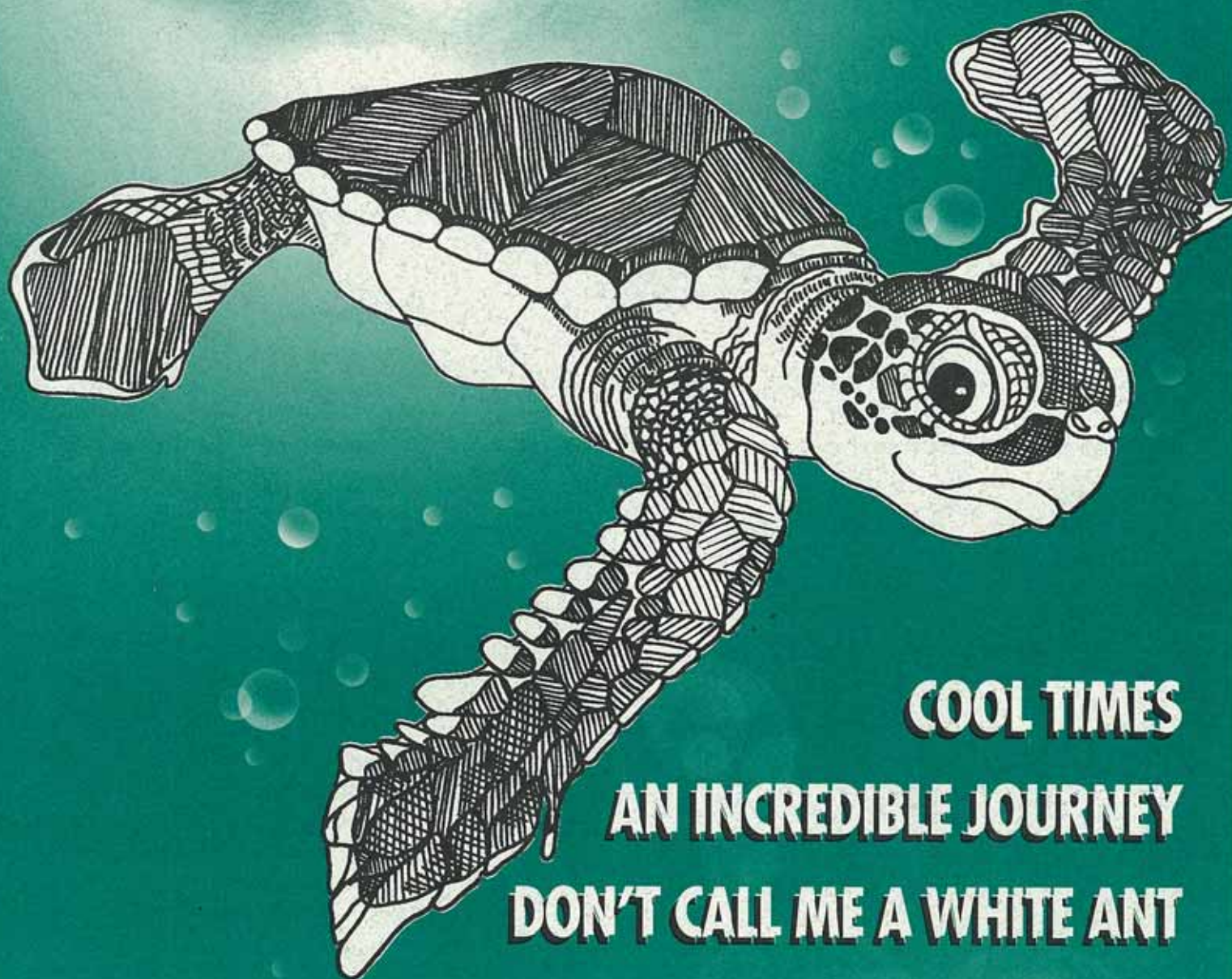




Junior Ranger

Review

May-June 1998



COOL TIMES

AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

DON'T CALL ME A WHITE ANT

SIGN OF THE TIMES

A Pleasant Change

This is a time of change in most parts of Australia. There is still some rain about in the Top End. And the seas are warm enough to generate one last cyclone. But the arrival of Rainbow Bee-eaters from the south heralds the coming dry season.

Use the numbers to colour the beautiful colours of this elegant bird.

- 1 = orange**
- 2 = black**
- 3 = green**
- 4 = blue**
- 5 = yellow**

The Rainbow Bee-eater spends summer in the south but heads north as winter approaches.



An Incredible Journey

Bee-eaters aren't the only birds on the move. One of the world's most amazing migrations is also happening. Two million sandpipers and other wading birds are leaving Australia, on route to Siberia. They spent summer at our wetlands but go north in April to breed.

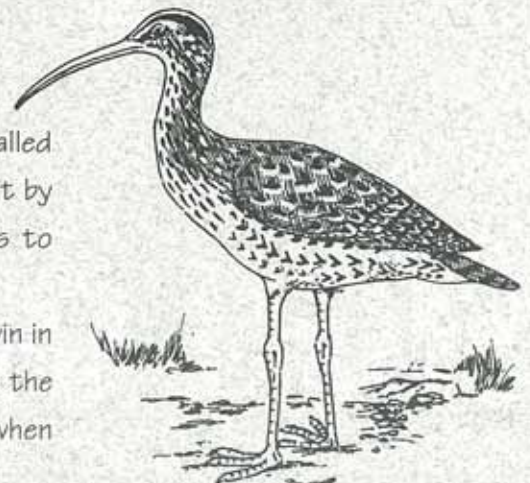
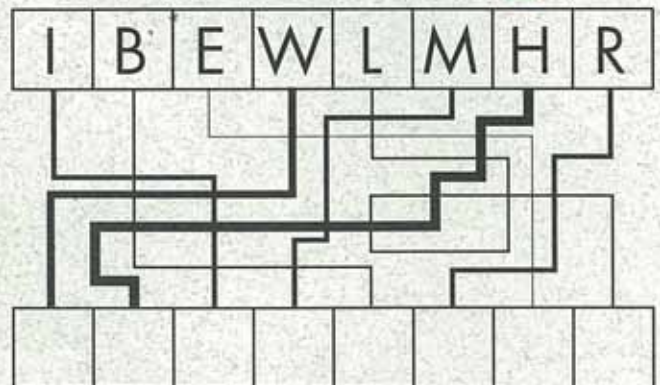
It's an 11000 km trip.



Sandpiper migration route

This is one of the birds flying north. It's called the Little Curlew but Darwin people know it by another name. Rearrange the letters to reveal the answer.

You may see it on school ovals in Darwin in October or November. It moves to the grassy plains of the Gulf country when the big rains come in December.



Welcome Easter Rain

April days are glorious in Alice Springs. Air disturbances over the Indian Ocean may bring some welcome Easter rain.



Butterflies breed...

There are lots of Caper White butterflies in Alice in April.



... and itchy grubs are on the move.

You may see a procession of them travelling overland.

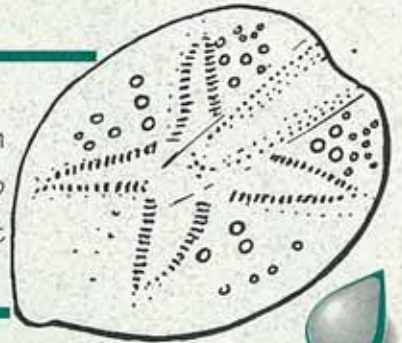


On the run

Prawns spawn at sea at this time of year.

All washed up

Lots of heart Urchin Shells get washed up onto Darwin beaches at the end of the wet.



North for the winter

Sun-loving Tree Martins are leaving the southern half of the continent in droves. Big numbers of them pass through Alice in April, heading north for a holiday. You can expect to see lots of them in Darwin during the Dry.



What's happening elsewhere?

- In Brisbane Macadamia nuts are falling to the ground.
- Quolls are mating in the east and south (but their northern cousins wait until later in the year.)
- Humpback Whales are moving up the west and east coasts... The Southern Right Whales are heading from Antarctica to the Great Australian Bight.
- Cuckoo-shrikes are crossing Bass Strait to avoid the cold Tasmanian winter.

COOL TIME

In the north the skies are filled with smoke as people burn the speargrass. Black Kites circle overhead, looking for a barbecued lunch.

In the Centre the days are sunny but the nights are very cold.



BREEDING SEASON

... it's the breeding season for some

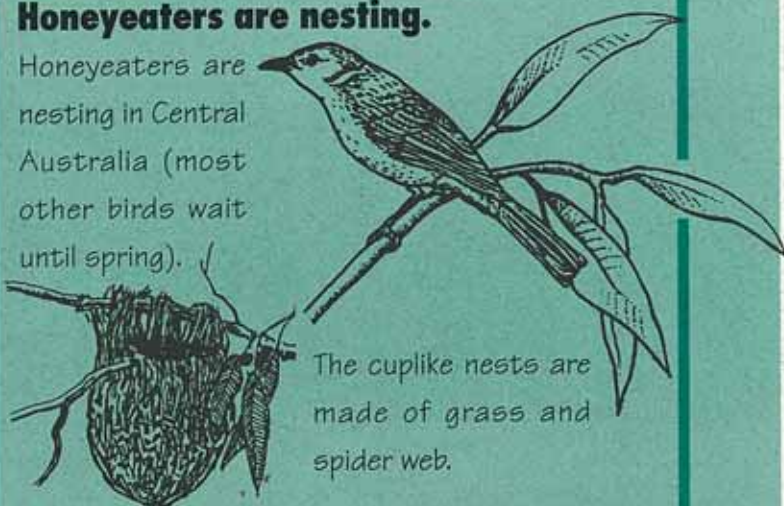
Dingoes are howling

They mate at this time of year and howl a lot. The pups will be born 9 weeks later in August or September.



Honeyeaters are nesting.

Honeyeaters are nesting in Central Australia (most other birds wait until spring).



The cuplike nests are made of grass and spider web.

Turkey Bush is flowering

Turkey Bush is flowering by roadsides in the Top End. It has pink flowers covering the tips of the branches.



Follow this track to Ayers Rock.

Follow this track to Ayers Rock. The 14 letters along the way spell the name of another flowering shrub.



TALKING TURTLE



The orange nuts of the Pandanus trees fall to the ground in June and July. At the same time, Sea Turtles are laying their eggs on northern beaches.

Turtles may roam the seas for 10 years before they become sexually

mature. Then, one night, they'll risk everything and come ashore.

While her mate waits offshore, the female pulls herself up the beach, above the high tide mark.

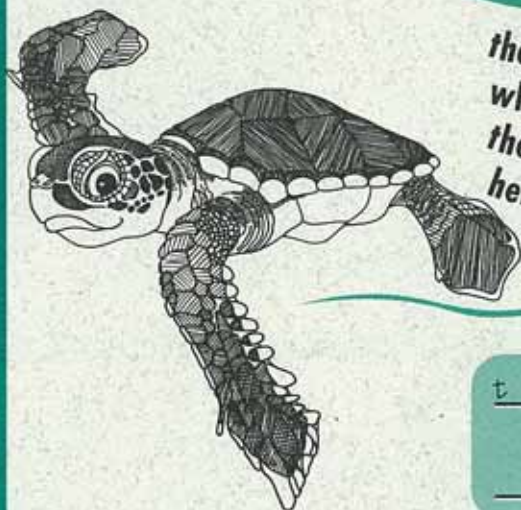
She may lay 50-150 eggs in the sand. They'll hatch 7 weeks later.

Along the east coast, turtles lay their eggs in summer.

But Top End turtles wait until June. To find out why...

... you'll need to choose the correct word from each group of four along the turtle's track.

TO MAKE THE CHOICE EASIER
Cross out all 4 letter words containing B, H or L.



then land lets to what. Then legs would hook
when hand gets too shot. When begs should book.
the sand sets two hot. Their eggs should look.
here band bets tool moth. There kegs hood cook.

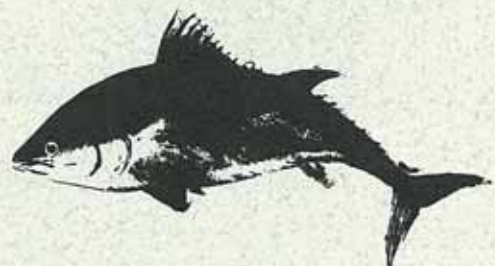
ANSWER:

On the North Coast in summer...

t _____ s t _____ t.
_____ s _____ d _____ k.

What's happening elsewhere?

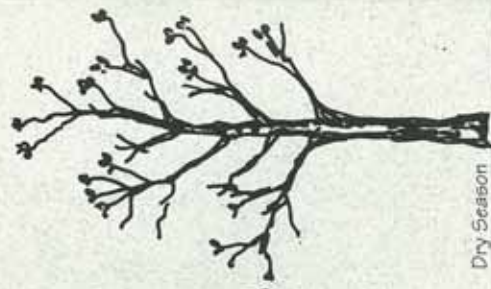
- Schools of bluefin tuna are travelling down the west coast.
- In the south winter has set in. Lambs are being born and you need to watch out for dive bombing magpies.
- Cassowaries are laying eggs in northeast Queensland.



Hot and Dry in the North...



Wet Season



Dry Season

In the Top End the days are hotter than earlier in the dry season. The billabongs are shrinking. The Red-flowering Kurrajong, emblem of the city of Darwin, has shed all its leaves to save water.

It's tough for the trees... but tougher for these little blokes!

Who are they?

They look like mice but Quolls are their closest relatives. They breed in August, but every male is dead within a fortnight. The little blokes put all their energy into just one short breeding season and then die of exhaustion and stress. The pregnant females survive.



These animals live in the tall forests in the northern most parts of the Territory.

Can you work out their name?

G B X O B O U F D I J O V T

But spring is in the air in the Alice.



The weather is beautiful in the outback in August and September. Many birds are nesting. Lizards are emerging from their winter hiding places to breed. The Rainbow Bee-eater wings its way back south again.

Dazzling Yellow Wattles Bloom

Wattles bloom in Central Australia in September. Dazzling yellow blossoms cover the branches. Wattle Day is celebrated on the

G J S T U E B Z P G

T F Q U F N C F S

Decode the words by turning each letter into the one which comes before it in the alphabet.



Slaving over a hot stove

No bird works harder at this time of year than the Top End's Orange Footed Scrubfowl.

Sand and leaves fly as these rainforest chooks build mounds 2 or 3 metres high.

The hens lay their eggs in these solar-powered



Incubation chambers between August and March.

When the chicks hatch they must dig their way out of the warm sand.

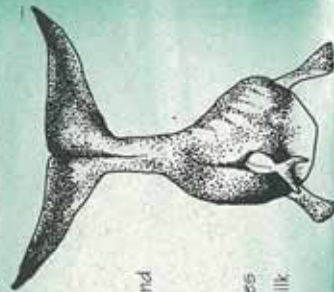
Then they scratch around for a feed of seeds and fruit.

What's happening elsewhere?

- Giant clams are breeding on the Barrier Reef.
- Koala babies leave Mum's pouch and ride on her back.
- Humpback Whales have newborn calves. You can see them off the Queensland coast and the northwest of Western Australia.

Did you know...

Whale calves are born tail first. Another whale acts as a midwife and nudges it to the surface to take its first breath of air. Then the baby will drink milk from Mum's nipple.



DUSTY DAYS



The Australian continent warms up in October.

In Central Australia northwesterly winds blow often. Dust storms are a feature of this time of year.

In the Top End the weather grows more humid and clouds progressively build up each day. It's difficult to sleep at night but spectacular lightning and

thunder cause a bit of excitement.

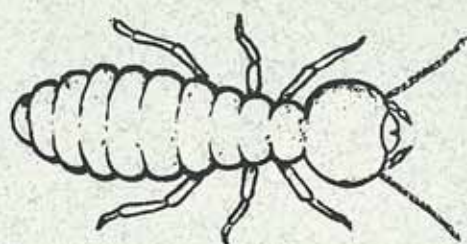
There's feverish activity in the Territory's termite mounds on humid evenings. The workers unplug tunnels to the surface, the soldiers stand by to repel invaders and flying ants swarm out. (Actually they're flying termites: young males and females on their wedding flight.) Very few live happily ever after. Most of these brides and grooms are eaten by birds, lizards or echidnas.

Don't call me a White Ant!

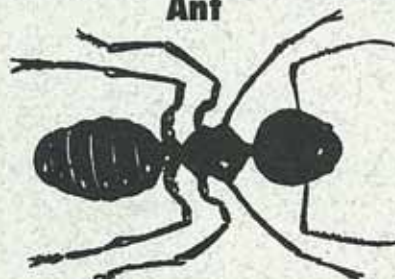
People often call termites 'white ants'. But they're not related. Termites are more closely related to cockroaches than ants. Use this code to unravel some differences between ants and termites.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Z Y X W V U T S R Q P O N M L K J I H G F E D C B A

Termite



Ant



U V N Z O V

Ant workers are all but half the termite workers are .

Y V M G

D Z R H G

Ants have antennae and a .

W V S B W I Z G V

Termites easily and must avoid the sun.

H L O W R V I H

Termite colonies have but ants don't.

P R M T

J F V V M

N Z G V H

The termite lives with the and many times.

D V W W R M T

The ant king dies after the .

It's Tucker Time...



In the Top End the flying-foxes are attacking the ripening mangoes...



... while sweet white lerps cover the leaves of River Red Gums in the Centre...



Frillies are out and about in the Top End.

Why don't you see frillies in the Dry?
You'll need a mirror to find out why.

They've been hiding in rough-
barked trees. If you walk near
their tree, they move around to
the other side of the trunk.

Little bats are breeding.

Small insectivorous bats start producing young ones in November.



What's happening elsewhere?

- Honeybees are swarming. It's time to split up and establish new hives.
- Huge numbers of Bogong Moths are flying to the high country from northwest NSW. They'll spend the summer in the Snowy Mountains and Victorian Alps.
- Along the coast, from NSW to the eastern end of the Bight, migratory muttonbirds are getting ready to lay. Amazingly they'll all start around 20 November and finish by 2 December. Theirs is the most predictable breeding pattern of any Australian animal.

TWO EXTREMES



Heavy rains flood the Top End between December and March.

As the rain tumbles down the rivers break
their banks and flood the plains.

The saltwater crocs move upstream to breed. Frogs become very active and noisy. Lots of waterbirds build nests.

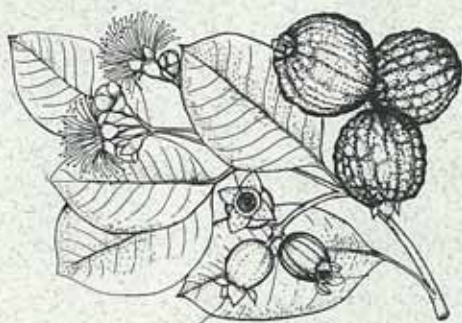
Everywhere in the Top End, plants are growing. Can you work out the names of these bush fruits that ripen in the Wet?

How to find the answers.

- Step 1** Colour any box that contains an F, J, Q, V, W, X or Z.
- Step 2** Track through the letter maze starting from the arrow.
- Step 3** String the letters together to make the names of these bush fruits.

Y	L	L	I	B	E	L	P	P
G	F	J	Q	V	W	X	Z	A
O	F	J	Q	V	W	X	Z	Y
A	F	Y	A	M	C	O	C	K
T	J	G	Q	V	W	X	Z	F
P	J	N	Q	H	S	U	V	W
L	X	O	Z	A	F	B	J	Q
U	V	L	W	P	X	D	E	R
M	Z	E	L	P	F	J	Q	V

SYNART



1

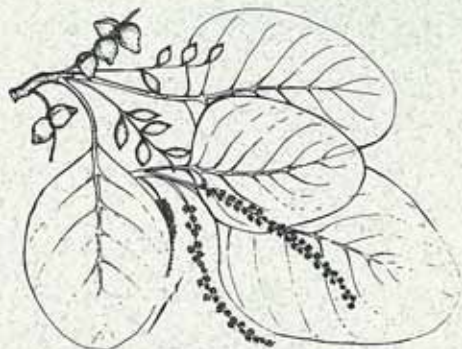
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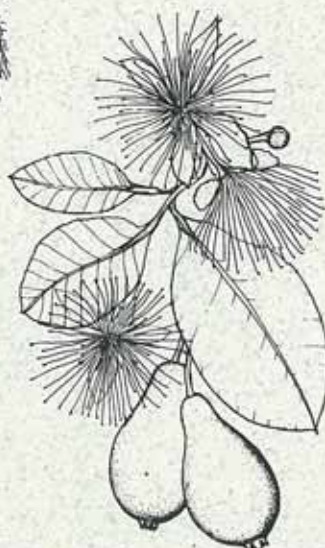
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4

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3

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It's very hot in the Centre in Summer, but life goes on.



Along the banks of the dry creeks, the River Red Gums flower in December. Cicadas call noisily from the upper branches.

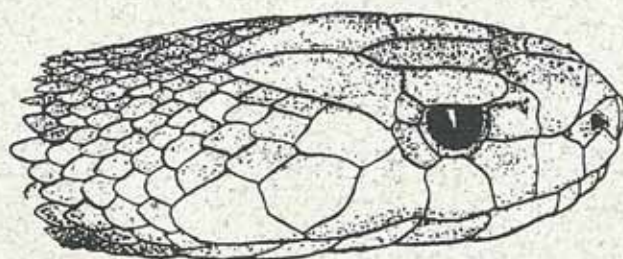
Caper Bushes flourish in the shade of the tree's spreading branches. They have lots of yellow fruit in summer. They look and taste like passionfruit.



Reptiles of all kinds are very active.

Geckoes are very common inside houses at night. You often see sand Goannas on the roads. Unfortunately many of them get squashed.

Wildlife rangers get many calls to remove snakes from places where they're not wanted.



What's happening elsewhere?

Young platypus appear in Queensland's coastal streams in January, 14 weeks after hatching.

Did you know that platypus have an extra sense? Special nerve receptors in their soft muzzle detect tiny discharges of electricity produced by the animals' muscles when they move.

This is the secret to the platypus' great skill in finding worms, tadpoles, yabbies and insect larvae moving in the mud or under stones.



These 13 Territorians move around with the seasons. Can you work out their names? (A bird book with an index may be helpful)



1 (across)
The Red-backed

is common in Alice in summer but not winter.

1 (down)
The Black

is not so common in Darwin in the wet.



4 The Straw-necked

disappears from Darwin in the middle of the wet.



2 Performs spectacular courtship flights in June.



3 Seen on Darwin ovals in October and November.



8 Large numbers pass through Alice in April.

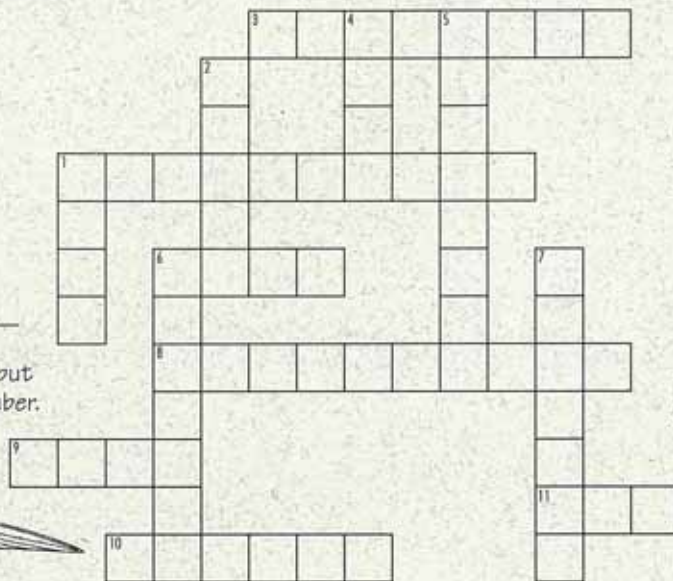


5 The Rainbow

leaves Central Australia in April but returns in September.



11 It lays eggs in May.



6 (across)
The Whiskered

visits the Alice Springs sewerage ponds in summer.



10 It dances on the flood plains in November.

6 (down)
The Grey-tailed

spends the wet season on northern beaches but goes to Siberia in the dry.



7 The white-winged
doesn't like the cold. It spends summer in the south and winter in the north.



9 The common
flies to northern Australia from Asia in the wet season.



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