

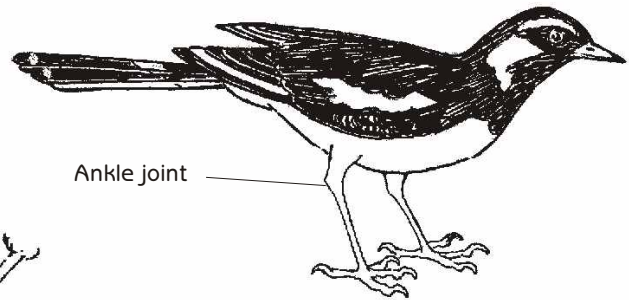
# Nature Notes

Junior Ranger

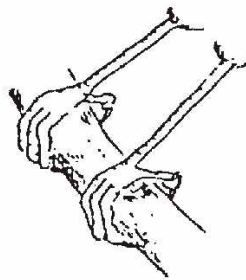
## BIRD TRACKS

It's hard to identify birds from their tracks because so many have similar feet. But here are some clues to get you started.

How would you like to walk on your toes all day long? We'd find it uncomfortable but birds do it all the time. The bend you see in a bird's leg is its ankle, not its knee.



Most birds have four toes, 3 at the front and another at the back.



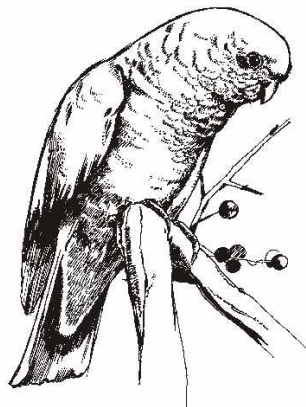
Typical perching bird

However, a few birds have different footprints.

## PARROTS & COCKATOOS



Parrots and cockatoos have 2 front toes and 2 back toes.



## PIGEONS



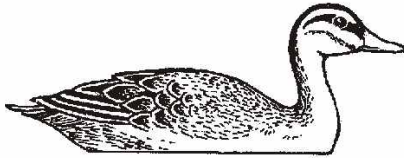
Pigeons have 3 front toes but the middle one points inwards.



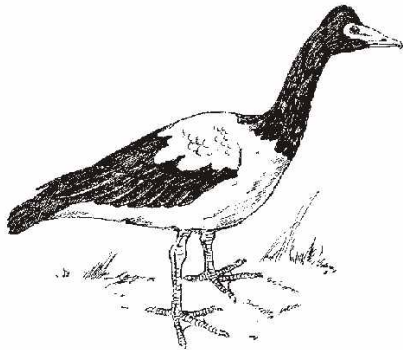
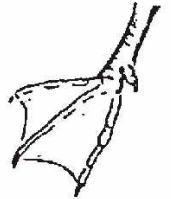
## WATERBIRDS

Beaches, mudflats and the edges of swamps are great places for studying the tracks of birds.

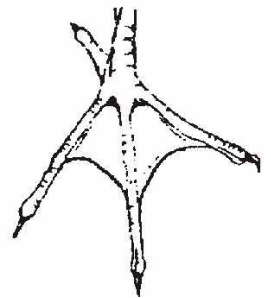
### DUCKS & SWANS



Ducks and swans have webbed feet. Their back toe is quite small.



The **Magpie Goose** *Anseranas semipalmata* has half-webbed feet. Unlike ducks, this bird is well equipped for walking on land as well as paddling in water. And unlike other geese or ducks, their strong hind toe allows them to roost in trees at night.

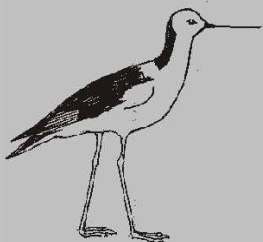


### WADERS



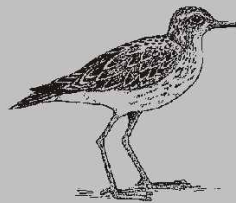
Waders have long front toes. These help them keep their balance as they stand in water, and stop them sinking in the mud. They have a back toe but it is small and doesn't make an impression.

Cross out every second letter to find out the names of these waders.



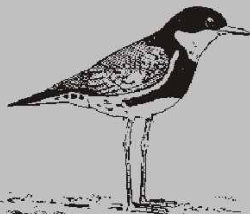
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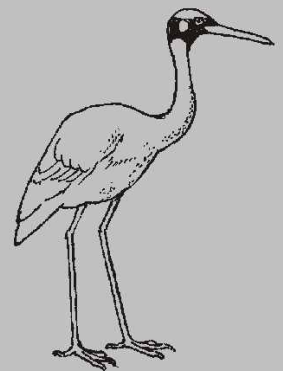
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Want to learn more about birds and their tracks?

Check out the affordable field guides *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia* by either *Simpson & Day* or the one by *Pizzey & Knight*. Another good book is the *Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds*. For tracks check out *Tracks, Scats and Other Traces - A Field Guide to Australian Mammals* by *Barbara Triggs*.

