

# THE AUSTRALIAN ANTECHINUS

## ANSWER KEY

Antechinus are a small Australian marsupial mammal that is part of the Dasyuridae family. Small in size, they typically measuring between 10 and 15 centimetres in length. Having short fur that ranges from brown to grey they have long tails that help them balance while climbing trees and searching for food.

Antechinus are primarily insectivorous, meaning they mainly eat insects like beetles, spiders, and caterpillars. They are nocturnal, which means they are most active during the night, using their keen sense of smell and hearing to hunt for food.

Antechinus are found in a variety of habitats across Australia, including forests, woodlands, and scrublands. They are skilled climbers and often make their homes in hollow logs, rock crevices, or leaf litter on the forest floor.

As a result of their small size, Antechinus have predators including owls, snakes, and in the urban environment - cats. However, their ability to remain hidden during the day and their quick movements help them avoid many predators. Antechinus are also predators themselves of insects and they play an important role in the ecosystem as they help to control populations of pests.

### 1. What do Antechinus primarily eat?

Antechinus primarily eat insects such as beetles, spiders, and caterpillars.

### 2. When are Antechinus most active?

Antechinus are most active during the night because they are nocturnal creatures.

### 3. Where do Antechinus make their homes?

Antechinus make their homes in various places such as hollow logs, rock crevices, or leaf litter on the forest floor.

### 4. Name one predator of Antechinus mentioned in the passage.

Owls, snakes and cats are all predators of the Antechinus.

### 5. How do Antechinus help the ecosystem?

Antechinus help the ecosystem by controlling populations of pests as predators of insects.

Uses comprehension strategies to expand content knowledge.

