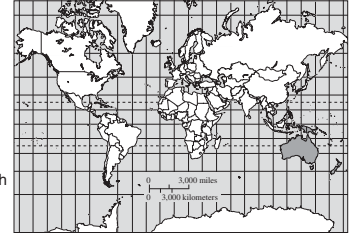


Physical Geography of Australia and Oceania

Location: Australia and most of Oceania are located in the eastern hemisphere. Some islands, including the Hawaiian Islands, are located in the western hemisphere. Australia is bounded by the Indian Ocean to the west and south and the Pacific Ocean to the north and east. The islands of Oceania are located in the Pacific Ocean east of the islands of Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia and west of North and South America.



Size: Australia is approximately 3 million square miles (7.5 million km²) in area. If you could combine all of the islands of Oceania together, the land area would be about 320,000 square miles (820,000 km²). Together, the area of Australia and Oceania is still about 200,000 square miles (520,000 km²) smaller than the area of the United States. The greatest distance in Australia from north to south is 1,950 miles (3,138 km) and from east to west, 2,475 miles (3,983 km). From Oceania's northernmost island, Midway, to the southernmost, the distance is about 5,000 miles (8,000 km). From its easternmost to the westernmost point is about 9,000 miles (14,400 km). The highest point in Australia is on Mount Kosciuszko, 7,310 feet (2,228 m). The lowest is at Lake Eyre, 52 feet (16 m) below sea level. The highest point in Oceania is on Jara Peak in New Guinea, 16,500 feet (5,030 m). The lowest point is sea level.

Climate: Northern Australia and most of the islands of Oceania lie within the tropics. This means that their climate is warm year round. The amount of precipitation these areas receive in a year varies from a few inches (cm) to about 150 inches (380 cm). The southern two-thirds of Australia has warm to hot summers and mild winters. Most of Australia receives less than 20 inches (51 cm) of precipitation annually. New Zealand's climate is wetter and cooler. Because Australia and New Zealand lie below the equator, their seasons are opposite of those in North America and Europe. July and August are winter months, and January and February are summer months.

The most dramatic feature of Oceania's climate is typhoons. With their extremely high winds and very heavy rains, typhoons are the Pacific Ocean's version of hurricanes.

Landforms: Australia is basically a gigantic island. It has three dominant landforms: deserts, highlands, and grasslands. The western part of Australia is dominated by deserts and grasslands. Most of this area is flat with few trees. Bordering the deserts are great areas of dry grassland. The highlands run the entire length of eastern Australia. This area includes many plateaus and ranges of hills and low mountains. Between these highlands and the Pacific is a narrow band of coastal plains. All of the lands of Oceania are islands. There are basically two types of islands in this area: high islands and low islands. High islands are hilly and/or mountainous. Many high islands contain volcanoes. The largest islands of Oceania are all high islands. Low islands have been created by coral reefs. Most are atolls, coral reefs surrounding a lagoon.

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Rivers, Bays, and Harbors of Australia and Oceania

Use the clues to help you match the letters on the map to the correct names.

- Botany Bay**—This bay is on the east coast of Australia. It lies about five miles south of the city of Sydney. Captain James Cook gave it its name because of the many plants that grew nearby.
- Darling River**—The Darling is the longest river in Australia. It rises in the Eastern Highlands and flows southward 1,702 miles (2,723 km) until it meets the Murray River.
- Hawke Bay**—This bay is an inlet of the Pacific Ocean that is located on the east coast of North Island, New Zealand. It is partly enclosed by Cape Kidnappers and the Mahia Peninsula.
- Manukau Harbor**—Manukau Harbor is one of two harbors that serve Auckland, New Zealand. It is located on the west coast of North Island.
- Murray River**—This is the longest permanently flowing river in Australia. It rises in the coast. It is about 1,600 miles (2,560 km) long.
- Pearl Harbor**—Pearl Harbor is a large and important harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. It is part of Oahu Island. The city of Honolulu is located nearby.
- Port Phillip Bay**—This bay is an important port in the country of Australia. It is located in the southeast corner of the continent with the city of Melbourne on its shore.
- Port Moresby**—This is a harbor that lies next to the capital city of Papua New Guinea. It is located on the southeast coast of the island and opens into the Coral Sea.
- Sydney Harbor**—This is one of the finest harbors in the world. It is located on the east coast of Australia next to Sydney, the continent's largest city.
- Waikato River**—The Waikato is the longest river in New Zealand. It rises in the mountains of North Island and flows northward until it empties into the Tasman Sea.

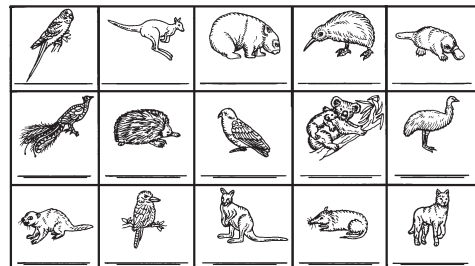


Answer Key: 1.F, 2.C, 3.J, 4.H, 5.E, 6.B, 7.G, 8.A, 9.D, 10.I

Animals of Australia and Oceania

The animals listed below are found in Australia and Oceania. In the first column, identify the animal as a *mammal* or a *bird*. In the second column, write "endangered" if the animal is on a recent endangered species list. Then match as many animals as you can with their correct pictures.

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. bandicoot | _____ | _____ |
| 2. budgerigar | _____ | _____ |
| 3. echidna | _____ | _____ |
| 4. emu | _____ | _____ |
| 5. kangaroo | _____ | _____ |
| 6. kea | _____ | _____ |
| 7. kiwi | _____ | _____ |
| 8. koala | _____ | _____ |
| 9. kookaburra | _____ | _____ |
| 10. lyrebird | _____ | _____ |
| 11. platypus | _____ | _____ |
| 12. dingo | _____ | _____ |
| 13. Tasmanian devil | _____ | _____ |
| 14. wallaby | _____ | _____ |
| 15. wombat | _____ | _____ |



Answer Key: 1. mammal, 2. bird, 3. mammal, 4. bird, 5. mammal, 6. bird, 7. bird, 8. mammal, 9. bird, 10. bird, 11. mammal, 12. mammal, 13. mammal, 14. mammal, 15. mammal
Pictures starting from top left: 2, 14, 15, 7, 11, 10, 3, 6, 8, 4, 13, 9, 5, 1, 12

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