

WILDLIFE EMBLEMS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BLACK SWAN

Cygnus atratus



The Black Swan was first recorded by the Dutch navigator Vlaming in January 1697 in the Swan Estuary. Although it is to be found throughout Australia, this graceful bird has been regarded with special affection by many generations of Western Australians and has long been used to identify things Western Australian.

Males and females are similar in size and appearance but males can be identified in flight by their longer neck and, when swimming, hold their neck more erect. The bird's voice can often be heard at night and is a musical honk or bugling sound.

Nests are a bulky collection of sticks and rushes found in fresh or brackish swamps and lakes. Between four to eight eggs are laid and these are pale green, becoming paler as incubation proceeds. Incubation takes thirty-five days.

Mangles' Kangaroo Paw was first collected in the Swan River Colony in the early years of its settlement, and was described by D. Don in 1836.

It is a low sub-shrub, with leaves 30-60 cm in length, sometimes more, rather broad and tapering to an acute apex. The flowering stem may reach 90 cm-120 cm in height and bears a number of large flowers at its summit.

Mangles' Kangaroo Paw occurs naturally from almost the Shark Bay area in the north to the vicinity of Busselton in the south, and eastwards to Lake Muir occurring on sandy soil. In the Darling Range it is common on lateritic soils while in a small form it extends eastwards as far as Merredin. The species is common in King's Park, Perth, and in the surrounding bushland.

Flowering usually commences in August and extends through to early October.



KANGAROO PAW

Anigosanthos manglesii D. Don

NUMBAT OR BANDED ANTEATER

Myrmecobius fasciatus



The Numbat is one of Western Australia's most attractive marsupials and, although its range once extended into northern South Australia, the population today is confined mainly to the south-west of Western Australia.

Preferred habitat is Wandoo forest where the ground is littered with fallen branches and hollow logs. Here the Numbat finds both shelter and food and can be observed during daylight hours searching for termites in the logs and sub-surface soil. Termites are the main food of the Numbat and are exposed by the animal's sharp claws and then licked up by its exceptionally long tongue.

An adult Numbat is generally about 40 cm long, of which slightly less than half is tail length. Usually a litter comprises four young which are born between January and April; these are carried or nursed by the mother through winter.

