

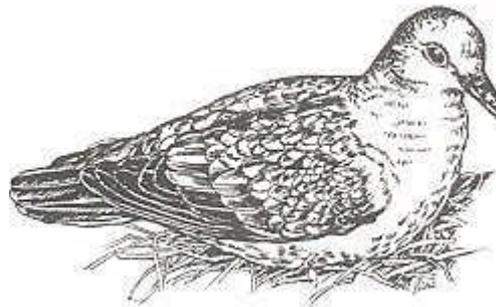
## Lord Howe Island

# Land Animals

The rare and endemic animals of Lord Howe Island, and their association with diverse neighbouring land areas were one of the factors that contributed to World Heritage Listing in 1982.

Because of the great distance of Lord Howe Island from any large land mass, large vertebrate animals are absent. When the Island was discovered, the only land vertebrates apart from birds were two species of lizards and a small bat. Invertebrate animals, being much smaller and lighter, travel over large ocean distances more easily and so the Island has a rich invertebrate fauna of small creatures such as insects, spiders and snails.

The two lizards - a skink and a gecko are quite rare on the main Island, probably because of predation by cats and rats, but are both abundant on the offshore islets including Blackburn Island, Ball's Pyramid and Roach Island. Interestingly they are found only on Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island and nowhere else in the world. The bat is a small insect eating bat only several centimetres long. They are best seen at dusk flitting around lights of the settlement area.



*Emerald Ground Dove*  
*Chalcophaps indica*

## Birds

Birds, with power of flight, can easily cross long ocean distances and colonise isolated islands; when Lord Howe Island was discovered there were 15 species of native land birds. Unfortunately, as on most islands around the world, the birdlife of Lord Howe was affected when the Island was discovered by humans. Two of the endemic species (the White Gallinule and White-throated Pigeon) were eaten into extinction by sailors who called in for food even before settlement in 1833; a third (the Red-fronted Parakeet) was shot soon after settlement because it ate the settlers crops and was last seen in the 1860's. The worst disaster for the birds was in 1918 when rats came ashore and caused a further five species to disappear. The last extinction was the Lord Howe Island Boobook Owl, last heard in the 1950's.

Seven land bird species managed to survive the rats - The Emerald Ground Dove, Sacred Kingfisher, Buff Banded Landrail, two endemic species - the Woodhen and the Lord Howe Island White-eye; and two endemic subspecies - the Lord Howe Island Currawong and the Lord Howe Island Golden Whistler.

## LAND ANIMALS

The Woodhen became endangered largely due to humans bringing predators to the Island. The Woodhen was the subject of a captive breeding program in the early 1980's and now flourishes on the Island (see separate leaflet).

With humans' modifications to the environment, mainly clearing of the forest, other landbirds from neighbouring land areas were able to colonise Lord Howe Island. These are the White-faced Heron, European Songthrush and Blackbird, Nankeen Kestrel, Australian Magpie Lark (Peewee), Common Starling, Masked Owl (introduced to kill the rats), Mallard cross Pacific Black duck, Welcome Swallow, Eastern Swamphen and Masked Lapwing? the last two species since 1987. Today there are eighteen species of landbirds breeding on the Island.

## Invertebrates

These are small animals without a backbone and include such familiar creatures as spiders, insects, and snails. They are usually small and they or their eggs can travel in air currents, birds feet, or on debris washed down from rivers and out to sea



*Land Snail - Gudeoconcha sophiae*

On Lord Howe Island there are about 50 species of land snails. Most are small, but there are several larger species. The 5 cm long, white, pointed shells on the forest floor are the dead shells of a land snail species still living on the Island today. Over 100 species of spiders have been identified on Lord Howe Island - most are small and rarely seen, but the large Golden Orb Weaver is conspicuous in summer, when it spins its long sticky threads across the tracks.

These birds may all be seen around the lowlands of the Island; the only one you may have difficulty with is the Masked Owl which is nocturnal and wary.



*Lord Howe Island White-eye  
Zosterops Tephropluera*

The Island has one endemic cicada whose loud drumming noise is heard throughout the Island forests in summer months. In the Island streams are two unusual invertebrate animals - a small 2 cm long endemic shrimp and a small 1 cm freshwater crab. During summer many species of beetles are active; the largest is the brown, 7cm long cerambid beetle, whose larvae are long white "witchety grubs" that eat into the wood of trees.

*Gecko Phyllodactylus Guentheri*

Responsible measures taken by the Lord Howe Island Board, such as removal of cats, will help the landbird and other animal populations to continue and ensure the important World Heritage values of the Island will be maintained.

