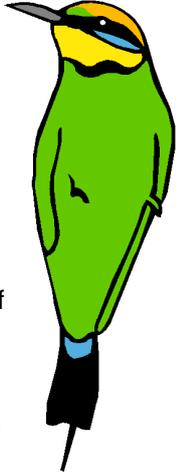


# GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

## KATYDIDS

By Dr Christopher Palmer  
NT Parks and Wildlife Entomologist



Katydid belong to the order of insects that include the grasshoppers, locusts, and crickets. Katydid are easily distinguished from grasshoppers and locusts, however, by having long antennae, or feelers, with well over 30 segments.

There are about 1000 species of katydids in Australia, with different species being active at different times of the day and night; some species are even active only around dusk.

Katydid show a wide variety of feeding strategies, such as leaf and flower feeding, and pollen and nectar feeding. Some species are quite fussy, feeding only on certain fruits and seeds. Some species that normally feed on plants can become carnivorous.

They are strong fliers, although they only rarely swarm. Most species live for no longer than a year.

Almost all katydids produce sound, in a process called stridulation. It's accomplished by rubbing the bumpy part of the leathery left forewing against a raised wing vein on the right forewing. It's just like running your thumbnail along the teeth of a comb. The different shape and structure of those parts of the forewing produce distinct sounds in different species. Most species 'sing' while perching on vegetation.



**Superb Katydid *Alectoria superba***  
Photo taken at a Land for Wildlife property  
on Lillecrapp Rd  
By Adrian James (2006).

Katydid are relatively easy to keep as pets, as long as they have enough water, warmth and food (like all animals!).

The species in the photo is the Superb Katydid, *Alectoria superba*. This is one of the most spectacular katydids in the world. Both yellow and green colour morphs (types) occur. The superb katydid is relatively uncommon, but is widely distributed in the arid and semiarid zones. The disc-like projection of the body located just behind the head is actually 'A'-shaped, roof-like structure. Its function is unknown.

Keep an eye out for the Katydid that might be living within the vegetation on your property!

If you want to learn how to breed another interesting group known as 'stick insects' go to

[http://www.zoo.org.au/education/hs\\_stickinsects.htm](http://www.zoo.org.au/education/hs_stickinsects.htm)

If you have not returned your Garden for Wildlife registration form, please do so as we would like to deliver your membership pack soon, visit <http://www.lowecol.com.au/lfw/gfwregister.htm> to download the simplified version.

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## Alice Springs Land for Wildlife Coordinator Position

Land for Wildlife in Alice Springs is a voluntary conservation program which encourages private landholders to maintain and improve native habitat on their properties. Coordination involves facilitation of workshops, environmental assessments of properties, newsletter publications, funding submissions, report writing, coordination of the Garden for Wildlife scheme and administration. Low Ecological Services are looking for an enthusiastic and experienced person to take on the coordination of the Alice Springs based Land for Wildlife Program.



Please contact Low Ecological Services on 08 8955 5222 or email [lfw@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lfw@lowecol.com.au) to obtain the Land for Wildlife coordinator position description and selection criteria.

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**Welcome to all our new members!** We now have 93 members and applications are continuing to arrive in the post, which is great, thank you to all who have been helping spread the word.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE FIELD NATURALISTS: Up and coming events for 2008

### Wed 9 April

**Field Naturalists Club Meeting, 7.30 pm AT Olive Pink Botanic Garden.**

Guest Speaker Jon Delaine "Invasive Bird Species in Alice Springs"

### Sat 26 April

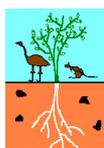
**Field Naturalists Club** day trip to Owen Springs. Meet 7.30 am at Flynn's Grave.

4WD vehicles only.

### Sat 3 - Mon 5 May

**Field Naturalists Club** 3 day trip to Ruby Gap. Meet 8.30 am at Date Farm. 4WD vehicles only.

Contact Bob Read for further details 08 8952 1935.



Low Ecological Services

