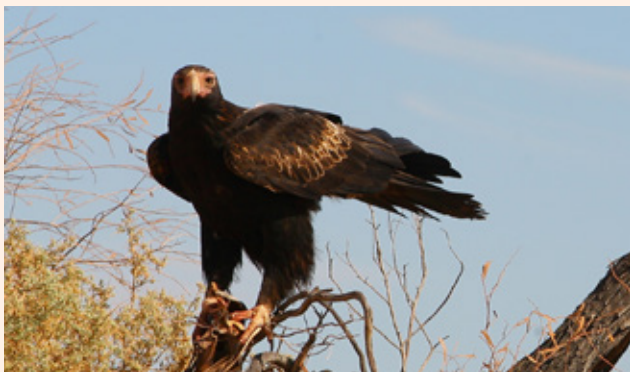


## WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE



### Common name

Wedge-tailed eagle

### Scientific name

*Aquila audax*

### Habitat

They prefer wooded areas and open forests but can at times be found in coastal and alpine regions. They are sometimes found in rainforests.

### Habitat range/distribution

The wedge-tailed eagle has an extremely large range and is found throughout mainland Australia, Tasmania and southern Papua New Guinea.

You will often spot wedge-tailed eagles perched on trees or poles or soaring overhead to altitudes of up to 2,000m. Wedge-tailed eagles build their nests in prominent locations with good views of the surrounding countryside. A nest may be built in either a live or dead tree, but usually the tallest one in the territory.

### Description

The wedge-tailed eagle has a long wingspan of 2.3m, and a characteristic long, wedge-shaped tail! Its legs are feathered all the way to the base of the toes. The bill is pale pink to cream, eyes brown to dark brown, and off-white feet.

Young wedge-tailed eagles are mid-brown in colour with reddish-brown heads and wings. They become progressively blacker for at least the first ten years of their lives.

The only difference in plumage between the sexes is that a female adult is generally slightly paler than her mate. Females (4.2–5.3kg) are also larger and heavier than males (3.2 up to 4kg).

Wedge-tailed eagles are Australia's largest raptors.

### Importance

All species are important because they each play an important and unique ecological role and hence help maintain a healthy and diverse natural environment, contribute to our economy (through ecotourism), and are culturally significant to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Wedge-tailed eagles feature in many dreaming stories for First Nations Australians, and play an important role in the agricultural ecosystem by:

- controlling numbers of rabbits and hares
- being indicators of environmental health because of their position at the top of the food web
- maintaining bush and farm hygiene by feeding on sick or weak animals.

### Key threats

- Habitat loss (including loss of nesting sites) from tree-clearing.
- Secondary poisoning from eating prey which has consumed poison.
- Collision with overhead wires, fences, and with vehicles while eating roadkill.

### What is being done to help protect and conserve this species

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting the growth, better management and sustainability of the state's public protected areas, including our extraordinary national parks and private protected areas which are home to our native animals, like the wedge-tailed eagle.

### Become a wedge-tailed eagle champion

- Learn about wedge-tailed eagles and how you can live with them on your property.
- Protect nesting sites from disturbance, especially during the breeding season (typically August-October).
- Report dead or injured eagles—1300 130 372.
- Talk to your friends and family about threats to wedge-tailed eagles and what they can do to help.



With a wingspan reaching more than two metres, the wedge-tailed eagle is Australia's largest bird of prey and one of the biggest eagles in the world.

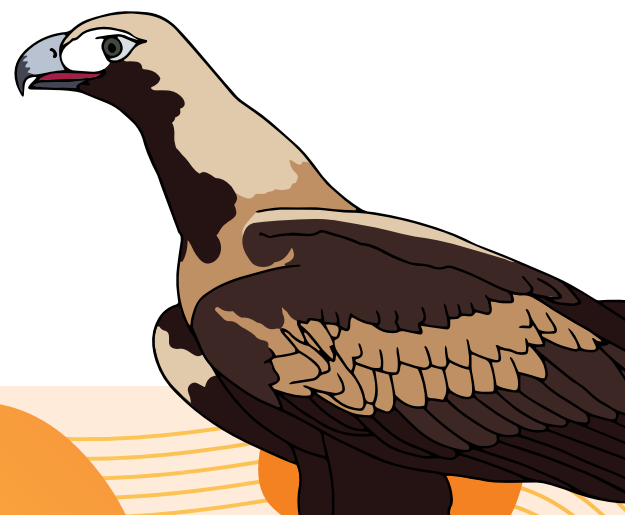
## SENTENCE SOLVERS

Use the words below to complete the sentences.

ALTITUDES	TERRITORIAL	DREAMING STORIES
NESTING SITES	WINGSPAN	BREEDING PAIRS

1. Wedge-tailed eagles are Australia's largest bird of prey with a \_\_\_\_\_ of more than two metres.
2. Wedge-tailed eagle \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_. They will defend their hunting ground and their large, impressive nests.
3. Keep your eyes on the sky because wedge-tailed eagles may be soaring overhead to \_\_\_\_\_ of up to 2,000m.
4. To be a wedge-tailed eagle champion, protect their \_\_\_\_\_ from disturbance, especially during the breeding season (typically August–October).
5. Wedge-tailed eagles feature in many \_\_\_\_\_ for Aboriginal Australians.

Wedge-tailed eagles are monogamous: they mate for life. Breeding pairs are territorial, and will defend their hunting ground and their large, impressive nests.



**Answers:**  
 1. wingspan  
 2. breeding pairs, territorial  
 3. altitudes  
 4. nesting sites  
 5. dreaming stories