

Swiftly: The Super-Fast Parrot

AUTHOR

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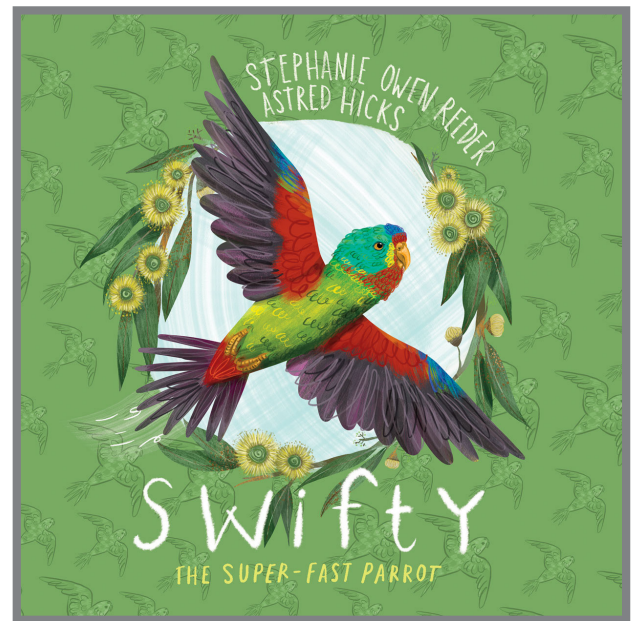
ILLUSTRATOR

ASTRED HICKS

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

A captivating story of the remarkable, but critically endangered, swift parrot—one of the fastest parrots in the world! Swiftly grows from a hatchling to a fledgling in the bluegum forests of Tasmania. She is then ready to make a challenging migration, following the blossom trail across Bass Strait to mainland south-eastern Australia.

Swiftly faces many threats and dangers, but she must return home. Will she make it?

Fly with Swiftly in this beautifully illustrated story, and learn how to spot a swift parrot and help protect them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Stephanie Owen Reeder is an award-winning children's author who writes about history and the environment. She is a recipient of the CBCA Book of the Year Award and the Laurie Copping Award for Distinguished Service to Children's Literature.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Astred Hicks is an award-winning book designer, illustrator and author. Her illustrations have appeared in books shortlisted for the CBCA Book of the Year Awards, and highly commended in the NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

STUDY

- Migration
- Animal conservation
- Australian birdlife

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading, discuss the following questions:
 - Talk about the name 'swift parrot'. What might the name tell us about this bird?
 - Ask students what it means for an animal to be critically endangered. Discuss what might cause an animal to become critically endangered.

SCIENCE

- Talk to the students about what migration means. Discuss why the swift parrot might migrate from Tasmania to mainland Australia and back, and what dangers or threats they might encounter on their migration.
- Ask students to identify examples in the book of introduced animals that might be contributing to the swift parrot

being critically endangered. How are they contributing to it? (See pp 4–5, a sugar glider taking babies, and p 13, a cat catching a bird.)

- Discuss what other information we can gain from the book to work out what else might have caused the swift parrot to become critically endangered.
- Ask students if any of them have encountered an injured animal, and if so, discuss what they did to help it. Discuss what to do if you find an injured animal, stressing the importance of an adult handling the animal and taking it to professionals to be cared for.
- Talk to students about the unique environment that is Tasmania, including old-growth forests and some of the cleanest air in the world. Discuss why some animals in Tasmania might not be found anywhere else in Australia (ie. its isolation). Then, ask students to research another animal that lives or lived in Tasmania and create an information poster about the animal. The animal may be currently living (eg. the Tasmanian devil) or extinct (eg. the thylacine).
- Research other birds that migrate and create a chart or map of the world indicating where each bird migrates to and from.

ENGLISH

- Students might not know the meaning of some words in the book. Discuss their meaning, and how reading the whole sentence or paragraph for context, and looking at the illustrations, can sometimes help. Examples include:
 - ancient
 - downy
 - scrabbling
 - frantically
 - scarce
 - cavorts
 - revive.
- Ask the students what the words ‘zipping and zooming through the trees’ (p 7), ‘swooping and wheeling’ (p 22) and ‘races’ (p 26) might tell us about how the swift parrot flies. (It indicates that they can fly and manoeuvre quickly.)
- Look at the words in the glossary at the back of the book, and read their meaning. Then have five words and put them in a sentence to show your understanding of the word’s meaning.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Discuss why blossoms might be scarce in some of the swift parrots’ habitats (see p 12). How does the illustration tell us this? (The illustration shows few trees and lots of human-made structures.) Also discuss what the illustration on p 24 tells us about what is happening to the swift parrot’s breeding habitat. (The tree stumps indicate that trees they would nest in are being cut down, and burnt remnants tell us that bushfires are damaging their nesting areas.)
- As a class, discuss what scientists and members of the public are doing to help the swift parrot.

MATHEMATICS

- Create a table to record any visits from swift parrots or other birds to your backyard with the following headings:
 - Size of bird
 - Colour of bird
 - Sound it makes
 - Any food I see it eat
 - Environment of my backyard
 - What species it might be.