

Tawny Frogmouth

Podargus strigoides



Class: *Aves*

Order: *Caprimulgiformes*

Family: *Podargidae*

Characteristics: Tawny frogmouths are named for their incredibly wide beak, resembling a frog's mouth. The tawny frogmouth is a silver-grey with mottled black and browns. The underparts are a lighter cream color. Inside of the frogmouth's enormous mouth is a lime-green or yellow color. They have longer feathers and a somewhat fluffy appearance. This is partially due to the tufts of bristles above the beak and on the neck. Males and females are distinguishable by iris color, with the males having an orange-brown ring around the yellow iris. Tawny frogmouths are about 12-20 inches long and weigh 0.4-1.3 pounds ([Toronto Zoo](#)).

Behavior: Tawny frogmouths are nocturnal animals that hunt at night and roosting during the day. These birds hunt by waiting for prey to come to them, then jumping from a low perch and catching the prey in their large beak. If threatened, the frogmouth will freeze with its feathers tight to its body and its head pointed upward and eyes closed to look like a stump or log ([Beauty of Birds](#)). At night, these birds make a drumming "oom-oom-oom" sound, especially during breeding season ([Saint Louis Zoo](#)).

Reproduction: Tawny frogmouths nest in trees, and a breeding pair will return to the same nesting site for many years. The pairs will stay together until one of the pair dies. The females will lay 2-3 white eggs and both parents share in incubation of the eggs. ([Lincoln Park Zoo](#)) The eggs are incubated for about 30 days. Both parents care for the chicks until they leave the nest at 25 days old. ([Beauty of Birds](#))

Diet: Wild: mostly large insects, occasionally frogs and other small vertebrates ([Australia Zoo](#))

Zoo: mice

Conservation: The tawny frogmouth is listed as least concern by [IUCN](#) due to its extremely large range size. The population trend also seems to be stable for the species. This bird is known to be common throughout its range and has no known major threats. They are a species that is in the Species Survival Program through AZA.

FYI: Tawny Frogmouths are not owls. Although they look similar, they are more closely related to nightjars. ([Perth Zoo](#))



Range & Habitat:

Found in most wooded areas throughout Australia and Tasmania.



Lifespan: up to 30+ years in captivity, 14 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: These birds are masters of disguise. When threatened they will freeze with their head pointed upward and cannot be distinguished from a tree branch or stump.

IUCN Conservation Status:
Least Concern

