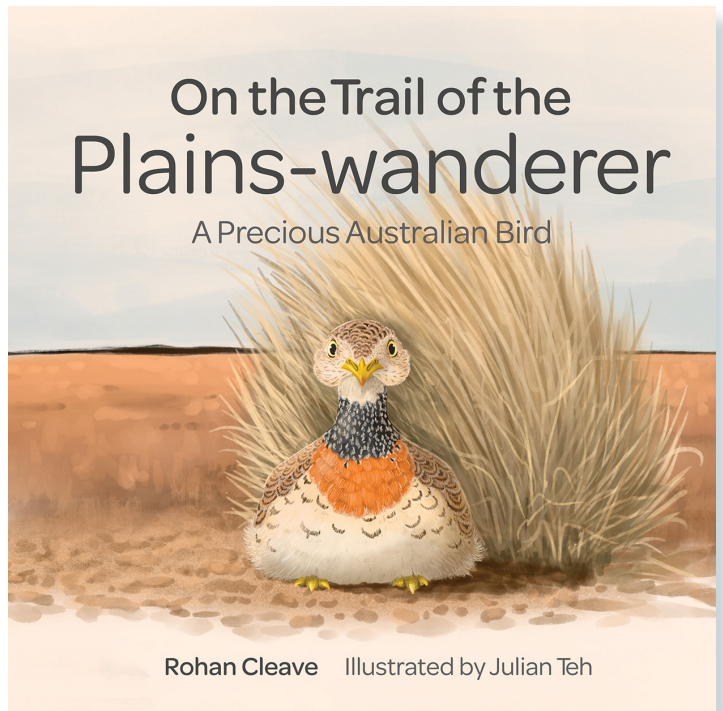
ISBN: 9781486314478

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Teacher notes prepared by Brooke Clark.

CSIRO Publishing
Private Bag 10
Clayton South, VIC 3169, Australia

Website: www.publish.csiro.au
Tel: 1300 788 000 (local call in Australia)
Email: publishing.sales@csiro.au



On the Trail of the Plains-wanderer: A Precious Australian Bird

Rohan Cleave and Julian Teh

About the book

The Plains-wanderer is unlike any other bird on Earth – it's one of a kind!

On the Trail of the Plains-wanderer tells the true story of one of Australia's most critically endangered bird species. This unique, quirky and precious bird faces many threats, but continues to survive against the odds. Discover more about this fascinating bird and see how people are providing hope for their future.

Recommended for

Readers aged 6 to 9 (Years 1 to 4)



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About the author

Rohan Cleave is a zookeeper at Zoos Victoria. His books have received CBCA Shortlist and Notable listings, a Wilderness Society's Environment Award for Children's Literature and a Whitley Award for Children's Natural History Book.

Julian Teh is a Canberra-based scientific illustrator. Fuelled by a lifelong passion for birds, he uses his paintings to tell the stories of his birding experiences.

Pre-reading questions or activities

Before reading the book, talk to the students about how some animals might adapt to keep themselves safe from predators and a hostile environment. Can they think of any examples of animals that have adapted over time or whose behaviour helps protect them? Write the examples on the board.

Ask students what extinction means. Can they think of any animals that are extinct or in danger of extinction? Discuss what might cause an animal to become endangered.

Discussion questions

Science

1. The Plains-wanderer is an Australian bird. Ask students to think about what other birds are native to Australia. Ask them to identify how those birds look different from the Plains-wanderer, and how they are similar.
2. Discuss what information in the book explains why the Plains-wanderer is in danger of becoming extinct. Talk about both climate change and land management.
3. The Plains-wanderer lives in a part of Australia that is dry and inhospitable. Talk about what this bird does to help it survive in such a hot, dry part of the country.
4. 'No other bird exists like them anywhere on the planet. This is why the Plains-wanderer is so important.' Ask students why this makes them so important.

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English

1. Ask students to explain the purpose of a glossary in a non-fiction book. Ask them what has been done to certain words in the text to help the reader identify which words will appear in the glossary.
2. Talk about some of the words in the book that might not be familiar to students, but which don't appear in the glossary. As a class, discuss what they mean; does reading the whole sentence help? Examples include:
 - vast
 - semi-arid
 - lurking
 - ambush
 - dew
 - clutch (of eggs)
 - motionless
 - low-pitched
 - safe haven
 - humidity

The Arts

1. The illustrations in the book are life-like. Ask the students why they think the illustrator has chosen to use this kind of illustration style for this book. Talk about the fact that when students are learning about an animal and its habitat, life-like illustrations can help them better understand the text they are reading.

Sustainability

1. Think about the environment in which the Plains-wanderer lives. Discuss how climate change might affect their habitat; will it make it easier or harder for the birds to live there? (Point out the mention of drought, floods and fire in 'Threats' on p. 32.)

Activities

Science

1. Ask students to create an information poster or booklet about the Plains-wanderer, using information they've learned from the book. Have them include illustrations, and the following information:
 - What do they look like?
 - What is their habitat? Where do they live?
 - What do they eat?
 - What are their predators?
 - How do they keep themselves safe?
 - Interesting facts about the Plains-wanderer.

English

1. Have the students write a story about a day in the life of the Plains-wanderer. Ask them to think about their habitat, what their predators are and how they keep themselves safe, and try to incorporate some of that into their story.
2. The word 'Plains-wanderer' is a noun – as a group, ask the students to explain what a noun is, and the difference between proper nouns, common nouns and pronouns. Put students in groups and have them write the headings 'common noun', 'proper noun' and 'pronoun' on a large sheet of paper, and write down examples of each from the book under the relevant headings. They can then present their findings to the class.

Sustainability

1. Discuss how zoos are helping to boost Plains-wanderer numbers by captive breeding. Have students research what captive breeding is, and consider what benefits and risks there may be in captive breeding. Choose a zoo and ask students to visit its website to try to find out what captive breeding programs they have, and for which animals. Ask them to write a report on what they discover, including illustrations of the relevant animals.

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Worksheets

Word search

See if you can find the words below in the grid.

C	O	Y	S	H	I	D	D	E	N	S
S	A	F	T	G	P	A	B	F	K	C
P	E	M	G	Q	R	N	I	A	I	I
E	H	E	O	D	E	G	R	R	N	E
C	P	M	D	U	Y	E	D	M	S	N
I	Z	B	E	S	F	R	G	E	E	T
E	D	R	Y	K	N	L	R	R	C	I
S	B	A	Y	H	W	D	A	S	T	S
Z	O	O	W	I	O	O	S	G	U	T
E	X	T	I	N	C	T	S	L	E	S
A	S	B	R	E	E	D	I	N	G	D

bird

camouflage

dawn

dusk

extinct

grass

hot

scientists

species

breeding

danger

dry

egg

farmers

hidden

prey

seeds

zoo



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Colour me in

Colour in the picture and then label it with the scientific name of the Plains-wanderer. (Hint: Read the section 'About the Plains-wanderer' at the end of the book.)



Illustration © Julian Teh

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Australian curriculum links

Year level	Learning area: science	Other learning areas
Year 1	<p>Science Understanding: Biological sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living things have a variety of external features (ACSSU017) Living things live in different places where their needs are met (ACSSU211) 	<p>English: Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore differences in words that represent people, places and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs) (ACELA1452) <p>English: Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams (ACELY1661) <p>Visual Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience (ACAVAM108)
Year 2	<p>Science Inquiry Skills: Questioning and predicting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pose and respond to questions, and make predictions about familiar objects and events (ACSI037) 	<p>English: Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that capital letters signal proper nouns and commas are used to separate items in lists (ACELA1465) <p>English: Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read less predictable texts with phrasing and fluency by combining contextual, semantic, grammatical and phonic knowledge using text processing strategies, for example monitoring meaning, predicting, rereading and self-correcting (ACELY1669) Re-read and edit text for spelling, sentence-boundary punctuation and text structure (ACELY1672) Write legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined upper case and lower case letters (ACELY1673) Create short imaginative, informative and persuasive texts using growing knowledge of text structures and language features for familiar and some less familiar audiences, selecting print and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose (ACELY1671) <p>Visual Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience (ACAVAM108)
Year 3	<p>Science Understanding: Biological sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things (ACSSU044) <p>Science as a Human Endeavour: Use and influence of science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions (ACSH051) 	<p>English: Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to and contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas and negotiate in collaborative situations (ACELY1676) Plan and deliver short presentations, providing some key details in logical sequence (ACELY1677) Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features and selecting print, and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose (ACELY1682) Re-read and edit texts for meaning, appropriate structure, grammatical choices and punctuation (ACELY1683) Write using joined letters that are clearly formed and consistent in size (ACELY1684) <p>Visual Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify intended purposes and meanings of artworks using visual arts terminology to compare artworks, starting with visual artworks in Australia including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAVAR113)

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Year level	Learning area: science	Other learning areas
Year 4	Science Understanding: Biological sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none">Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive (ACSSU073)Science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions (ACSHE062)	English: Language <ul style="list-style-type: none">Incorporate new vocabulary from a range of sources into students' own texts including vocabulary encountered in research (ACELA1498) English: Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations incorporating learned content and taking into account the particular purposes and audiences (ACELY1689)Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts containing key information and supporting details for a widening range of audiences, demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features (ACELY1694)Re-read and edit for meaning by adding, deleting or moving words or word groups to improve content and structure (ACELY1695)Write using clearly-formed joined letters, and develop increased fluency and automaticity (ACELY1696)
All	Cross-curriculum Priority: Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems (OI.3)Sustainable futures result from actions designed to preserve and/or restore the quality and uniqueness of environments (OI.9)	

Related books from CSIRO Publishing

By the same author:

- *Bouncing Back: An Eastern Barred Bandicoot Story* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/7771>)
- *Phasmid: Saving the Lord Howe Island Stick Insect* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/7226>)

For younger readers:

- *One Potoroo: A Story of Survival* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/8010>)
- *Swoop* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/8054>)

For adults:

- *The Compact Australian Bird Guide* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/7916/>)

Other CSIRO resources

CSIRO has developed and delivered a broad range of high-quality STEM education programs and initiatives for nearly 40 years. Our programs aim to inspire the pursuit of further STEM education among students and the community, to equip the emerging workforce with tomorrow's skill sets, and to strengthen collaboration between industry and classrooms across Australia. For more information visit: <https://www.csiro.au/en/Education>