

# Teacher Notes

## Themes

- Australian birds
- Animal conservation

## Key learning outcomes

- Learn about the importance of adult birds in regent honeyeater development
- Find out how humans have affected the regent honeyeater population
- Identify the different songs of the main birds in the book
- Be introduced to the IUCN

## Key curriculum areas

- **Science:** Science Inquiry; Science as a Human Endeavour
- **English:** Language
- **Mathematics:** Number
- **Cross-curriculum Priority:** Sustainability

## Publication details

*The Forgotten Song: Saving the Regent Honeyeater*

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# The Forgotten Song

*Saving the Regent Honeyeater*

Coral Vass and Jess Racklyeft

## About the book

The song of the regent honeyeater has been heard in the bush for many generations – but could it soon be lost forever?

Regent's father had learnt the song from his father, who learnt it from his father too. But with Regent's species now facing extinction, there is no one around to teach him. Regent tries to mimic the sounds of different birds but without success.

Will Regent learn his mating call before it's too late?  
Or will his ancient song be forgotten forever?

## Recommended for

Readers aged 5 to 9 (Years 1 to 4)



PUBLISHING

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## About the author and illustrator

**Coral Vass** is an award-winning children's author. She has always loved telling stories and is passionate about giving all children an equal opportunity to read.

**Jess Racklyeft** is an author and illustrator based in Melbourne. She particularly loves illustrating plants and animals and sharing her love of the Australian bush.

## Pre-reading questions or activities

The adults in your life were your first teachers and you had already learned a lot from them before you started kindergarten or school. What are some of the important skills, behaviours and knowledge that the grownups at home taught you? Can you imagine how your life might be different without that early learning?

## Discussion questions

### Science

1. What are some of the ways mentioned in the book that humans have pushed the regent honeyeaters out of their usual habitat?

*Trees turned to towers, billabongs to buildings, woodlands to carparks, forests to farms, land cleared leading to loss of habitat. This habitat destruction and fragmentation interferes with food sources, increases competitors and decreases nesting places.*

2. Apart from the named birds, how many Australian native animals and plants do you recognise from the book?

*Front endpapers: mistletoe, eucalypt or gum, grevillea, wattle*

*Page 3: bottlebrush*

*Page 9: yellow-tailed black cockatoo, crimson rosella, magpie, Major Mitchell's cockatoo*

*Page 16: koala*

*Page 21: wombat*

*Page 22: Bogong moth*

*Page 24: kookaburra, possum, scribbly gum*

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## Sustainability

1. Each pupil can prepare two questions that explore ways to increase the regent honeyeater population. Some topics to guide the writing of these questions are: food (they mainly eat nectar but also insects and lerp), shelter, animal competition (noisy miners and wattlebirds can push them out, invasive species) and human efforts.

## Activities

### Science

#### *Who's singing?*

There are four birds featured in the book, with Regent trying to copy the song of three other birds. Can you match the descriptions of each bird song with the four sound files provided? (See worksheet on page 5.)

*Regent honeyeater: Song 3*

*Noisy friarbird: Song 4*

*Pied currawong: Song 2*

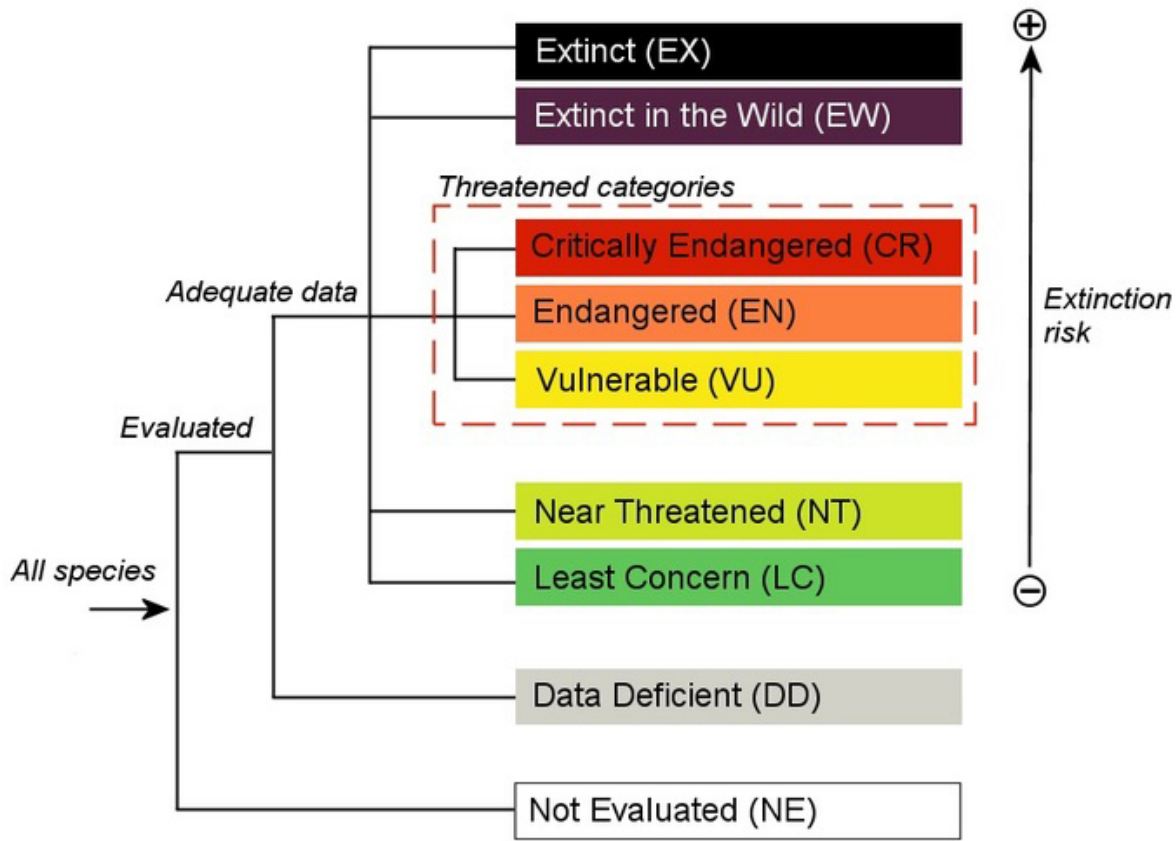
*Eastern rosella: Song 1*

#### *Meet the IUCN*

The book says that the regent honeyeater is listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the IUCN, as 'critically endangered'. The IUCN is a global agency that carefully assesses how healthy the populations of living things are, and whether they are at risk of becoming extinct. What do you think the words **critically**, **endangered** and **extinct** might mean? Check the glossary at the back of the book for some help. (When a creature or plant becomes more rare, the species is heading closer to extinction.)

In pairs or in a small group, discuss the two categories on either side of Critically Endangered (**Endangered** and **Extinct in the Wild**) in the picture on the next page. Report back to the class, including the factors that may move the regent honeyeater into either of those categories.

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IUCN, <<https://www.iucnredlist.org/about/faqs#What%20are%20the%20Red%20List%20Categories%20and%20Criteria>>

## English

### *Beautiful bird words*

Some of the words in the story may be unfamiliar to you. Use the worksheet on page 6 to replace the underlined words in each sentence with one of the words that comes from the book. Then decide if the word is a noun, a verb, an adjective or an adverb.

## Mathematics

### *Declining numbers*

Looking at the timeline at the back of the book, calculate how many regent honeyeaters disappeared between the years 2000 and 2022. Roughly then, how many birds are lost each year?

$$1500 - 400 = 1100$$

$$1100 \div 22 \text{ years} = 50 \text{ per year}$$

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## Worksheets

### *Who's singing?*

There are four birds featured in the book, with Regent trying to copy the song of three other birds. Can you match the descriptions of each bird song with the four sound files provided? See page 3 for the answers.

Bird	Song
Regent honeyeater, who whistled and warbled	1. <a href="https://xeno-canto.org/695231">https://xeno-canto.org/695231</a>
Noisy friarbird, who squeaked and squawked	2. <a href="https://xeno-canto.org/609026">https://xeno-canto.org/609026</a>
Pied currawong, who gabbled and gurgled	3. <a href="https://xeno-canto.org/30871">https://xeno-canto.org/30871</a>
Eastern rosella, who peeped and piped	4. <a href="https://xeno-canto.org/580083">https://xeno-canto.org/580083</a>

#### Credits:

1. Marc Anderson, XC695231. Accessible at [www.xeno-canto.org/695231](http://www.xeno-canto.org/695231).
2. Marc Anderson, XC609026. Accessible at [www.xeno-canto.org/609026](http://www.xeno-canto.org/609026).
3. Vicki Powys, XC30871. Accessible at [www.xeno-canto.org/30871](http://www.xeno-canto.org/30871).
4. Marc Anderson, XC580083. Accessible at [www.xeno-canto.org/580083](http://www.xeno-canto.org/580083).

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## *Beautiful bird words*

Replace each underlined word in the sentences below with the most suitable alternative from this list of words from the book: **frantically; pulsed; skimmed; timid; twitched; warbling**. Label each word in this list as a noun, a verb, an adjective or an adverb.

1. I could feel my heart beat as the blood pounded in my veins.

2. The magpies would wake the whole neighbourhood with their carolling.

3. Both of our dogs felt nervous when fireworks exploded in the sky.

4. The flat stone skipped and glided across the water – it was the perfect throw.

5. Regent desperately tried to sing the right song so a mate would recognise him.

6. As the fishing line jerked, Khanh could feel that something had been caught on the hook.

# Teacher Notes

## Australian Curriculum Links (version 9.0)

Year level	Learning area: Science	Other learning areas
Years 1/2	<b>Science Inquiry: Questioning and predicting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pose questions to explore observed simple patterns and relationships and make predictions based on experiences (<a href="#">AC9S2I01</a>)</li></ul> <b>Science Inquiry: Processing, modelling and analysing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sort and order data and information and represent patterns, including with provided tables and visual or physical models (<a href="#">AC9S2I04</a>)</li></ul>	<b>English: Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Understand that words can represent people and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs) (<a href="#">AC9E1LA07</a>)</li><li>Recognise the vocabulary of learning area topics (<a href="#">AC9E1LA09</a>)</li></ul>
Years 3/4	<b>Science as a Human Endeavour: Nature and development of science</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Examine how people use data to develop scientific explanations (<a href="#">AC9S3H01</a>)</li></ul> <b>Science Inquiry: Processing, modelling and analysing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Construct and use representations, including tables, simple column graphs and visual or physical models, to organise data and information, show simple relationships and identify patterns (<a href="#">AC9S3I04</a>)</li></ul>	<b>Mathematics: Number</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop efficient strategies and use appropriate digital tools for solving problems involving addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division where there is no remainder (<a href="#">AC9M4N06</a>)</li></ul>
All	<b>Sustainability: Futures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sustainable futures require individuals to seek information, identify solutions, reflect on and evaluate past actions, and collaborate with and influence others as they work towards a desired change. (SF2)</li></ul>	

## Related books from CSIRO Publishing

- *A Shorebird Flying Adventure* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/8006>)
- *On the Trail of the Plains-wanderer: A Precious Australian Bird* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/8005>)
- *Swiftly: The Super-fast Parrot* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/8062>)
- *Swoop* (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/book/8054>)

## 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>