



DARTER

Description

The male Darter is almost entirely black. Females are similar but have a pale creamy chest and abdomen. The head is marked with a white stripe below the eye. The Darter's head is streamlined like its pointed bill. It uses its bill as a spear to catch prey.

Diet

The Darter is a **carnivore** and eats fish and other aquatic animals. The Darter silently submerges itself into the water and stalks unwary fish.

In the wild

When Darters lay eggs, both parents take turns to sit on the eggs. At changeover, the arriving bird makes a 'kah' call several times from nearby and waits for the response. Then there is a brief greeting and as the sitting bird stands, the mate pushes it aside to sit on the nest. Both birds defend the nest site by either hissing or attacking.

Threats

Like other waterbirds, the Darter is threatened by destruction of wetland habitats.

At Perth Zoo

Darters can be seen inside the **Australian Wetlands** drying themselves in the sun.

Scientific Name

Anhinga melanogaster novaehollandiae

Other Names

Australian Darter,
Snake-bird



Conservation Status

Extinct

Extinct in the Wild

Critically Endangered

Endangered

Vulnerable

Near-Threatened

Least Concern

Not Evaluated

Body Length: 85–90 cm

Incubation: 26–30 days

Number of eggs: 4–6



Distribution ■

Distribution: Most of Australia except central arid regions

Habitat: Freshwater areas like rivers, swamps and lakes

Did you know?

The Darter's feathers aren't waterproof so they will spread their wings and dry them in the sun. This also helps to control skin parasites.

