

Australia's largest 'living atlas' coming to a street near you

The [Atlas of Living Australia](#) online database has reached 30 million species records, making it the largest collection of media-rich information on Australia's plants, animals and fungi.



Credit: Tony Dudley
Rights: Licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License](#)
Source: [Flickr EOL](#)

The Atlas is a collaboration between all Australian museums, herbaria and biological collections, CSIRO, Adelaide and Southern Cross Universities and the Commonwealth Government. It reached this milestone when over half a million records from Birdlife Australia were incorporated.

[BirdLife Australia](#), now Australia's biggest bird conservation organisation, was created by the recent merger of Birds Australia and Bird Observation and Conservation Australia (BOCA). BirdLife Australia is dedicated to achieving outstanding conservation results for native birds and their habitats, using the specialised knowledge and commitment of an Australia-wide network of members, volunteers and supporters.

Some of these Birdlife Australia records come from the diaries of 17th Century Dutch navigators, such as the record for a [brush bronzewing pigeon](#) dated 1629.

'The Atlas is a unique national repository for rich data on all Australian life forms – from bacteria to kangaroos, land-based to marine, native and non-native,' says Dr John La Salle, Director of the Atlas of Living Australia.

'Together with information about the whole range of Australian species, the Atlas contains many different types of

data, including photos, distribution, maps and mapping tools, DNA sequences, scientific and common names, conservation status, identification keys and heritage literature.'

The Atlas provides access to over 350 large and small datasets, from the NSW Government's Atlas of Wildlife to the records of a community group who look after a local creek.

One of the applications in the Atlas, 'Explore Your Area', allows users to enter an address or location to find the recorded species nearby. At the click of a button users can create a list and map of species that have been found in their local area and photos of most of them.

'Local and traditional knowledge is invaluable for tracking where Australian animals and plants are distributed across the country. Even if a plant or animal is common in your area, it may never have been officially recorded there, only because no-one has conducted a technical survey of what's there. If the species list is incomplete, it only takes a few minutes to add your own sightings and photos of Australian species,' says Dr La Salle.

Source: Atlas of Living Australia

From ECOS online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC12244>