

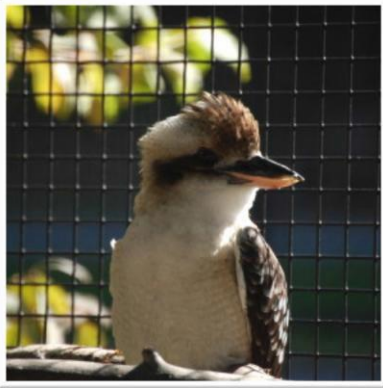
# Kookaburra

**Scientific Name:** *Dacelo novaeguineae*

**Class:** Aves

**Order:** Coraciiformes

**Family:** Alcedinidae



Their size and weight are 16 to 18 inches and 3/4 lb. The bill is 2.5 inches. The giant kingfisher, or laughing kookaburra, is actually the world's largest kingfisher though it has taken to dry land and forests, forsaking a fish diet. Their wings are small for the bird's body size and flights of a few hundred feet are usually its limit. Its legs are short as are those of all kingfishers. Vision and hearing are very keen. The very heavy, wedge-shaped bill facilitates snake and lizard hunting. Prey is swallowed whole. Of course, it is their laugh that makes these birds so remarkable. So eerie is this sound, bearing implications of crawling creatures and dripping rainforest, that Hollywood producers have put the call in jungle scenes all the way from Brazil to Borneo

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## Range

Australia.

## Habitat

Open forests, arid areas, parks, gardens

## Gestation

Incubation 19-20 days

## Litter

6-7 eggs

## Behavior

They live in communal clans which proclaim domination over an area by singing at dusk and dawn.

The name "Kookaburra", as may be surmised, is an onomatopoeic Aboriginal name. Australian Aborigines say that when a sun rose for the first time on earth, the god Bayame ordered kookaburra to utter its loud laughter to wake up mankind so man should not miss the wonderful sunrise.

## Reproduction

Another interesting feature about this bird concerns incubation of the eggs. Not only do both parents participate, but the whole family, brothers and sisters as well. The appetite of the chicks is remarkable. One captive baby kookaburra was observed to consume, within 6 weeks, 992 grasshoppers, 65 small lizards, 29 moths, and an assortment of dragonflies, crickets, and food scraps. There is another species of kookaburra, namely the blue-winged variety, which is slightly shorter (16 in.), and which has, obviously bluer on the wing. Its eyes are white, and the laugh is replaced by a high-pitched howl.

## Wild Diet

Snakes, lizards, insects, crabs, eggs, nestlings.