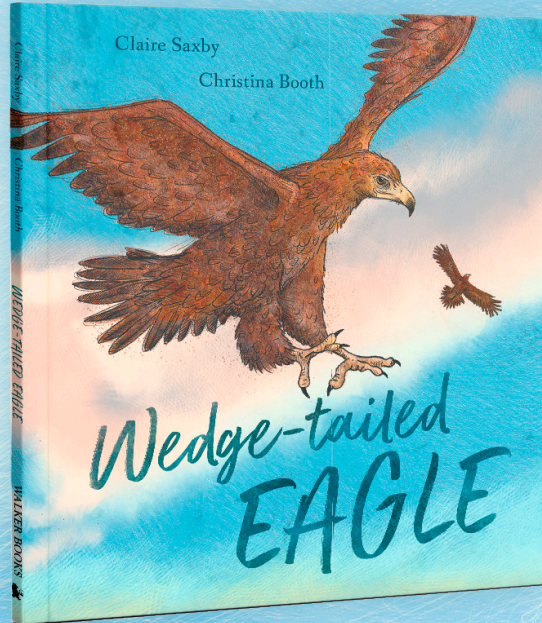


TEACHER NOTES

Teacher Notes by Belinda Bolliger

WALKER BOOKS

About The Book



WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE

CREATORS: CLAIRE SAXBY AND CHRISTINA BOOTH

ISBN 9781760655686 HARDBACK

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Award-winning author Claire Saxby's latest addition to the Nature Storybook series follows a female wedge-tailed eagle and her mate in a lyrical, fact-filled look at Australia's largest raptor.

Look up. Way up, into the clear blue.
Those two tiny specks are a wedge-tailed eagle and her mate.

Wedge-tailed Eagle explores the family life of these remarkable birds. The largest raptor in Australia, wedge-tailed eagles are powerful hunters, who mate for life, bringing many new clutches of chicks into the world in their lifetime. Award-winning author Claire Saxby leads us through a mating season, while Christina Booth's illustrations capture the majesty, power and gentleness of these magnificent birds of prey.

About The Creators

Claire Saxby... lives in Melbourne, Australia and loves her city. She is the bestselling and award-winning author of many books. *Big Red Kangaroo* and *Emu* (both illustrated by Graham Burne) and *Koala* (illustrated by Julie Vivas) have won numerous awards including the Royal Zoological Society of NSW's Whitley Award, the Environment Award for Children's Literature and Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Crichton Award. *Koala* was a CBCA Honour Book. *Dingo* (illustrated by Tannya Harricks) was joint winner of the Patricia Wrightson Prize for Society of NSW's Whitley Award (2018) and was shortlisted for Best Picture Book in the Educational Publishing Awards. Both her historical novels, *Haywire* (Omnibus Books, 2020) and *The Wearing of the Green* (2022) were shortlisted for the NSW Premier's History Award.

Author and illustrator *Christina Booth* works from her bush studio in Tasmania, Australia. Trained as a teacher and painter, she loves that she makes up stories and colours for a living. Christina started her literary career illustrating for great Australian authors such as Max Fatchen, Colin Thiele, Christobel Mattingley and Jackie French. Many of Christina's books have been CBCA Notables and her 2009 picture book *Kip* was a CBCA Honour Book. She won the 2014 Environment Award for Children's Literature for *Welcome Home*, and her 2019 title *One Careless Night* was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, and won the Environment Award for Children's Literature and the Whitley Book Award.





About the Teacher Notes Author

Belinda Bolliger... worked as an editor and publisher of children's books for over twenty-five years. She was the Children's Publisher at Hodder Headline (now Hachette Australia) and Children's Commissioning Editor and Publisher for ABC Books/HarperCollins. She has worked with many award-winning authors and illustrators, including Libby Hathorn, Garry Disher, Frances Watts, Judith Rossell and Matt Ottley. Belinda was editorial manager for Australian Standing Orders (Scholastic) for over 11 years, reviewing and selecting the most suitable new releases from Australian publishers to send to schools around the country. Belinda now works as an associate agent at Key People Literary Management and as a freelance children's editor and project manager.

CURRICULUM LINKS

- English (language, literature and literacy) • Science
- The Arts (drama, visual arts) • Health and Physical Education (personal, social and community health)

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY

Sustainability

Teacher Notes



ALL ABOUT WEDGE-TAILED EAGLES

After reading the book, discuss what you learned about wedge-tailed eagles that you didn't know before.

Wedge-tailed eagles are raptors. Raptors are birds of prey or predatory birds. As a class, brainstorm what this means. If you need more information, use the internet or your school library to answer any questions you have.

The word 'raptor' means 'to seize or grasp' in Latin. How might this apply to wedge-tailed eagles?

Create a map of where wedge-tailed eagles live.

What kind of environment do wedge-tailed eagles need to hunt and build nests?

What kind of threats do wedge-tailed eagles face?

Why are wedge-tailed eagles important in their ecosystem? What might happen if there were no eagles?

Choose one of the animals in *Wedge-tailed Eagle* and turn it into a piece of art using only recycled materials. Why is it important to recycle? How can it help to make a difference in the preservation of natural habitats such as a wedge-tailed eagle's habitat?

'Wedge-tailed eagles mate for life. This grooming is called *allopreening* and helps to keep their bond strong.' (p. 11) What does it mean to 'mate for life'? Find out which other birds mate for life.

Write a story about two wedge-tailed eagles looking for their special mate.

Wedge-tailed eagles are the fourth largest raptor in the world and the largest flying raptor in Australia. Find out about other raptors around the world. Break into small groups and choose one raptor (other than the wedge-tailed eagle) and create a poster presentation to share with the rest of the class.

On a map of the world, mark where other birds of prey can be found.

The Andean condor is the largest raptor in the world. It has a wingspan of up to 3.3 metres and can weigh up to 15 kg. Find images of the Andean condor on the internet - they are very impressive birds!

Compare the size of a wedge-tailed eagle, an Andean condore and a kookaburra by measuring them out on a large roll of paper or using chalk on the pavement in the playground. Information about the size and weight of wedge-tailed eagles can be found on page 27 of the book. Use the internet to research the size and weight of kookaburras.

'Wedge-tailed eagles perform a display called a *'pothook'* to impress their mate at the beginning of a new breeding season.' (p. 9) Other bird species also have elaborate and dramatic rituals and performances to attract a mate. Use the internet or your school library to find examples of these. You might like to look at dancing birds of paradise, bowerbirds and Victoria's riflebird.

A life cycle is a series of stages a living thing goes through during its life span. All plants and animals go through life cycles. What is the life cycle of a wedge-tailed eagle? Create an illustrated diagram that shows its life cycle. You might like to draw, paint, use collage or images from magazines to illustrate your diagram.

Choose another bird that interests you and create an illustrated diagram of the bird's life cycle.

VOCABULARY

There are some words in the book that you may not have heard. Use your dictionary to find the definitions of these words:

- Prey
- Carrion
- Thermals
- Parry
- Mock-battle
- Grooming
- Brown-blotch
- Forest dwellers
- Territory
- Potential

Choose 5 of these words and use them in a sentence.

TEXT

Two different fonts are used in the story. A font is the design and appearance of text. Can you see the two different fonts? Why do you think different fonts have been used? How do they add to your understanding of how to read the story?

One part of the text is fiction and the other is non-fiction. Discuss the meaning of the terms fiction and non-fiction. Give examples of fiction picture books and non-fiction picture books.

With a classmate, discuss whether you prefer fiction or non-fiction books and why.

Why do you think the author has chosen to tell the story using two different styles? Do you think it is effective?

ILLUSTRATIONS

How do the illustrations help tell the story?

How do the illustrations help you understand the information in the book?

Would the text work as well without the illustrations?

What did you notice about the pictures in the book?

What colours do you see? How do they make you feel?

What style are the illustrations (realistic, cartoonish, abstract)?

How does the illustrator use light and shadow in the pictures?

Discuss the perspectives the illustrator has used. Why do you think she has chosen to illustrate using these perspectives? Pages 6-7 and 8-9 are good examples of perspective.

If you could add something to one of the illustrations, what would it be and why?

Draw your own version of one of the illustrations.

Choose one of the illustrations and think about what might be happening outside the edges of the illustration. Draw or describe what else could be in the scene.

BIRD CROSSWORD (ANSWERS)

ACROSS

1. Wings
3. Talon
5. Egg
6. Chick
9. Raptor
10. Fly

DOWN

2. Squawk
4. Nest
7. Hatch
8. Prey

ROLE-PLAYING

Act out a day in the life of a wedge-tailed eagle, including hunting, nesting, and caring for chicks.

Act out a scene where you are a wedge-tailed eagle chick, pip-pip-pipping out of your shell. Find some music that suits egg-pipping. Don't forget to 'squawk and snatch' and flap your 'stubby wings and hop about the nest'! (p.23)

EGG BABY

Caring for an egg is hard work! Learn about responsibility and the basics of animal care by looking after an egg for one week as if it were a real baby bird.

You will need:

- Raw eggs (one per student, plus a few extras in case of accidents)
- Decorating supplies such as textas and stickers etc.
- Small baskets or containers to use as nests
- Cottonwool or tissue paper to cushion the eggs
- Journal for writing about your egg care.

What to do:

- Discuss why caring for eggs is important in the natural world, especially for birds such as wedge-tailed eagles.
- Decorate your egg (you might like to draw a face, add a name or create your own egg-cellent design). Be gentle! Eggs are fragile.
- Make a soft, warm nest for your egg. Your egg needs to be safe and comfortable.
- Take your egg with you wherever you go. This will help you understand how eggs require constant care. Keep your egg in its nest.
- Use your journal to write about your daily activities with your egg. You can illustrate your journal as well. Write about any challenges you face looking after your egg. Write about what you did every day to look after your egg (keeping it warm, not dropping it and so on).
- At the end of the week, share your experience caring for your egg with the rest of the class. What did you learn? Was it difficult? Was it fun?
- Create a certificate to give to one of your classmates to reward them for taking good care of their egg baby.

CRAFT

Create wedge-tailed eagle masks or wings using paper, feathers, and paint.

Make a large mural of a wedge-tailed eagle's habitat with all the different animals and plants that live there.

GUEST SPEAKER

Invite a local bird expert or wildlife rehabilitator to talk about eagles and other birds of prey.

FURTHER READING

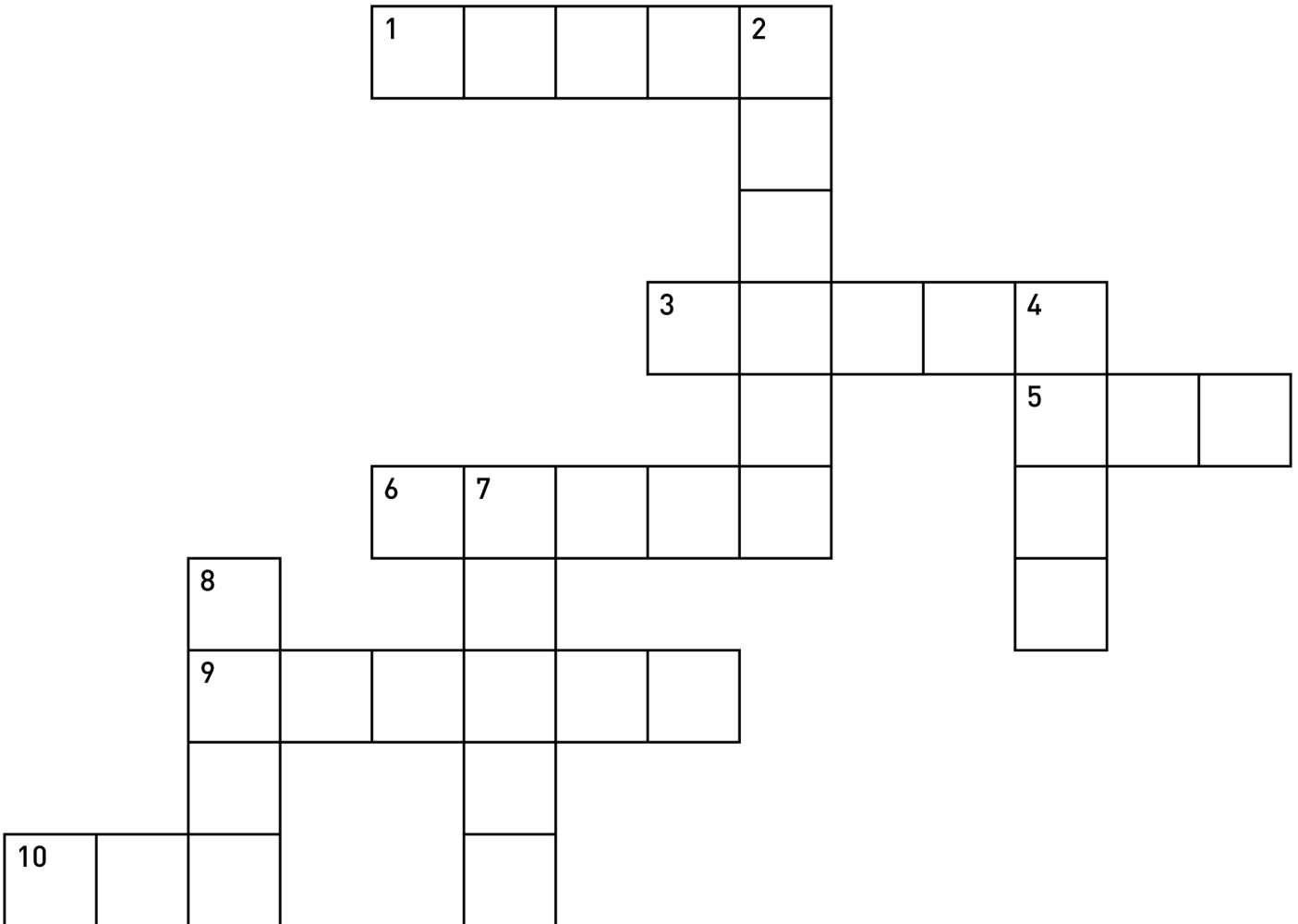
Read other books about eagles and birds (please note that some of these suggestions are for upper primary readers):

- *Bindi* by Kirli Saunders and Dub Leffler (Magabala Books)
- *Birds of Prey* by Tom Jackson (Amber Books Ltd)
- *The Eagle & the Wren* by Jane Goodall (Random House US)
- *The Eagle Flew* by Daniel Stoks and Aisha Lani Wiig (Bass Museum of Art)
- *Ten Birds That Changes the World* by Stephen Moss (Faber)
- *Birds of Prey: Eagles* by Golriz Golkar (North Star Editions)
- *Raptors: Hawks, Eagles, Kites, Falcons and Owls* by Roland H. Wauer (Lightning Source Inc)
- *Eagle Warrior* by Gill Lewis (HarperCollins Publisher)

Books in the *Nature Storybooks* series published by Walker Books (<https://www.walkerbooks.com.au/resource/nature-storybooks-book-list/>).



BIRD CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. The body parts birds use to fly
3. The sharp claw of a bird of prey
5. An eagle lays this
6. A baby bird
9. A bird of prey
10. To move through the air

DOWN

2. The sound an eagle chick makes
4. A bird's home
7. To emerge from an egg
8. The food that birds hunt



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