



TOP SECRET:

MISSION: OPERATION WILD RESCUE

TO: The Intrepid Explorers & Junior Wildlife Agents
FROM: Director Banks, Head of Wildlife Protection - Taronga Zoo

Dear Explorers,
We need you.

Four precious native animals have vanished from Taronga Zoo, in Sydney, overnight. Surveillance footage shows a group of international wildlife smugglers sneaking in during the early hours and escaping with crates marked "Exotic Goods".

We believe these animals are being transported across Australia to be sold on the black market. Each smuggler has left behind a trail of cryptic clues. We need your sharp minds to help decode the messages, track the smugglers, and return these creatures to safety.

Today, we start with our first case: the KOALA.
Your task is to read its file, solve the clue that was left behind in his enclosure, and figure out where the smugglers are heading.

Tomorrow, we'll release a new clue for the next missing animal.
We're counting on you.



 Let the mission begin.



BACKGROUND BRIEFING:

TOP SECRET – AGENT FILE INITIATED



Archie, Ruby, Violet, Alex, and Max are not your average Aussie kids.

Together, they make up The Intrepid Explorers, a team of brave, curious adventurers sent on missions around the globe.

Their job?

- To protect nature.
- Recover stolen treasures.
- Solve mysterious puzzles.
- And dive into the wildest and coolest places on Earth.

From the icy winds of Antarctica to the dense jungles of the Amazon, and even deep into the remote Australian outback, these five friends never know what adventure awaits them next.

Where others see a problem...

✨ They see an adventure.

In just 10 days, their biggest mission yet kicks off in Australia with the release of the first full-length book:

📖 The Intrepid Explorers and the Mysterious Case of the Stolen Suling

But before the book lands...



The team needs your help to solve a real mystery involving four stolen animals, a suspicious smuggling ring, and clues that lead across the country. Below you'll find the file about the first missing animal and a clue to track it!





Species Name: Phascolarctos cinereus

Code Name: LeafNap

Status: MISSING



Natural Habitat: Eucalyptus forests along the eastern and southern coasts of Australia, especially in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria.

Diet: Strictly eucalyptus leaves and lots of them (up to 1 kilo a day)!

Special Abilities:

- Sleeps up to 20 hours a day
- Powerful claws for tree climbing
- Has a special thumb-like digit for gripping branches

Conservation Status: Vulnerable due to deforestation, bushfires, and disease.

Threat Level: High. Koalas are not good travellers and become stressed easily.

Your Mission: Locate the smuggler's hideout and guide LeafNap back to the safety of the zoo.

CLUE #1 - WHERE IS LEAFNAP?

Found hidden in the empty koala enclosure:

A torn scrap of paper with this riddle written in pencil and a smudge of red earth...

 RIDDLE FROM THE SMUGGLER:



"Built by hands that came back from war,
This winding trail hugs the southern shore.
Ocean to one side, cliffs to the right,
It's a view that's best seen in morning light.
Find the road that's more than just grand –
It's a memorial carved through the land."

 YOUR TASK:

1. Solve the riddle: What famous road is this clue describing?
2. Mark the location on your explorer map.
(Hint: It's in Victoria!)
3. Research why Koalas must be protected.

The Intrepid Explorers' Map



Illustration from the book: The Intrepid Explorers: The Mysterious Case of The Stolen Suling / to be published mid-August 2025.



Code Name: Shadow Snarl

Species: Tasmanian Devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*)

Status: MISSING – Urgent Rescue Needed!



Natural Habitat: Tasmania, and especially in cool forests, coastal scrublands, and open plains. These animals are only found in the wild on the island of Tasmania.

Diet: Carnivorous scavengers, they eat dead animals and use their super-strong jaws to crunch through bones. Nature's clean-up crew!

Special Abilities:

- They have the strongest bite per body mass of any living mammalian carnivore
- Can store extra fat in their tails for energy
- Fierce growl and powerful jaws make them sound much scarier than they look
- Nocturnal – sleeps during the day and hunts at night

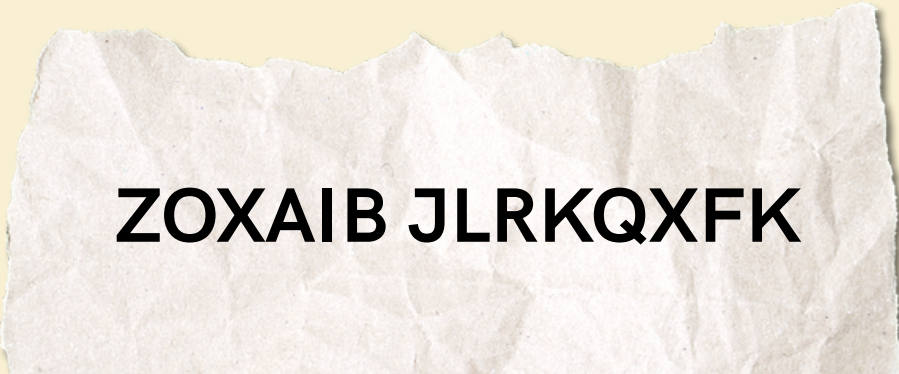
Conservation Status: Endangered – A contagious disease called Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD) has wiped out many devils. Conservation groups are working hard to protect the remaining population.

Your Mission: Help the Intrepid Explorers locate Shadow Snarl before it's too late.



CLUE #2 - WHERE IS SHADOW SNARL?

Archie just intercepted a coded message... and it might be your only chance to find out where Shadow Snarl has been taken!



ZOXAIB JLRKQXFK

To crack the code:

Use the Caesar Cipher +3 key (Shift each letter 3 forward in the alphabet)

For Example, A is D

 Mark it on your Explorer Map

Check back tomorrow for your next clue. FOUR more animals are missing!





Code Name: Puddle

Species: Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*)

Status: MISSING – Help us rescue her!



Natural Habitat: Freshwater rivers and streams in eastern Australia and Tasmania. They live in burrows along the banks.

Diet: Carnivorous. They eat insects, larvae, and small crustaceans. They hunt underwater using their super-sensitive bill.

Special Abilities:

- Females lay eggs (super rare for mammals!)
- Males have venomous spurs on their back legs
- Can close their eyes, ears, and nose underwater – like a mini submarine
- Electrolocation – they can sense electric fields given off by their prey

Conservation Status: Near Threatened – Climate change, drought, and water pollution are affecting their habitats.

Your Mission: Track Puddle's trail and help her return to the safety of the zoo.

CLUE #3 - WHERE IS PUDDLE?

As you know, PUDDLE has vanished from Taronga Zoo... but we've just received a tip!

A mysterious message says she's been spotted somewhere up north, and it's up to you to help the Intrepid Explorers figure out exactly where.

  Solve each clue below.

Each answer is a word, and you'll need to take the first letter from each word and report it in the corresponding case.

This will reveal the secret location where PUDDLE has been taken.

 Once you've cracked it, mark the location on your Explorer Map!



1	2	3	4	5	6
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1. This city is famous for a huge horse race that people all across Australia watch every year.
2. The national day of remembrance for Australian and New Zealand soldiers.
3. One of the oldest animals on Earth, they've been around for over 200 million years!
4. This Australian animal is famous for hopping on its powerful back legs and using its long tail for balance.
5. The first people of Australia who have lived here for over 65,000 years.
6. A small freshwater crustacean that lives in rivers, lakes, and dams across Australia.



Code Name: SmilePouch

Species: Setonix brachyurus

Status: MISSING



Natural Habitat: Small islands off the coast of Western Australia (like Rottnest Island) and a few areas on the mainland's southwest.

Diet: Herbivore. Quokkas eat grasses, leaves, and stems. They can survive long periods without water by getting moisture from plants.

Special Abilities:

- Known as "the world's happiest animal" thanks to its cheeky grin
- Excellent climber and jumper despite its small size
- Mainly nocturnal and can hide in dense vegetation to avoid predators
- Uses its tail for balance when standing upright

Conservation Status: Vulnerable — threatened by habitat loss and predators like foxes and cats.

Your Mission: Track down the location where SmilePouch is being held and bring them back to the safety of the zoo.

CLUE #4 - WHERE IS SMILEPOUCH?

As you know, SMILEPOUCH has vanished from Taronga Zoo... and our search team has just finished scouring the quokka enclosure.

Inside the hollow of a log hideout, we found:

- A handful of powdery white sand (not from Sydney!)
- A faded postcard showing a coastline with water so bright it almost glows turquoise
- A torn page from a notebook with this puzzle written in messy block letters:
-

  Your mission: Solve each clue below.  Once you've cracked the code, mark the location on your Explorer Map!

Each answer is a word. Write down the first letter from each answer in the matching case. The letters will reveal the secret location where SMILEPOUCH has been taken.

- - - - -

1. A precious green-blue gemstone
2. The opposite of "stop"
3. A narrow piece of land surrounded by water on three side
4. A person who journeys to unfamiliar places
5. A lush, green forest with lots of rain
6. The first letter of the alphabet
7. The opposite of "south".
8. The salty water that covers most of Earth



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