

Diversity Down Under

What do weebills, wombats, and wallabies have in common? They're all animals found only in and near Australia. The land "down under" is home to more than half a million plant and animal species. Many of them are endemic to the area—they are only found in Australia and its neighboring countries. Can you guess which of the animals below are endemic to this region?*

Australia's animals are delightfully diverse. About

half of the continent's mammals are marsupials, which often carry their young in pouches. Reptiles include a wide range of snakes and lizards, such as the thorny devil lizard—which can eat up to 45 ants per minute and drink water with its skin!

From tropical forests to deserts, grasslands, and oceans, Australia provides a wide range of habitats for its unique wildlife. Take a journey to this land of adventure and meet some fascinating animal families.

Match each amazing creature with its statement.

1 Laughing Kookaburra

4 Kangaroo

2 Koala

3 Emu

5 Short-beaked Echidna

6 Dolphin

7 Crocodile

8 Seahorse

A

My baby grows in my pouch for about six months. Then it clings to my back or belly while I munch eucalyptus leaves.

B

I'm one of only two mammals that lays eggs. My baby, or **puggle**, stays in my pouch until its spines start to pop out.

C

As our chicks grow, they help care for their siblings. We snuggle closely together on branches.

D

My calf swims close to me, learning to catch fish and stay safe by mimicking me.

E

With us, the mom lays eggs in the dad's pouch, and the dad gives birth.

F

Even with my sharp teeth, I pick up my hatchlings in my mouth and carry them safely to the water.

G

My joeys spend their first months in my pouch. If I have two joeys of different ages, I produce two kinds of milk.

H

We dads build nests and sit on the moms' eggs for about eight weeks. We don't eat or drink until the eggs hatch.