

Australia's critically endangered animal species

December 6 2012, by Jane Rawson



Corroboree Frog. Credit: Australian Alps/Flickr

Australia has 96 critically endangered animal species, listed below. Over the coming months, we will be publishing a profile of each of them, looking at the threats to their survival, what's being done to protect them, and what more needs to be done.

"Critically endangered" is the highest threat level that can be assigned to a wild species (lower levels are "endangered" and "vulnerable"). These

species are either facing an extremely high risk of extinction, or have numbers which decreased (or will) by 80% within three generations. Some of these species may already be extinct.

Where no common name exists, only the Latin name is given.

Mammals

Woylie Bettongia penicillata Also known as the Brush-tailed Bettong, or Brush-tailed Rat Kangaroo; a small marsupial found from south-west Western Australia across [southern Australia](#).

Mountain Pygmy Possum Burramys parvus This tiny possum occurs as three isolated, genetically distinct populations in the alps of Victoria and NSW.

Christmas Island Shrew Crocidura trichura The shrew is endemic to Christmas Island and hasn't been seen since 1985. It is possibly extinct.

Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat Lasiorhinus krefftii Only 115 of these wombats remain; they are limited to Epping Forest National Park in Queensland.

Lesser Stick-nest Rat Leporillus apicalis This central-Australian rodent is probably extinct, with no reliable sightings since 1970.

Bramble Cay Melomys Melomys rubicola Limited to a small cay in the Torres Strait, this rodent has one of the most restricted distributions of any [mammal species](#).

Lord Howe Long-eared Bat Nyctophilus howensis This bat is known only from a single skull found in 1972, but Lord Howe Islanders continue to report bat sightings.

Christmas Island Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus murrayi* While listed as critically endangered, it's generally accepted this little bat is now extinct.

Gilbert's Potoroo *Potorous gilbertii* Only 40 or so of these rabbit-sized marsupials live in south-west Western Australia, but the population seems stable.

Kangaroo Island Dunnart *Sminthopsis aitkeni* This little hand-sized marsupial is restricted to a very small area of Kangaroo Island.



Mountain pygmy possum. Credit: Australian Alps collection/Parks Australia

Carpentarian Rock Rat *Zygomys palatalis* A rodent found in sandstone gorges in the Northern Territory, there are thought to be less than 2000 remaining.

Central Rock Rat *Zygomys pedunculatus* This rodent is found only in the western MacDonnell Ranges in the Northern Territory.

Birds

Christmas Island Frigatebird *Fregata andrewsi* Dust from mining has destroyed much of the frigate's nesting habitat but it may be losses away from the island that are the real danger – we have no idea of either trends or the severity of threats.

Orange-bellied Parrot *Neophema chrysogaster* One of the world's most endangered species, this parrot is expected to become extinct in three to five years.

Regent Honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia* Brightly coloured honeyeater from inland southeast Australia.

Reptiles

Short-nosed Sea Snake *Aipysurus apraefrontalis* In the 1990s, this Ashmore Reef-dweller was the third most commonly recorded sea snake; no individuals have been recorded since 2000, suggesting a 90% decline.

Leaf-scaled Sea Snake *Aipysurus foliosquama* Like the short-nosed sea snake, this snake has declined precipitously this century, perhaps due to coral bleaching.

Eared Worm-lizard *Aprasia aurita* Found around Ouyen, Victoria, this 10cm lizard is seriously threatened by fire; the next large fire could wipe it out.

Leatherback Turtle *Dermochelys coriacea* While this turtle has a world-wide range, its Pacific Ocean population has declined drastically in the last decade.

Christmas Island Whiptail-skink *Emoia nativitatis* The population of this skink, found only on Christmas Island, has declined 98% due to

the invasion of yellow crazy ants.

Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* The largest breeding populations of these ornate sea turtles are found along the northern coast of Australia.

Retro Slider *Lerista allanae* This burrowing skink has no legs and is found in the Brigalow woodlands of inland Queensland.

Gulbaru Gecko *Phyllurus gulbaru* Discovered only in 2003, this leaf gecko already makes the critically endangered list due to its restricted distribution.

Western Swamp Tortoise *Pseudemydura umbrina* Less than 200 of these tortoises remain in the wetlands around Perth.

Amphibians

Elegant Frog *Cophixalus concinnus* This frog is abundant, but because it lives on one mountaintop in Queensland it is threatened by climate change.

White-bellied Frog *Geocrinia alba* This frog is found only in the swamps in the dry lands around Perth, Western Australia.

Booroolong Frog *Litoria booroolongensis* Found right through New South Wales, this frog is found only in streams of the western Great Dividing Range.

Yellow-spotted Tree Frog *Litoria castanea* Found in permanent ponds, this bell frog is found in two completely separate populations in southeast Australia.

Armoured Frog *Litoria lorica* This wet tropics [tree frog](#) was rediscovered in 2008 in a tiny population on the Atherton Tablelands.

Kuranda Tree Frog *Litoria myola* Another tree frog from the wet tropics, this species is found in patches around Cairns.

Mountain Mistfrog *Litoria nyakalensis* This frog from the wet tropics was last recorded in 1990.

Peppered Tree Frog *Litoria piperata* This frog is found on in creeks in the dry escarpments of New South Wales.

Spotted Tree Frog *Litoria spenceri* A frog from the rocky gullies of the southern Great Dividing Range.

Baw Baw Frog *Philoria frosti* Discovered when a snake vomited it on to a naturalist, this frog is found only in the bogs of Mount Baw Baw in Victoria.

Corroboree Frog *Pseudophryne corroboree* This yellow-and-black striped frog is found only in the sphagnum bogs of the Australian Alps.

Sharp-snouted Day Frog *Taudactylus acutirostris* A frog from the mountains near Cooktown in Queensland.

Eungella Day Frog *Taudactylus eungellensis* This frog is found in the ranges of central Queensland.

Kroombit Tinker Frog *Taudactylus pleione* A frog restricted to forest patches in southern Queensland.

Tinkling Frog *Taudactylus rheophilus* With a "tinkling" call, this [frog](#) is restricted to mountaintops in Queensland.

Fish

Knifetooth Sawfish *Anoxypristis cuspidata* A sawfish found in shallow waters across the tropical Indian Ocean and western Pacific.



Spotted Handfish. Credit: AAP

Spotted Handfish *Brachionichthys hirsutus* This fish walks around on the sea bed using its fins and is found only in southeast Tasmania.

Dumb Gulper Shark *Centrophorus harrissoni* A species of dogfish from the deep waters off eastern Australia, threatened by fishing for oil and meat.

Elizabeth Springs Goby *Chlamydogobius micropterus* (and Edgbaston Goby *C. squamigenus*) Two highly specialised fish from artesian springs on stations in Western Queensland.

Swan Galaxias *Galaxias fontanus* This fish from eastern Tasmania declined with the introduction of Brown Trout.

Barred Galaxias *Galaxias fuscus* A Victorian galaxias from the headwaters of rivers near Mount Buller.

Clarence Galaxias *Galaxias johnstoni* A southern Tasmanian freshwater fish, this galaxias is threatened by invasive species.

Pedder Galaxias *Galaxias pedderensis* This spotty fish was threatened by the historic flooding of Lake Pedder in 1972.

Northern River Shark *Glyphis garricki* A shark found in the tidal rivers and estuaries of northern Australia and New Guinea.

Murray Cod *Maccullochella peelii* This large fish from the Murray-Darling is threatened by overfishing and river regulation.

Queensland Sawfish *Pristis clavata* (and Green Sawfish *P. zijsron*) Two sawfish from northern Australia, these shark relatives have declined due to bycatch.

Red-finned Blue-eye *Scaturiginichthys vermeilipinnis* A fish adapted to the harsh conditions of the Great Artesian Basin springs in western Queensland.

Southern Bluefin Tuna *Thunnus maccoyii* This large, predatory fish spawns off northwest coast of Australia and migrates around the southern coast.

Insects

Sydney Hawk *Austrocordulia leonardi* A dragonfly from southern Sydney, threatened by urban expansion.

Lord Howe Island Stick Insect *Dryococelus australis* Australia's most

famous insect, it was presumed extinct until 2001 and is now bred in captivity.

Tasmanian Torrent Midge *Edwardsina tasmaniensis* This insect lives only in the Cataract Gorge of Launceston, Tasmania.

***Hemisaga elongata* (and *Ixalodectes flectocercus*, *Nanodectes bulbicercus*, *Pachysaga strobila*)** Four species of katydids that h

Dinosaur Ant *Nothomyrmecia macrops* Found on the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia, this ant is a living fossil.

Schayera baiulus Presumed extinct until its rediscovery in 1991, this northern Tasmanian grasshopper hasn't been seen since.

Crustaceans

Cherax leckii This crayfish is found in one river on the border of New South Wales and Queensland.



Lord Howe Island Stick Insect. Credit: AAP

Margaret River Hairy Marron *Cherax tenuimanus* A crayfish from deep waters of Margaret River, threatened by competition with another crayfish species.

Central North Burrowing Crayfish *Engaeus granulatus* Only recently described, very little is known about this northern Tasmanian crayfish.

Mallacoota Burrowing Crayfish *Engaeus mallacoota* This crayfish is found only in the rainforest of an inlet in Victoria.

Scottsdale Burrowing Crayfish *Engaeus spinicaudatus* A burrowing crayfish found only in northeast Tasmania around the forestry town of Scottsdale.

Warragul Burrowing Crayfish *Engaeus sternalis* Land cleared for farming is the last remaining habitat for this burrowing crayfish.

Margaret River Burrowing Crayfish *Engaewa pseudoreducta* This burrowing crayfish is found in two streams in Western Australian heathlands.

***Euastacus bindal* (and *E. clarkae*, *E. dalagarbe*, *E. dharawalus*, *E. eungella*, *E. gamilaroi*, *E. girurmulayn*, *E. guruhgi*, *E. guwinus*, *E. jagabar*, *E. jagara*, *E. madae*, *E. mirangudjin*, *E. monteithorum*, *E. robertsi*, *E. setosus*, *E. yigara*)** Seventeen species of crayfish found on isolated mountaintops and cool rainforest streams in New South Wales and Queensland.

***Ombrastacoides denisoni* (and *O. parvicaudatus*)** These two crayfish are endemic to western Tasmania and threatened by mining activities.

Molluscs

Tasmanian Freshwater 'Limpet' *Ancylastrum cumingianus* A mollusc, that is not a limpet, found in Great Lake in Tasmania, now flooded for hydroelectricity.

Beddomeia tumida This snail possibly became extinct when Great Lake, Tasmania was flooded.

Fluvidona petterdi This snail is found in a single creek in New South Wales

Hemistomia whiteleggei A possibly extinct snail found only on Lord Howe Island.

Jardinella colmani A snail found only in the springs of the Great Artesian Basin in western Queensland.

Placostylus bivaricosus This large land snail is endemic to Lord Howe Island.

Corals

Fire Coral *Millepora boschmai* This coral, found in eastern Indian and central Pacific oceans, is vulnerable to El Nino events and global warming.

Read about how lists of endangered species are compiled:
[theconversation.edu.au/endange ... makes-the-list-11073](http://theconversation.edu.au/endange...makes-the-list-11073)

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