



# INFO SHEET

## Habitat means a place to call home

The beasts that live in the Fitzroy Basin need a variety of landscapes to survive. The environment or place where a species tend to live is called its **habitat**.

The more restricted a species' habitat is, the more endangered it is likely to be. That is why it is so important to save habitats. Common landscapes that provide essential habitat include bush, deserts, rivers, rainforests, and oceans. Habitats can be anywhere where plants and animals exist. Some other special types of habitats include:

**Estuaries:** an area of water where freshwater from rivers and streams flows into the ocean, mixing with seawater. Estuaries are protected from the full force of ocean waves, winds, and storms by the reefs, barrier islands, or fingers of land, mud, or sand that surround them. Estuaries are important breeding grounds for many fish, birds and other animals. Mangroves often border on estuaries and provide sources of food, help filter water and protect the shoreline from erosion.

*Beasts that rely on estuaries:* Australian snubfin dolphin, turtles, dugongs, fish, crabs, birds.

**Wetlands:** Wetlands are areas of land with trees, grasses and shrubs that are also inundated by water. They are sometimes known as swamps, lakes, marshes or billabongs. Some have water in them all year round while others are only wet at certain times of the year or after heavy rain. Wetlands also help filter water running across the landscape, resulting in cleaner water draining into rivers and out to sea. They can also help collect and hold flood waters to reduce the impacts of flooding. Our region is home to two wetlands recognised internationally for being special – Corio and Sholawater Bay wetlands.

*Beasts that rely on wetlands:* many birds including migratory birds that travel thousands of kilometers from overseas to breed, fish, native mammals, stock for drinking water.



A dugong in Shoalwater Bay





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## Habitat continued...

**Natural grasslands:** Natural grasslands are open fields with cracking clay soils where a variety of native grasses grow including Queensland bluegrass, satintop, wire grasses, and native panics. Natural grasslands in central Queensland once covered an area of approximately 1.2 million hectares. Now, less than half remains. Because of this decline natural grasslands are now protected.

*Beasts that rely on natural grasslands:* Birds, small marsupials, stock for feed. The narrow-nosed planigale (*Planigale tenuirostris*), a small carnivorous marsupial, forages and shelters in the deep cracking soils of natural grasslands. Several species of quail thrive in the thick ground level vegetation.

**Brigalow Belt forest:** Brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla*) is a species of silvery wattle that gives the mosaic of open forest and woodland communities known as the Brigalow Belt its name. The canopy is usually 10-15m in height. The Brigalow Belt also includes patches of vegetation called semi-evergreen vine thickets, which are endangered. This vegetation includes a range of different plants such as trees, vines and bushes.

*Beasts that rely on the Brigalow Belt:* Bridled naitail wallaby, northern hairy-nosed wombat, black breasted button quail, squatter pigeon, brigalow scaly-foot, ornamental snake and the black-throated finch. A number of brigalow reptiles also rely on this habitat.



A narrow-nosed planigale



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