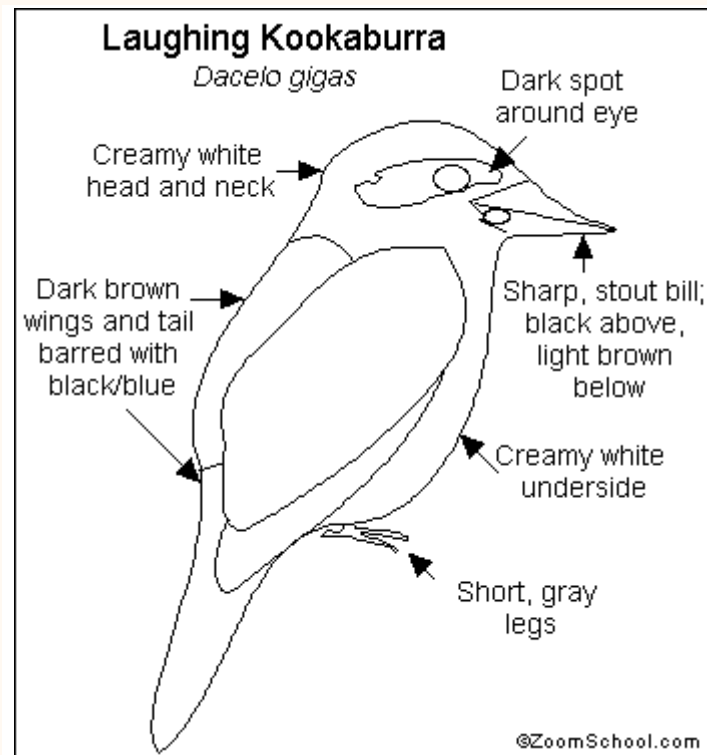


KOOKABURRA

Kookaburras, known as the Laughing Jackasses of Australia, are from the family Kingfishers. They have a strong and compact body, a short neck, a long and pointed beak and short legs.

Kookaburras are 17 inches in height, the upper parts dark brown, the wings spotted grey-blue. A white band separates the head from the body. There is a dark stripe through the eye, and the under parts are white. The strong beak is black.



Kookaburras inhabit woodland areas of eastern and south western Australia.

The Kookaburra's rolling, laughing call is one of the best-known sounds in the animal world.

The Kookaburra is a carnivore (meat-eater). It eats snakes and lizards. After catching prey, the Kookaburra pounds it against a tree branch or rock, probably in order to tenderize the meat. The Kookaburra doesn't drink any water; it gets enough water from the food it eats.

Kookaburras generally live in pairs or in small groups in open woodland.

They incubate their two to four white eggs in tree holes. Both adults incubate for a period of 25 days. The young leave the nest 30 days after hatching, but the parents continue to feed them for another 40 days.



The Australian aborigines have a legend about the Kookaburra. When the sun rose for the first time, the god Bayame ordered the kookaburra to make its loud, almost human laughter in order to wake up mankind so that they should not miss the wonderful sunrise. The aborigines also believed that any child who insulted a kookaburra would grow an extra slanting and ugly tooth.

