



**WILD
AT ART**

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

THREATENED
SPECIES **ART**
COMPETITION
FOR KIDS 

LESSON GUIDE



AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION

Nature
needs us,
now



Wild At Art threatened species art competition for kids

LESSON GUIDE

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Wild At Art in your classroom

Wild At Art is Australia's biggest threatened species art competition for kids. Founded in 2016 by artist Lorraine Bower, Wild At Art is an opportunity for children to unleash their creativity while learning about Australia's threatened animals and plants.

Over ten years, we've had over 20,000 entries from kids aged 5-12. From cuddly koalas to rare species of fish, colourful butterflies and smiling quokkas, kids love learning about the animals they share the planet with.

Guide to using this resource

This resource is a unit plan linked to the curriculum. It is designed to support educators to deliver a series of lessons that facilitate student engagement with the Australian Conservation Foundation's Wild At Art threatened species art competition for children aged 5-12. At the end of the resource, we have also provided three 45-minute standalone lessons that can be brought into the classroom at any time.

The guide is designed to be flexible so that educators can adapt it to their students' varied needs and levels, regardless of their classroom level. Following the entry criteria for the competition, this lesson guide is divided into four sections: research, create, reflect, and submit and next steps.

In each section there are four potential activities that increase in level. Each activity provides questions as prompts to guide students' wondering, interest and responses.

In each of the three sections there is also an overarching goal and application designed to integrate with the Australian curriculum.

The final outcome of this guide is for children to submit an entry to Wild At Art, our threatened species art competition for kids. To submit entries, children will require support from educators to upload them into the online submission portal. The portal has been designed to make batch uploading entries easy and smooth for teachers. You can also save your submissions as a draft so you don't have to upload all in one go. For support using the portal, please reach out to wildatart@acf.org.au

Curriculum links to each section have also been aligned and provided.



Part 1: Research

GOAL: To choose and research a threatened plant or animal that is native to Australia.

Research some of the threatened animals and plants in Australia, then choose one to represent in your artwork.

You may decide to look for a species that's threatened in your area, or one that used to live in your area but is now extinct there. Or you may decide to choose one that lives further away but is very interesting to you. The only rules are that your chosen species is native to Australia (i.e. it occurs here naturally and has not been introduced) and it is considered threatened (at risk of extinction).

You may also like to find out the reasons that animal or plant is threatened. Perhaps it has suffered habitat loss from logging, land-clearing or bushfires, or perhaps it is threatened by introduced animals like foxes and cats.

APPLY:

The following activities can be used as prompts and starting points for selecting and researching a threatened plant or animal species. See the resource list below for starting points.

Level F-2: All about your chosen threatened species

Have a look at the [list of Australian threatened plants and animals](#). Which species are you drawn to? Which do you find interesting? Is there a less common or unusual species you might like to focus on?

Find out the following information about your plant or animal:

- What is the name of your chosen species?
- What do they like to eat?
- What kind of places do they live in?
- What is something that is threatening them and making it difficult for them to survive?



Level 3-4: Your chosen threatened species on Country

It's important to understand the history of where we live. Research and learn more about First Nations culture and Country, and the Country that your threatened species lives on.

- Can you find a threatened species that is local to where you live?
- What state and city do you live in?
- Can you find the First Nations name/s for this place?
- What kind of environment is around you?
- What do you think this environment looked like 40,000 years ago, for the First Nations people who lived here then?

Level 5-6: Your chosen threatened species and you. What impact do humans have on their environment and what could the future look like?

As humans, our actions impact the world around us. Reflect on how you and other people impact the world and your chosen plant or animal.

- What things do we do every day – big or little – that impact the natural world around us?
- **Reflect:** What was your plant or animal's environment like when First Nations Peoples managed the land, before colonisation?
- **Question:** What is their environment like now? What positives and negatives are there?
- **Predict:** Imagine two worlds. If we don't take action, what might the environment be like 20 years from now? If we do act responsibly now, what positive changes might we see?
- **Predict:** Imagine two worlds. If we don't take action, what might the environment be like 20 years from now? If we do act responsibly now, what positive changes might we see?



Resources

- [Endangered Australian Animals on Twinkl](#): A handy list of critically endangered Australian animals, loads of key information and creative resources about the topic to help you teach your children.
- [Wild At Art website](#)
- [Threatened animal list](#) from the Australian Conservation Foundation
- [Zoos Victoria School Readers](#): Discover the science of Victoria's wildlife through illustrated stories written for Foundation-Year 2. Free e-books with narration, videos, animal toolkits, and more.
- [Whose Country am I on?](#) | AIATSIS: A guide to finding out the First Nations name/s for the Country you are on and the Country your chosen species can be found on.
- [Australian Native Plants Society](#): examples of plants at risk
- [EPBC Act List of threatened fauna](#): List of threatened animals under Australia's national environment law.
- [EPBC Act List of threatened flora](#): List of threatened plants under Australia's national environment law.

Curriculum links

- Science understanding
 - [Biological sciences](#)
 - [Earth and space sciences](#)
- Science inquiry
 - [Questioning and predicting](#)
 - [Communicating](#)
- General Capabilities
 - [Ethical understanding](#)
 - [Literacy](#)
 - [Critical and creative thinking](#)
- Cross-curriculum priorities
 - [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures](#)
 - [Sustainability](#)
- HASS F-6: skills
 - [Questioning and researching](#)



Part 2: Create

GOAL: Using your research, create an artwork to represent your chosen threatened species.

Create your own original work of art that interprets your chosen threatened animal or plant. Make sure it falls within the categories of drawing, painting or mixed media (such as collage). Three-dimensional, photography and video works unfortunately can't be accepted for the Wild at Art competition. You can read the [full instructions for the artist](#).

Please make sure it is your own work. Copying the shape and form of a species is fine as long as you make it your own creation. Tracing, or having a parent or anyone else work on any part of your entry is not allowed. AI is also not allowed and will be disqualified.

APPLY:

Level F-2: Recycled and found materials

One reason so many species are threatened is because of how much waste we create as humans. In your artwork, how can you include materials that otherwise would go in the bin or recycling, and turn them into art? This means less waste AND it's a clever way to help people to see the impact their rubbish might have on our environment.

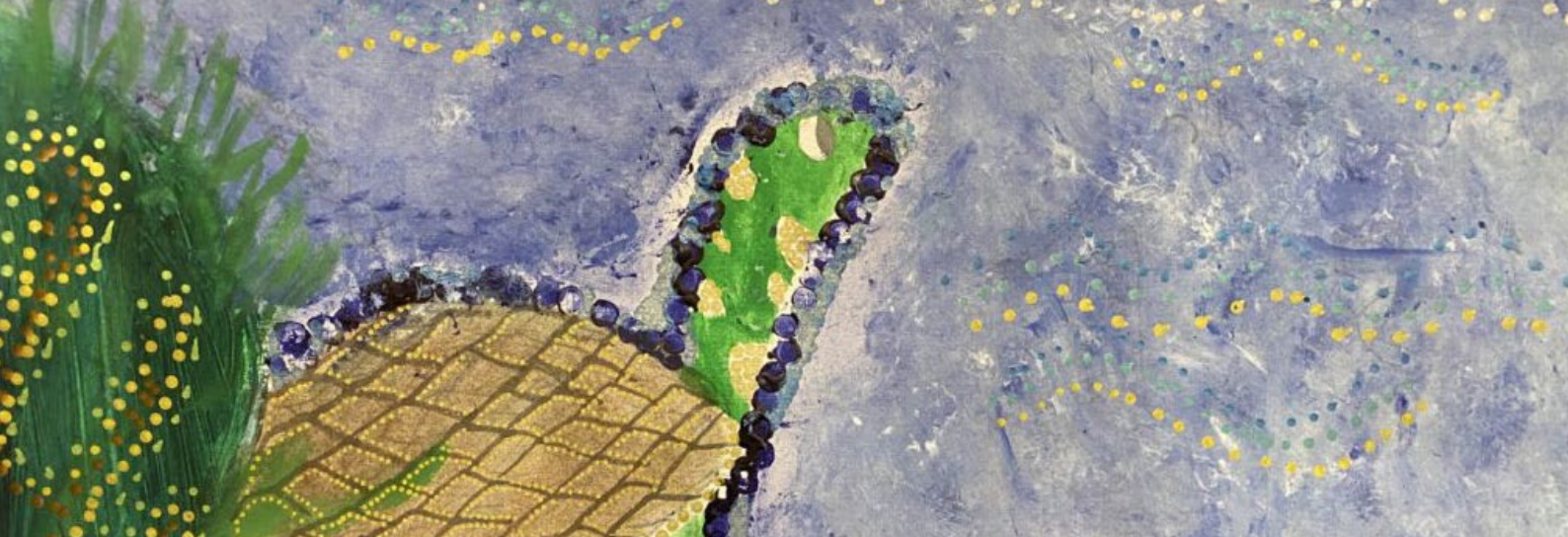
Examples of materials:

- Scrap paper
- String or wool
- Cardboard or packaging
- Lids
- Shiny wrapping paper

Level 3-4: Composition - what are your eyes drawn to? What is the focus of your artwork?

Choose an artwork from last year's winners. What do your eyes see first in this artwork?

What is going to be the focus of your artwork? When planning out your work, think about how you can make your chosen species stand out. Could you use bold colours for the species, and pale colours for the background? Rough textures for the species on a smooth background?



Level 4-5: Don't forget – uniqueness!

How can you make your artwork stand out?

The most unique thing about your artwork is that YOU are creating it - and no one is exactly like you!

Could you use your favourite colours or choose a species that lives in your neighbourhood? What things do you think YOU might notice about your chosen species, that no one else might see?

Level 5-6: Context - consider your research. What else can you include?

Consider your research. What did you find out about the species you have chosen?

Did you learn anything about their environment? What about the impact humans have on this environment? How might you include this information in your artwork? Could you include this in the background?

For example you could draw/paint:

- A koala surrounded by burning trees because bushfires threaten koalas
- A regent honeyeater that is sad because the trees it lives in are being cut down
- An Australian sea lion surrounded by plastic and rubbish in the ocean

Resources:

- [Wild At Art: Instructions for the artist](#)
- [Wild At Art 2025 winners](#)
- [Wild At Art 2024 winners](#)

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Part 3: Reflect

GOAL: To reflect on your work and share any thoughts or feelings about your species.

Your reflection should be 50-150 words long and can be included in the submission form. This will help the judges understand more about you and your work.

The reflection is a short piece of writing that describes anything you would like to share about your artwork. You might like to share what inspired you to depict that species, or a fun fact about the species.

Parents or teachers may help younger children fill in this section. Take a look at the [winning written entries from 2025](#).

APPLY:

Level F-2: Tell us about your work

Share your thoughts about your threatened species. Use this short template and fill in the gaps. Circle if your art is an animal or plant.

I chose the _____ for my artwork. I chose this animal/plant because _____ and _____. My animal/plant lives _____ and likes to eat _____. When I think about my animal/plant, I feel _____.

I chose to use _____ to draw/paint my artwork because _____. If I could talk to my animal/plant I would say _____. One fun fact about my animal/plant is _____.

When people look at my drawing I want them to feel _____.

Level 2-4: Create a story around your artwork

Imagine that your animal or plant has a story. Where did they come from? Where do they live? Could you create a story about your animal as if they were a character in a movie? How does your animal or plant feel? Give them a personality.

For example: My koala is called Frank. Frank lives in Queensland, just outside Brisbane/Meenjin. Frank loves to eat eucalyptus leaves and sleep all day. Frank is scared that the eucalyptus tree he lives in is going to get bulldozed. I really want to help protect Frank and his friends from losing their homes.



Level 5-6: Record and share your reflection

Record a 10-15 second video or voice recording describing your artwork. Swap with a friend and write a summary of each other's reflection.

- What was really clear about their reflection?
What did you learn?
- What do you think they could have included?
What else did you want to know?
- What was your favourite thing about their artwork?
- What do you think the intention of their artwork was?

Resources

Written entry examples:

This is the Spotted Tree Frog and I call him Mr Frog. Mr Frog has a clock on his tummy because time is running out for him. The sun is very hot, and the frog's home is getting too warm and dry. He can't even find a proper leaf to stay on. I want people to help the frogs and keep the water cool and clean, so they can be safe and happy

– Aaron, age 5.

This poor unnoticed, and endangered creature is unable to defend itself in its own habitat! This is a major problem in my eyes. If we don't work together to save this little crayfish, extinction is right around the corner. If you think we can just ruin all of our amazing, special places and the beautiful little species that live there, you are sadly mistaken. When they are gone, they are GONE. Please help us save them

– Derek, age 10.

What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word EXTINCTION? Maybe you think of the Tasmanian Tiger or the Dodo bird, these animals all had to try and fight to stay alive but they still went extinct. What would you do if all humans went extinct? No one would like that, but this is happening to animals. Let's all make extinction go extinct!

– Darian, age 11.



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- English
 - [Text structure and organisation](#)
 - [Language for expressing and developing ideas](#)
 - [Creating texts](#)

Part 4: Submit and next steps

To submit your artwork, you'll need support from your teacher or another adult. They will be able to submit your artwork via the online portal.

Now that you're finished, what have you learnt?

What are one or two of the most surprising or memorable facts that you've learned about your species? Think about how YOU fit into this story – how will you think or act differently now that you know that this species is threatened? What do you want to communicate to others about this situation using your artwork? Are there other ways you can communicate this message?

APPLY:

When you submit your artwork, you will also have the option to send your artwork and reflection to your local Member of Parliament (MP). It's important that MPs hear from you about why it's important to protect our unique and wonderful plants and animals.



Appendix: Additional classroom resources

In this section you'll find two 45-minute lessons per level that can be used as standalone lessons in the classroom. One focuses on learning about threatened species in Australia, and the second lesson is focused on creating an artwork.

Lesson one – learning about threatened species

GOAL: To learn about threatened species in Australia and share those learnings with a buddy or the class.

APPLY:

Level F-2: Class group research and reflection

As a class, choose one animal or plant to research together with your teacher. You may like to choose a more popular animal like the Tasmanian devil or koala, or perhaps you might want to choose a more unique animal like the maugan skate or the red handfish.

As a class, find the answers to the following questions:

1. If you chose an animal, what does it like to eat?
2. Where does your plant/animal live/grow?
3. What are two fun facts about your plant/animal?

Once you have all this information, talk to a buddy about the animal. Do you think this animal likes eating meat or vegetables? Do they prefer hot or cold weather? Do you think they would be scared or brave?

Level 2-4: Research and reflection

Choose a threatened animal or plant from [this list](#) and conduct research on the animal or plant of your choice. Answer the questions provided about your chosen animal or plant and share it with a buddy.

1. Choose a species from [this list](#).
2. Research the following questions:
 - a. What is the common name and the scientific name of your chosen animal or plant?
 - b. Where do they live/grow?
 - c. What threats are they facing? For example, is their habitat being destroyed or is there a invasive animal that hunts them?
3. Share the research you have found with your buddy and then swap and listen to their answers.



Level 5-6: Reading and comprehension lesson

Read through this short piece about Australia's extinction crisis, then work your way through a series of comprehension questions. You could do this as a whole class, in small groups or as individuals. Find the answer sheet at the end of the lesson guide.

Australia's extinction crisis

Australia is one of the few places mega-diverse places on earth that supports an incredible array of completely unique plants and animals. In fact, over 80% of Australia's plant, mammal, frog and reptile species are found nowhere else in the world!

So many extraordinary animals and plants, from the koala to the wollemi pine, have evolved isolated from the rest of the world over tens of millions of years. Australia is spoilt when it comes to wildlife but unfortunately, our precious animals and plants are also in danger.

Our governments are failing to protect the plants and animals that make our nation so unique, and today there are more than 2,000 plants, animals and ecosystems that are threatened with extinction. In fact, we have caused the extinction of more mammals in Australia than in any other nation. Extinction is a confronting but important concept. There are cultural, scientific, ecological and moral impacts from the extinction of species.

Our national laws are failing to protect nature. While the government has recently made some changes to these laws, they need to implement them properly. It's more important than ever that children learn about Australia's threatened wildlife and speak out for a future where plants, animals and people thrive.

At the Australian Conservation Foundation, we are fighting hard to protect precious species like our iconic koala, beautiful swift parrot, rare maugan skate and more. Together, we can demand that our governments implement strong laws to protect these amazing, unique animals and plants.

Comprehension questions:

- 1) What type of text do you think this is?
- 2) What does the writer want you to know? Show your answer by summarising each paragraph in one or two sentences.
- 3) How many plants and animals are threatened with extinction in Australia?
- 4) a. What type of animal has Australia caused the extinction of more than any other country?
b. Can you give an example of this type of animal?



5) What does 'mega-diverse' mean?

Use a dictionary to confirm your understanding.

6) What does the writer mean by "Australia is spoilt when it comes to wildlife"?

7) Can you explain what the writer means by 'Extinction is a confronting but important concept.'

8) Super Challenge Question

Can you infer why Australia's plants and animals are so unique?

Underline or copy the clue.

HINT: Read the second paragraph carefully.

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Lesson two – drawing/painting/collaging a threatened plant or animal

GOAL: To draw/paint/collage an animal or plant that is threatened in Australia.

APPLY:

Level F-2: Copying an artwork

Pick an animal that you like the name of or that you find interesting from [this list](#). With the support of a teacher, find an image of the animal or plant. Look closely at the photo and carefully draw/paint your version of this animal or plant. Look at the details. Does your animal have feathers, fur or scales? Do they have claws? Are they standing on grass or perhaps swimming in water?

Use pens, pencils or paints to draw/paint your chosen animal or plant, looking closely at your photo as inspiration.



Level 2-4: Use different mediums to create an artwork

Pick an animal that you like the name of or that you find interesting from [this list](#). With the support of a teacher, find an image of the animal or plant to use as inspiration.

Now, look at the different colours and textures. What different mediums could you use to paint/draw your animal? Could you cut up some paper and glue it on? Could you find some leaves and use them as scales? Use three or more different mediums to create your work.

Level 5-6: Draw/paint a threatened animal/plant and something that is threatening them

There are over 2000 animals, plants and ecosystems in Australia that are threatened. There are many different reasons why these animals are threatened. Pick a threatened plant or animal and find out why they are threatened. Draw/paint your animal/plant and include something in the artwork that is threatening them.

For example you could draw/paint:

- A koala surrounded by burning trees because bushfires threaten koalas
- A regent honeyeater that is sad because the trees it lives in are being cut down
- An Australian sea lion surrounded by plastic and rubbish in the ocean

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Answers for Level 5-6: Reading and comprehension lesson

1) Information text or persuasive information text

2) Correct answers will vary

Core ideas:

Paragraph 1 - Australia has unique and diverse plants and animals.

Paragraph 2 – Australia has extraordinary plants and animals and they are under threat.

Paragraph 3 – Governments are not doing enough to protect or unique and precious plants and animals, so many are now threatened with extinction. Australia has caused the extinction of more mammals than any other country.

Paragraph 4 – Australian nature laws are not working well enough and it's important children know and speak out in protection of nature.

Paragraph 5 – Australian Conservation Foundation is working to protect threatened animals and plants. The Australian people can stand together to demand better nature laws.

3) More than 2,000.

4) a. Mammals

b. Correct answers will vary

Core idea:

Mammals include humans and all other animals that are warm-blooded vertebrates (vertebrates have backbones) with hair. They feed their young with milk and have a more well-developed brain than other types of animals. Definition [here](#).

5) 'Mega-diverse'

Megadiverse means having an extraordinarily high level of biodiversity—a massive variety of plant, animal, and fungi species within a given area. The term is most commonly applied to a specific group of nations that harbor the majority of Earth's life and unique ecosystems. – Wikipedia.

For [more information](#) about Australia's status as a mega-diverse country, click [here](#) or [here](#).

6) Correct answers will vary

Core idea:

The writer is using figurative language to express Australia has an incredible amount of interesting wildlife to learn and wonder about. It comes from the idiom "spoilt for choice". According to the [Cambridge Dictionary](#), to be "spoilt for choice" is an idiom that means you have so many good options or alternatives available that it is difficult to make a decision.



7) *Correct answers will vary*

Core idea:

The writer suggests that while thinking about the idea of extinction and certain species being gone forever is scary or confronting, it is important we think about it and understand the threats. If we understand the threats, we can take action to make changes that protect against the extinction of our precious and unique flora and fauna.

8) *Correct answers will vary*

Core idea:

Due to Australia's geographical isolation a long time ago, when we became an island, our flora and fauna developed without interference, or any way of spreading into different areas. They developed ways of being and adaptations suited specifically to Australia.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Clue, paragraph two: "So many extraordinary animals and plants, from the koala to the Wollemi pine, have evolved isolated form the rest of the world over tens of millions of years"



Thank you for using the Wild At Art lesson guide!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to our friendly team at wildatart@acf.org.au

Please note that competition dates each year vary, so make sure to check out our web page for the latest information on the competition.

'Hope in her eyes' by Jasper, 10 - 2025 Wild At Art competition



**AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION**

**Nature
needs us,
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