



RAINFOREST AVIARY (Map Ref36)



LP, MP, UP

The Wet Tropical Rainforest Aviary was opened in 1988 and at the time it was the largest aviary in the Southern Hemisphere. At its highest point the aviary stands at over 28 metres, higher than a 10 storey building. This aviary houses a range of birds which would normally be found in tropical rainforests such as those in North Queensland.

Each species of bird has specific dietary requirements, it is not as simple as scattering a few handfuls of seed! Plates are made up fresh each day by our keepers who do their best to give the birds the same sort of diet they would have in the wild. There are many types of bird diets including:

- Frugivores - birds which only eat fruit e.g. Fruit Pigeons
- Nectivores - birds which feed on nectar e.g. Rainbow Lorikeets
- Granivores - birds which feed on seeds and other grains e.g. Parrots
- Insectivores - birds which feed on insects e.g. Rainbow Bee-eaters
- Carnivores - birds which feed on other animals e.g. Owls

As you can appreciate, a lot of time and effort goes into looking after these birds.

Rainforests are being destroyed at an alarming rate. Since settlement, over one third of Australian rainforests have been cleared which means an incredible loss of wildlife as well as native plant life. It is not only humans who rely on rainforests, whilst we need them for oxygen, many animals are only adapted to life in the tree-tops and are unable to survive without trees.

Such animals have a special relationship with these trees and for many plant species, their only means of spreading their seeds is by the wildlife which inhabits them. This is done when the seeds are eaten by animals and spread throughout the forest; as the animals move through the trees, their droppings (which contain the seeds) fall to the forest floor. For other plants, their pollen sticks to animals' fur or feathers and pollination occurs as they move from plant to plant.



A1

The best way to see this aviary is to participate in it! To become part of the rainforest you only need to take your eyes and ears with you. Voices are definitely not needed.

- How many different species of birds can you see?
- How many different bird calls can you hear?
- Can you find all of the birds shown on the identification signs?
- Play Silent Eye - Spy with a friend: Each of you needs to point to a different identification sign and then find each other's bird. The first one to find it wins!

A2

You can make a difference to the wildlife that lives in your local area! The best way to help native animals living near you is to plant Australian flora which is native to your area. You can do this at school or even in your own backyard. To find out which plants are best and what sort of wildlife they attract, contact your local council or plant nursery. Many councils will also provide school and community groups with native trees for free - just ask! Not only will you be providing the wildlife in your area with food, shelter and homes but your efforts will be rewarded when the animals come to visit your school or area.

A3

TEACHERS!
This could make a great class project!
Older students might choose to become involved with other community groups such as Landcare for long-term projects and excellent research opportunities.



Don't forget...

- Cats make great inside pets and are best kept inside where they can't injure wildlife living in your area. Provide your cat with a litter box, toys, a scratching post and lots of love and attention. This way your cat is safe from road accidents, baiting and injuries & diseases from other cats. The best part is that native animals stay safe too.
- Use chemicals like pesticides, weed controllers and even detergents responsibly. Always use biodegradable products and don't ever dispose of chemicals down our storm water drains which go straight to our water ways. An easy way to make a big difference is to wash the family car on the grass and not on the road or in your driveway. This protects native Australian plants as well as animals.