

Tawny Frogmouth

Podargus strigoides



WHITEMAN PARK
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Whooo are you?

Tawny Frogmouths are commonly mistaken for an owl. They are not raptors though, lacking the strong feet and talons that characterise these birds of prey. They are more closely related to the nightjar family. They await small food items to come in range rather than hunting on the wing and use their beaks, rather than feet, to catch their prey.



Mopoke me

Frogmouths make a wide range of sounds – from throaty clacks with their beaks to the reverberating ‘oom oom oom’ often heard after dusk. They are sometimes known as a ‘mopoke’ too, after one of its distinctive calls, “mopoke... mopoke...”

I’m no builder!

Frogmouths have a very untidy platform of sticks as their nest. Unfortunately, they lose a large number of chicks from the nest due to its very unstable construction! Breeding usually occurs between July to November, with two eggs in a typical clutch size.

On the menu...

The tawny frogmouth is predominantly an insectivore, feasting mostly on beetles, grasshoppers, crickets and spiders. When available, small frogs, lizards and mammals may also be eaten.



Mates for life

Male and female tawny frogmouths will pair for life and both the male and female share the duty of incubating their eggs. The male will typically sit on the nest during the day, while the female assists at night and both parents helping to rear the chicks.

A tree or a bird?

Lacking sharp claws or beaks, tawny frogmouths rely on their well-adapted camouflage for protection when threatened. They sit very still, beak pointed straight, mimicking a branch for long periods until the threat has passed. If threatened on the nest, tawny frogmouths will open their beak and eyes very wide in an effort to scare off potential predators.



Photos courtesy of Roundtooth Studio