

WHAT IS A MEGAPODE?

The megapodes, also known as incubator birds or mound-builders, are stocky, medium-large chicken-like birds with small heads and large feet in the family Megapodiidae. Their name literally means *large foot* (Greek: *mega* = large, *poda* = foot), and is a reference to the heavy legs and feet typical of these terrestrial birds. All are browsers, all but the Malleefowl occupy wooded habitats, and most are brown or black coloured. Megapodes are superprecocial, hatching from their eggs in the most mature condition of any birds. They hatch with open eyes, with bodily coordination and strength, with full wing feathers and downy body feathers, able to run, pursue prey, and, in some species, fly on the same day they hatch.

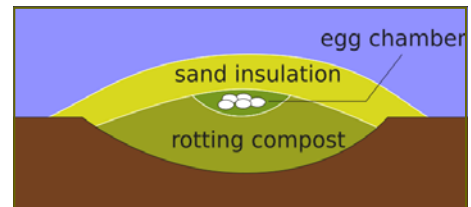
Two well-known megapodes are the Malleefowl, *Leipoa ocellata*, and the Brush Turkey, *Alectura lathami*.



Brush Turkey
Photo: Elizabeth Hane



Malleefowl
Photo: "Kr.afol"



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BIRD KEEPING IN AUSTRALIA