

Life in a Hollow

AUTHOR

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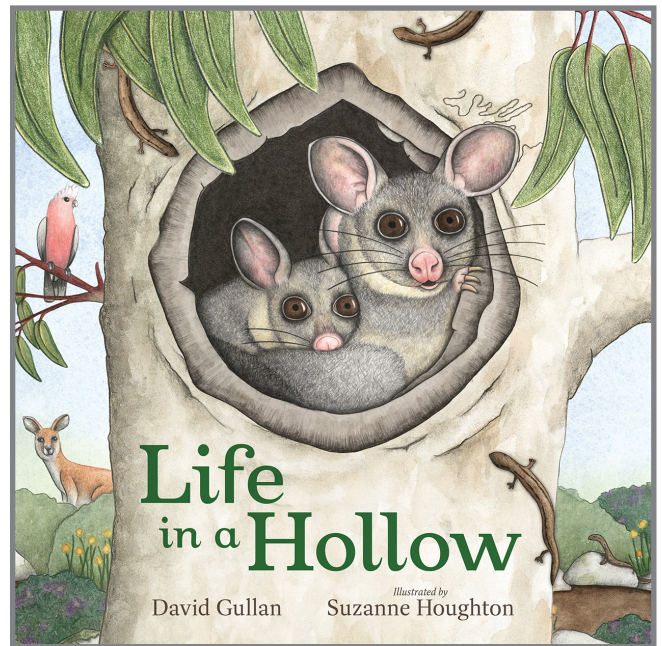
ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

Who is home in the hollow?

Tree hollows are very special places that provide animals, both big and small, with a space to nest and feel safe.

Explore life in a tree hollow in the Australian bush and meet the native creatures who come to call a hollow a home. You'll be surprised just how many choose to move in!

You'll also discover the important role tree hollows play in the environment and how we can help protect them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Gullan is a primary school teacher, who developed a love of Australian wildlife from his parents. He now aims to share his passion for Australia's native creatures with children everywhere.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Suzanne Houghton is an award-winning illustrator who loves nothing more than to splash colour on a page. When it comes to her books there is one thing Suzanne wants more than anything: to bring joy.

THEMES

- Conservation
- Animal habitats
- Ecology

STUDY NOTES

BEFORE READING

- Some animals build their homes out of leaves and sticks, some bury into the soil, some even venture into caves, but many of Australia's wonderful creatures depend on the little-thought-of tree hollow. This book is about tree hollows and all the animals that come to call a hollow a home. Maybe you have seen a tree hollow before. As a class discuss the following questions as you read the story and explore *Life in a Hollow*.:
 - What kinds of creatures have you seen using tree hollows?

- Where do tree hollows come from?
- What do you think all these animals use tree hollows for?
- How long do you think it takes trees to develop tree hollows?

WHILE READING

Science

- In the story we see a variety of animals use the tree hollow for a range of purposes. What are some the different reasons animals depend on tree hollows?
- What are some of the things that contribute to the hollow gradually growing larger?
- Read the section 'More about tree hollows' at the back of the book. Discuss how long it takes for tree hollows to form for different size animals. Use a timeline to visualise how long it really takes for these homes to form, comparing the time to other events the students can relate to such as their age, their parents' age, etc.
- This survey can be done either at school or sent home as a fun activity for students to do with their family and bring their data back to school to share. Ask students to create a table with the following headings:
 - Location
 - Size
 - Occupied
- They can then record any tree hollows they have seen, the location of the tree hollow, the approximate size of the tree hollow (insect size, skink size, microbat size, small parrot size, possum size, etc.), and record if the hollow is occupied or not, and if so, who is living there.
- Nesting boxes are terrific solutions for quickly replenishing the amount of available homes for Australia's hollow-dependent animals, but all these animals require different features to be happy in a nesting box. Look at some of the nesting box designs featured at the Nangak Tamboree Wildlife Sanctuary: <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife/nesting-boxes>. With your class, read about the features they have included to meet the needs of different animals out looking for a home.
 - Using the information about nesting boxes, work with a partner or a small group to design your own nesting box for a particular animal, being sure to include the appropriate features to meet the needs of your chosen animal.

English

- In the story the baby possum is referred to as a joey. What other Australian animals have joeys? Do you know what this group of animals is called?
- Many different types of species appear in the book. Can you name them? (eg. insects, reptiles, mammals/bats, birds, marsupials, amphibians). Why do you think the author decided to use a variety of animals instead of just one?
- Did you notice that the animals that came to call a hollow a home in the story arrived in a particular order? Recount the order the animals arrived at the hollow. Then, using evidence from the text, make a prediction about what animals might come next and justify your prediction.
- Tree hollows are a crucial habitat for many Australian animals, but as trees are being cut down and hollows take so long to replace, we need to start thinking about protecting the tree hollows we have left. Using information from the book, write a persuasive text that will convince others to join the fight to protect Australian tree hollows.

Sustainability

- Tree hollows provide so many animals with shelter and protection in Australia. Discuss with the students what the effect of logging might have on the populations of some of these Australian animals.
- Tree hollows need protecting, and raising awareness and teaching others about the importance of how hollows can help. With that in mind, create an awareness poster to teach others about tree hollows, the role they play in Australian ecosystems and the animals that call them home. You can then display the poster near a tree hollow in your school, community or even your own backyard! By sharing your knowledge with others, you can make a difference.