

Tawny Frog Mouth

Podargus strigoides

What do they look like?

The Tawny Frogmouths are often confused with owls, but are actually more closely related to the nightjars. Their feet are weak and lack the curved talons of owls. The general plumage of the Tawny Frogmouth is silver-grey, slightly paler below, streaked and mottled with black and rufous. A second plumage phase also occurs, with birds being russet-red. The eye is yellow in both forms, and the wide, heavy bill is olive-grey to blackish. The body length ranges from 35 to 50 cm, with south-eastern birds being larger than birds from the north.



Where do they live?



The Tawny Frogmouth is found throughout Australia, including Tasmania. It can be found in heath, forest and woodlands, urban and rural areas.

During the day, the Tawny frogmouth perches on a tree branch, often low down, camouflaged as part of the tree.

What do they eat?

The bulk of the Tawny Frogmouth's diet is made up of nocturnal insects, worms, slugs and snails. Small mammals, reptiles, frogs and birds are also eaten. Most food is obtained by pouncing to the ground from a tree or other elevated perch. Some prey items such as moths are caught in flight.

Breeding and Lifecycle

Tawny frogmouths breed mainly from August to December, although birds in more arid areas may breed in response to heavy rain. Both sexes incubate the two or three eggs. The male sits during the day, but both sexes share sitting at night. The nest is a loose platform of sticks, which is usually placed on a horizontal forked tree branch. Normally only one brood is raised in a season, but birds in the south may have two.

