

Australia 19th October – 21st November 2016

SE Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria & SE South Australia

Mike Hoit

mikee_hoit@hotmail.com



Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Denilquin rugby pitch

This trip was divided roughly into two parts. Until the 7th November, I was accompanied by my partner and involved more 'normal' holiday activities, including attending a wedding and visiting friends in Hobart. While less intensive in terms of mammal watching, I still spent a good amount of time in the field and there were ample opportunities to see some great stuff. The last two weeks I travelled on my own through Vic and south-eastern SA and was free to spend my entire time in the field.

Being a straightforward place to get around, I've only mentioned logistic details in the relevant sections, where necessary. I rented smallish SUVs/4WDs, which were only really necessary on a few occasions, but added a degree of confidence on a couple of tracks (and were handy to sleep in a couple of times!). Virgin Australia were used for internal flights, and proved good value for money - we had been warned other carriers were far less reliable.

David Andrew's new(ish) [Guide to Finding Mammals of Australia](#) was invaluable in the planning of the trip; I've referenced below where the stakeouts in the book paid off, and on the occasions where my experiences were at odds with the information. As always, I also heavily relied on the trip reports at mammalwatching.com. A huge source of assistance came from the members of the [Australian Mammal Watching](#) Facebook page, who provided excellent advice and answered my numerous requests for information; an extremely friendly bunch, and extremely generous with sharing site details - thanks everyone! I should single out Tim Bawden, Rohan Clarke, John Harris, and Angus McNab in particular for giving me vital pointers for certain species.

In addition to the species noted under each site, I had various sightings of Brown Hare, European Rabbit and Red Fox, and a couple of Feral Cats; I've generally omitted sightings of invasive species, with a couple of exceptions (it's a long enough report already). For those also interested in birds, my sightings for the trip are on ebird [here](#).

QUEENSLAND

Brisbane area, 19th-20th, 22nd, & 27th October

We spent the first two nights in Brisbane's CBD, a very pleasant city in which to begin; exploration of the City Botanic Gardens and South Bank Parklands provided our first few species, including a Rakali. On 27th we spent about an hour and a half after dusk spotlighting the area around JC Slaughter Falls at Mt Coot-tha but failed to find any gliders.

Common Ringtail Possum – One at Mt Coot-tha on 27th, between car park & junction of trail to for JC Slaughter Falls.

Common Brushtail Possum – Several in City Botanic Gardens on 20th, two Mt Coot-tha below JC Slaughter Falls car park.

Black Flying-fox - c.35 roosting by the pool in the northwest corner of Botanic Gardens; probably this after dark at South Bank Parklands. A camp of several thousand seen on 22nd in the Loganholme/Logan River area while driving from Cleveland to Lamington NP; I didn't note the exact location but were easy to spot from the road.

[microbat sp – 4+ dark brown, mid-sized bats leaving a box behind the toilet block at JC Slaughter Falls car park prior to dusk.]

Water Rat – a large individual seen well scampering across one of the lawns at South Bank Parklands on 20th.



Common Brushtail in typical habitat, Brisbane; Koala in typical pose, Point Lookout, North Stradbroke

North Stradbroke Island, 21st-22nd October

We included a visit here to ensure I got my cetacean fix for the trip. The Andrew guide mentioned several species, with Humpback Whale being near-guaranteed in October, and possibilities of some interesting terrestrial species, notably Squirrel Glider and Agile Wallaby. I struggled to find any details on where to look for the latter, so we tried the track to Blue Lake (car park off Alfred Martin Way at -27.510466, 153.468636) late afternoon, and the Brown Lake Track (junction at -27.499670, 153.427637) just before dusk, without success. I'm still not sure whether they're localised, or if we were just unlucky. The glider should be possible anywhere I think, but we failed to see any by spotlighting around the northwest of the island. It seemed quite difficult to get away from main roads in many areas, and with hindsight should probably have driven back to the Blue or Brown Lake areas. I was hoping to look for Water Mouse as well, but the boardwalk at Myora Springs was closed for repair. We were successful in seeing the other targets though, and it was really nice place to visit.

The best place for cetacean viewing was the northern section of the Gorge boardwalk, starting from opposite the Ocean Gelati Bar in Pt Lookout; aside from whales, we had close views of Green Turtles, a Manta Ray and stingrays by looking down from the cliffs. Cylinder Headland (a little to the northwest) should also be good. We stayed in Point Lookout at the lovely [Banksia Retreat](#), which had Eastern Grey Kangaroos outside, and our host asked around to locate the local Koala. There are several decent food options.

Koala – North Stradbroke is famed for its good population of Koalas, and it didn't take long to find one. The first was in a roadside tree on the road to Amity Point, rapidly followed by another over the picnic site at Cabarita Park, Amity Point ([-27.4007112,153.4376768](#)), and another along the trail to Blue Lake. The next day, we found two in Point Lookout around Bigoon Road/Bimba Street.

[**Sugar Glider** – A couple heard chattering for a prolonged period at the junction of East Coast Road and Fisherman's Road ([-27.435652,153.500463](#)), but not seen.]

Eastern Grey Kangaroo – Common, even in gardens around Point Lookout.

Black Wallaby – A stunning 'golden' morph individual along the trail to Tortoise Lagoon/Blue Lake late afternoon.

Dugong – Great views of one from the ferry less than 10 minutes after leaving Cleveland on 21st, and two slightly distant animals of Amity Point early the following morning.

Black Flying-fox – Lots of Flying-foxes around Point Lookout in the evening, the few seen well were this species.

'Dwarf' Minke Whale – One individual, presumably of this unnamed form, seen several times moving southeast past Point Lookout boardwalk at about 1km range on 21st.

Humpback Whale – At least 8 past Point Lookout boardwalk over a couple of hours in the afternoon of 21st. Andrew suggests they are often very close, but binoculars were essential for a decent look, and I was pleased to have my scope. I watched from Cylinder Headland early morning on 22nd, but a strong northerly breeze and rough sea severely hampered viewing; I still had a great views of one spectacularly breaching a couple of times, and saw a couple of brief blows.

Australian Humpback Dolphin – Two individuals seen close in off the jetty at Cabarita Park, Amity Point, immediately on arrival (around midday) on 21st. They were around on and off for the hour or so I spent there, but could go missing for extended periods, only to reappear in the same spot. Presumably the same animals also present at dawn on 22nd. This site is mentioned in Andrew's guide.

Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin – Three seen from the ferry back to Cleveland from Dunwich on 22nd, about halfway across.

Lamington NP/Canungra, 22nd-25th October

Lamington completely lived up to expectations from a wildlife point of view. We stayed for three nights at O'Reilly's; it's pretty pricey and parts are overrun by tourists by day, but not too bad really, and the birding and mammaling was fantastic. I saw nearly all of the species one could reasonably expect, most around the resort itself. Duck Creek Road was also excellent, particularly the first kilometre after the transition from wet to dry forest; this track is quite heavily potholed and would have been tricky in a two wheel drive car, and presumably need a 4WD after rain.

I again didn't find Squirrel Glider; it's apparently sometimes seen lower down the road, although one of the guides had seen one well a week or so earlier along the first couple of hundred metres of the Border Track from the resort. Andrew mentions a nearby dam where Platypuses can be seen, and I think this refers to the O'Reilly's vineyards in the Canungra Valley. We stopped for essential wine supplies while leaving, and were surprised to see signs advertising the presence of Platypus in a pool in Canungra Creek. The staff reported seeing the animals fairly often, even during the day, and one lady had seen one recently by day in Canungra itself; why the resort doesn't advertise this I don't know! If staying at the resort one could drive down for an evening vigil, then back up the road (just under 30km) spotlighting in likely areas.

Brown Antechinus – Presumably the same individual seen well around the entrance to the reception building on 22nd & 25th, and another around the junction of Lamington NP Road/Duck Creek Road on 24th.

Northern Brown Bandicoot – Seen every night at the resort: up to two between the bird feeding area and the start of Booyang Boardwalk, one around the rooms near the start of the Wishing Tree track. A bandicoot sp. in eucalypt woodland on Duck Creek Road on the night of 24th was probably this species.

Southern Long-nosed Bandicoot – Up to two around the picnic benches on the opposite side of the road to the reception building. Extremely confiding if you keep the torch beam dim.



Above left, Red-necked Pademelon; above right, Northern Long-nosed Bandicoot; below left, Common Ringtail Possum, all O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, Lamington NP. Below right, Red-necked & Whiptail Wallabies, Laidley



Sugar Glider – At least one chattering and seen poorly (mostly just eyeshine) from the Treetop Walkway.

Southern Greater Glider – Great views of two of these brilliant animals at about 19.30 on 24th on Duck Creek Road at [-28.20166, 153.10305](#).

Common Ringtail Possum – Common indeed! Seen every night, peak count was 17 around reception & along Booyang/Treetop Walkway on 24th, some giving superb views

Short-eared Brushtail Possum – a few seen around the same areas as Ringtails each night, plus a couple of extremely tame animals in the campsite.

Red-legged Pademelon – Frequently encountered by day in forest (e.g. Wishing Tree and Python Rock trails), but better views at night. Particularly common and easily see along the Booyang Boardwalk late afternoon and after dark.

Red-necked Pademelon – Extremely common and generally on view on any grassy areas, except during the middle of the day. My peak count was 48 on view at one time on a cloudy late afternoon around the helipad.

Whip-tailed Wallaby – Good views of five along Duck Creek Road around [-28.191132, 153.09883](#) at about 9am on 24th. Slightly surprisingly, not seen along the main road while arriving or departing – perhaps we were too early in the afternoon and late on a warm morning, respectively.

Fawn-footed Melomys - Seen a couple of times from Booyang Boardwalk, and once at the junction of Lamington NP Road/Duck Creek Road.

Bush Rat – Individuals seen by the roadside between the campsite and car par, from Booyang Boardwalk, and behind the rooms near the Wishing Tree Track.

Black Flying-fox – A camp of c50 located in trees by Canungra Creek on 25th, while checking an area where Platypus had recently been seen. Park by the bridge at [-28.0172016, 153.160726](#).

Little Red Flying-fox – I was pleased to find a group of at least 6 alongside the above species.

[long-eared bat sp – One spotlight gleaning from leaves near the junction of Lamington NP Road/Duck Creek Road on 24th.

Lockyer Valley area, 25th-27th October

I fully expected a couple of extremely wildlife-deficient days, but our friends had fortunately chosen an excellent location for their wedding. While this area is unlikely to feature on any mammal watching circuit, it might be of interest to anyone passing through the area. We were staying just outside Laidley at [Branell Homestead](#), a former farm converted into holiday homes & a wedding venue; I was amazed to see Whiptails on the grassy slopes as soon as we arrived! While this and much of the surrounding land is private, I think everything could be viewed from public roads, and I'd imagine that any nearby areas of open eucalypt forest & paddocks nearby would hold the same species. After departing on 27th, we checked out a flying-fox camp in Toowoomba (mentioned in Andrew), and then took a circuitous route through Crow's Nest National Park and the hills back to Brisbane, which was a most pleasant drive.

Squirrel Glider – Excellent views of one (including performing an impressive glide) east of Laidley at the junction of Paroz Road and Norfolk Road ([-27.629353, 152.430776](#)) at around 23.30 on 25th.

Common Brushtail Possum – A couple around the Homestead.

Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby – Two at Perseverance Dam Wall, Crow’s Nest ([NP -27.285532, 152.119462](#)). The animals were on the boulder slope on the east side of the road mid-afternoon.

Whip-tailed Wallaby – Up to 18 on the grassy slopes at Branell.

Red-necked Wallaby – Four at Branell.

Black Wallaby – Three or four in scrubby gullies at Branell.

Black Flying-fox – A camp of several hundred at Kearney’s Springs Historical Park in Toowoomba (car park at [-27.600879, 151.945387](#)); all three flying-foxes are reported as occurring here, but I despite searching this was the only species I could see.

Grey-headed Flying-fox – An enormous camp (too many to make an accurate estimate) was just north of Laidley on the road towards Plainland and the A2, along the creekline around [-27.618925, 396232](#). These staged a spectacular flyout to points unknown southeast at dusk.

Little Red Flying-fox – An almost equally impressive flyout of this species (numbers in the low thousands) see both nights from Branell. These followed the ridges north-northeast from somewhere south of Laidley (I never located the camp itself) with many feeding on flowering gums around the homestead just after dusk, before moving on.



Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby habitat with rock-wallabies, Perseverance Dam Wall

TASMANIA

Just awesome. More than anywhere else, I regret not allocating more time to Tas. An incredible place to see wildlife, and brilliant place all round, I could have spent weeks here. Due to foolishly only having a week, my time here was a bit hectic and things could easily have gone wrong, but I managed to see all targets. Due to a lack of time, we didn’t visit the northeast, nor have time to visit Narawntapu, writing off ‘Forester’ Eastern Grey Kangaroo and relying on other sites for Common Wombat.

Hobart/Melaleuca/Bruny Island, 28th-31st October

As we were visiting friends for a long weekend, I was only able to skive off to hunt for wildlife on a few occasions. So I was unable to stay overnight on Bruny I., as many people do, being limited to an afternoon visit with the others – a fantastic place, but I didn’t add any new species. I flew to



Rufous-bellied Pademelon, Arthur River

Melaleuca, in the southwest of Tasmania, for half day trip with [Par Avion](#), on 29th. This was a stunningly beautiful flight to twitch the critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot, but also held a little mammal interest, and well worth the cost. The same day I was allowed out for a spotlighting session to the Waterworks Reserve in Hobart, before heading on to Truganini for another chance at Eastern Barred Bandicoot. Even though the gate at the Waterworks was open at 21.30, I parked outside ([-42.905686, 147.296977](#)), before walking the road

to the end of the Upper Reservoir, the track around the far side, back across the dam, and retracing my steps to the entrance. Other sites visited with the others were Mount Wellington (no mammals seen, but probably worthy of an evening visit), and Peter Murrell Reserve for an incredible Platypus. The latter has been seen in Hobart Rivulet between the Cascades Brewery (worth a visit) and the city, though we had no joy, and the water levels were quite low. Another site not far from Hobart, which isn't mentioned by Andrew, is the [Salmon Ponds](#) near New Norfolk; we didn't visit but Platypus seems to be seen regularly.

Platypus – A large individual at the north end of Heron Pond at Peter Murrell Reserve just before dusk on 30th. I parked off [Lady Penrhyn Drive](#) and walk west.

Eastern Barred Bandicoot – Having drawn a blank at Waterworks Reserve, I headed to the Truganini Track, where the BirdQuest tour had seen one the previous year. This path follows Cartwright Creek between the Cartwright and Truganini Reserves, leaving a parking area off the B68 between Taroona and Sandy Bay at [-42.930668, 147.356710](#). I had fantastic views of one less than 100m along the track.

Sugar Glider – One at Waterworks Reserve; after a tip-off from some fellow mammal spotters, excellent views just beyond the further toilet block, near the car park at the west end of the Upper Reservoir (introduced on Tas).

Common Ringtail Possum – One on the Truganini Track, my only sighting on Tasmania

Common Brushtail Possum – Four at Waterworks Reserve, three at the Truganini Track, singles crossing roads through suburban Hobart on two occasions.

Eastern Bettong – Almost the first animal seen on entering the Waterworks Reserve! Great views just 50m inside the gate, until I edged a bit too close in an attempt to get pictures, when it took off at great speed.

Rufous-bellied Pademelon – My first one was by day at the walker's huts, Melaleuca. Then at least 27 Waterworks Reserve, 8 at Truganini Track, and about 10 at Peter Murrell.

Red-necked Wallaby -14 or so at Waterworks Reserve.

Swamp Rat – Excellent prolonged views on one nibbling on spilt food below the feeding tables at Melaleuca.

Tasmanian Long-eared Bat – Presumed to be this species watched hunting in the spotlight at Truganini Track, based on apparent bulk.

[microbat sp. – at least two species at Waterworks Reserve based on flight and size differences, probably a wattled bat sp. and either Little Forest Bat or Eastern Falsistrelle]

Arthur River area, 31st October – 1st November

A potential spanner in the works was that our visit coincided with a number of tour groups, meaning that Mountain Valley at Loongana was booked out on the only dates we could visit Tasmania. After advice from the Facebook group, we took a punt on a the long drive to search for devils ourselves in this remote area of the northwest, which Devil Facial Tumour Disease has yet to reach. We stayed at [Arthur River Cabin Park](#), which was ideal; the township was almost deserted this early in the spring, which was quite eerie, but meant that wildlife was everywhere. The roads are fully paved in this area now, meaning if one was so inclined you could drive a huge loop from Smithton southwest, down the coast and back northeast in a normal car. My strategy was to drive the Arthur River Road (north of the township), and the Temma Road (south of the river), plus tracks to West Point and Bluff Hill, very slowly. North of Arthur River, sonic deterrents are in place to keep wildlife off the road, and locals and rangers alike remove roadkill to the bush; better for devil survival, but perhaps less good for would-be devil watchers! We also took a day trip with [Arthur River Cruises](#), which was excellent, despite encountering neither Platypus (sometimes seen from the boat) nor Spot-tailed Quoll (a family were regular at the lunch stop a couple of years ago, and occasional animals still visit).

Short-beaked Echidna – Our first Echidna caused major excitement and an emergency u-turn. Close views as it foraged by the Bass Highway at [-41.550158, 146.952424](#) late morning on 31st.

Swamp Antechinus – One seen darting out onto the Bluff Hill Track at [-41.011475, 144.652286](#) several times on 1st; I never obtained a really good view, but think it was this species rather than Dusky.

Spotted-tailed Quoll – A smallish individual slowly ambled across the road just south of the entrance to the Cabin Park at 22.30 on 1st. Apparently fairly common in the area.



Tasmanian Devil – After we cruised the roads without success from 21.00 to 23.15 on 31st, I went out alone along Temma Rd from 01.30-03.10. About 15km south of Arthur River, just after the road turns inland, a young Devil suddenly appeared: it seemed unsure if whether to run, and paused for brief binocular views at the edge of the headlights. Wanting a better view (and for my partner to see one), we headed back south after dusk on 1st. After only 20 minutes, we disturbed an absolute brute of a Devil eating something at the roadside; we parked a switched off the lights, and after then minutes it returned, initially very tentatively and fleeing, but becoming increasingly bold, as it sniffed around the verge just metres from the car. Eventually it wandered off, but on the return drive it was again present; in the end I had to chase it off the road for its own good! One of the most incredible wildlife experiences I've ever had.

Tasmanian Devil, south of Arthur River

Common Wombat – Very easy to see in the area. The first was by the cattle grid north of the West Point Road turning before dark, with good numbers on lawns around Arthur River township and at the Cabin Park. We even found prints on the beach at the end of West Point Road.

Common Brushtail Possum – Up to six seen each night.

Long-nosed Potoroo – One seen a close range at dusk in a roadside ditch on West Point Road at [-40.942202, 144.663217](#).

Rufous-bellied Pademelon – Extremely common.

Red-necked Wallaby – Not as abundant, but plenty seen along roadsides and lawns.

Tasman Peninsula, 2nd-3rd November

Our last stop on our whistle-stop tour of the state was the fantastic Tasman Peninsula. This is another region where Devils are tumour-free, and although I did not receive any recommendations to look for the species here, I think it would be well worth a go. Roads are busier, but there are a number of tracks to try; an extremely knowledgeable tour guide at Port Arthur Historic Site told us she sees them every couple of months on the late-night drive home. She also mentioned the area around the [Port Arthur Lavender Farm](#) as being good for wombats, which we didn't see on our visit.

On my one night in the area, we searched the southern perimeter of the Historic Site before and after dusk, before joining a 'Ghost Walk' inside the [Historic Site](#) itself (interesting and swarming with mammals), and then driving the Fortescue Road/C344 (turnoff by the Lavender Farm) and part of the C343 (turn off the B37 at [-43.057229, 147.808881](#)). Given the limited time available, we managed a superb haul of stuff, and thoroughly recommend a visit.

Short-beaked Echidna – One late afternoon by the side of Safety Cove Road at [-43.052041, 147.845469](#), and another early evening by the Arthur Highway by Eaglehawk Bay at [-43.023252, 147.895309](#).

Eastern Quoll – Great views of one feeding on something on Fortescue Road at [-43.127017, 147.928597](#) around 23.45; another, darker, individual dashed across the track about 500m further along.

Southern Brown Bandicoot – One just after dark along the trail (leaves Safety Cove Road at [-43.154362, 147.845108](#)) along the coastal side of the Historic Site; another within the site in the Government Garden, by the visitor centre.

Eastern Barred Bandicoot – Two in the Historic Site, foraging on the lawns opposite the Officer's Gardens.

Common Brushtail Possum – Three inside the Historic Site, four crossing various roads, and two at our B&B at Norfolk Bay Convict Station.

Eastern Bettong – Poor views of a very small macropod bounding away by the Historic Site entrance track probably this species.

Long-nosed Potoroo – Several brief views of an animal poking its head out from roadside vegetation by the trailhead off Safety Cove Road (see above) was initially thought to be a Southern Brown Bandicoot, until the tail was seen and it gave the macropod foot thump of alarm. A surprising confusion pair!

Rufous-bellied Pademelon – Large numbers around the Historic Site early evening and after dark, 15+ along Fortescue Road, and few others along the main roads.

Red-necked Wallaby – A few in the same areas as the Pademelons.

Water Rat – Prolonged views of one foraging in the bay and feeding on a stone jetty by the perimeter fence of the Historic Site pre-dusk. Viewed from the stile at [-43.148771, 147.852754](#).

Afro-Australian Fur Seal – Three seen from The Blowhole, near Eaglehawk Neck.

Southern Right Whale – A very distant whale offshore from Devil's Kitchen/Tasman Arch (south of Eaglehawk Neck) had the distinctive V-shaped blow of this species.

Humpback Whale – One offshore from Remarkable Cave (south of Safety Cove) on the afternoon of 2nd, and three distant animals (though not as distant as the Right Whale) that evening off Devil's Kitchen/Tasman Arch. Certainly the latter sighting was only possible with a spotting scope.



Left, Short-beaked Echidna; right, Southern Brown Bandicoot, both Port Arthur

VICTORIA

Melbourne area, 3rd-7th and 9th November

A long weekend in the city, based in St Kilda, within walking distance of the breakwater with its Little Penguins and Water Rats. Other than casual sightings, I managed a morning birding at Sherbrooke Forest in the Dandenongs, and an afternoon out on the Mornington Peninsula. The former area may well repay a nocturnal visit, but presumably anything present here can be better sought at e.g. Bunyip. I passed through Greater Melbourne again on the evening of 9th, and had a fortuitous Platypus sighting.

Platypus – I stopped for a picnic meal and wander at Candlebark Park on the early evening of 9th, and was surprised to have a Platypus pop up not far from the riverbank, despite quite a few joggers and dog walkers being present. I parked at [-37.740844, 145.136747](#), the animal was about 100m upstream.

[**Common Wombat** – Plenty of tracks and diggings Sherbrooke Forest.]

Common Ringtail Possum – One running along a garden fence in St Kilda.

Common Brushtail Possum – Several seen in St Kilda.

Black Wallaby – One Sherbrooke Forest on 4th, on the trails from Grant's Picnic Ground –([37.887520, 145.369901](#)).

Water Rat – At least five at St Kilda Breakwater [Penguin Colony](#) on 5th. Brilliant close views of two pairs from the far end of the boardwalk, and another juvenile individual at the landward end of the pier.

Grey-headed Flying-fox – Small numbers seen in the evenings along the Yarra near the CBD.

Afro-Australian Fur Seal – One off Point Nepean on 5th.

Burrnan Bottlenose Dolphin – At least three animals c750m off shore from Point Nepean Visitor Centre, at the tip of Mornington Peninsula, on 5th.

Little Desert, 7th-8th November

Having dropped the other half off at Melbourne Airport, I made a last minute change of plan. My idea of an evening in the Yarra Ranges would have entailed a lot of dead time during the day, so I altered my booking at Little Desert Nature Lodge and set off on the four hour drive west. In the end, I probably could have chosen a more efficient route around southern Australia, but the late addition of the areas east on Melbourne to my itinerary and the fixed dates for Deniliquin meant this was the only way to maximise looking for target species.

The lodge was an ideal base to explore this area, being sited in excellent habitat. Unfortunately, none of the volunteers I spoke to could give me much in the way of advice on where to look for small mammals. I harboured vague hopes of locating a Silky Mouse burrow to stake out at night, but found nothing during my afternoon wandering the heaths; either they're scarcer than I assumed, the burrows aren't as distinctive as the Andrew guide makes out, or my detective skills are lacking! Instead, I slowly drove the Nhill-Harrow Road between the lodge entrance and the southern edge of the national park a few times, and spent a couple of hours spotlighting in the compound. Plenty of shrubs were flowering along the southern perimeter fence, but I had no joy finding any pygmy-possums. The following day I birded the northern part of Little Desert before heading back east.

Short-beaked Echidna – One on 8th near Kiata, by the roadside at [-36.428994, 141.777649](#).

Sugar Glider – Excellent views of two in the mature gums north of Whimpey's Waterhole.

Common Brushtail Possum – At least ten in the lodge grounds.

Western Grey Kangaroo – Common both within the compound and on the heaths.

White-striped Free-tailed Bat – Two seen and heard over the compound.

Point Addis/Anglesea/Airey's Inlet 8th-9th November

I stayed overnight at Anglesea Beachfront Caravan Park, which seemed as good a base as any. Originally I had intended to travel the Great Ocean Road at least as far as Cape Otway, but opted for a night east of Melbourne instead. This area is probably worth a couple of nights anyway in case of bad weather or, as with my experience, just one of those nights. I targeted the Great Otway National Park inland of Airey's Inlet, and spent a couple of hours exploring the tracks and trails around [Distillery Creek Picnic Area](#); this turned out to be almost entirely unsuccessful as far as locating my target species went, and I saw very few animals in general. I was particularly after Yellow-bellied Glider, and Eastern Pygmy-possum and Agile Antechinus have been seen here.

I also spent a bit of time looking out to sea while birding at Point Addis (from the car park at [-38.395233, 144.252947](#)) on both days; for much of the 9th I birded coastal heath and wetlands back to Melbourne without any mammals of interest.

Koala – Two near Distillery Creek Picnic Area before dusk, and a male heard calling loudly after dark.

Common Ringtail Possum – One spotlighted along Iron Bark Drive

Common Brushtail Possum – Three in the Airey's Inlet area, one in Anglesea.

Eastern Grey Kangaroo – 35 on Anglesea Golf Course early evening (viewed from Golf Links Road at [-38.408856, 144.175858](#)), several Great Otway NP.

Black Wallaby – At least three Great Otway NP.

Short-beaked Common Dolphin – At least six off Point Addis on 8th.

[bottlenose dolphin sp. – Three moved west close inshore past Point Addis on 9th; I'm not sure if these were Common BnDs (they looked fairly large), or if Burrunan BnD is possible outside Port Philip]

[microbat sp – several mid-large bats foraging around clearings in Great Otway NP]

Powelltown/Bunyip/Toolangi 9th-10th November

A couple of months before leaving the UK I became aware that Leadbeater's Possum was now a possibility, along with Mountain Brushtail, and it was immediately apparent that I'd have to tweak my itinerary! Tim Bawden's superb [blog](#) contains some great photos of these species, and all credit for my successful visit goes to him. With Tim also providing some good gen for Yellow-bellied Glider in the area, I decided the Great Ocean Road area would be sacrificed to make time.

I arrived in the Powelltown area just before dark, to the slightly worrying signs of low cloud shrouding the upper forests – presumably pretty regular here, and although it made spotlighting tricky, there was plenty of activity. The mountain ash habitat on steep slopes here is absolutely stunning, although shockingly it's unprotected and there are substantial clearfell areas. Disgraceful really, and hopefully the campaign for a Great Forest National Park will win out. I worked the Big Creek Road area (turning on Yarra junction road at [-37.870645, 145.805127](#)), although in the higher areas the cloud was too dense, with periods of rain. After an hour's sleep, the cloud base had drifted lower, so I drove around to Bunyip for another session. The poor weather followed me to these lower altitudes, so after quick success with the gliders and owls I called it a night. The next morning I headed to Toolangi (via a chance platypus and Healesville) for some fog-bound birding, then on to Heathcote.

Platypus – One at dawn seen in the Yarra opposite the Home Hotel at Launching Place, just after turning off the B80 towards Healesville (from the bridge at [-37.775370, 145.584892](#)). Actually spotted from the car, only seen briefly once I'd got out.

Common Wombat – One crossed the road on the way to Bunyip, somewhere north of Gembrook.

Leadbeater's Possum – Two along Big Creek Road. The first wasn't much more than a blur before it leapt between trees and vanished; the second shortly afterwards hung around for longer, giving great looks (although it never kept still for long) seemingly in response to 'pishing'. One of the highlights of the trip.

Yellow-bellied Glider – Two at Mortimer Campground, Bunyip ([-37.984771, 145.595152](#)), where the track runs northeast; one or two more heard along the road east of the campsite. Superb.

Sugar Glider – Two chattering, one seen poorly, lower down on Big Creek Road, Powelltown.

Common Ringtail Possum – One crossed the road on the way into Bunyip.

Mountain Brushtail Possum – Two Big Creek Road, Powelltown; including a large, dark individual crossing the road and sitting low in a tree.

Black Wallaby – One crossing the road en route to Bunyip; two Toolangi.

Heathcote/Bendigo area, 10th-11th November

A convenient stopover en route to Deniliquin to hunt down some bird species in the Box-Ironbark woodlands around the town. Late evening I headed up the Mount Ida track (junction at [-36.870121, 144.697882](#)); however, this rather stunted habitat didn't look much cop for spotlighting, so I decided to search two different areas. The first was the tall, open woodland at One Eye State Forest, accessed by taking the Mia Mia Derrinal Road from the B289 northwest of Heathcote; there are various tracks to explore, I started by following Old Railway Reserve Road (junction at [-36.890853, 144.665270](#)). Later, I moved to the more gnarled woodland along Forest Drive, turning off the Heathcote-Nagambie Road at [-36.943598, 144.733620](#). These seemed promising, but sadly produced practically nothing! Another one of those nights, I'm sure on another day they could be better... A few months before, Brush-tailed Phascogale and Common Dunnart, amongst others, had been seen on the Baileston Road in Heathcote-Graytown NP; with hindsight, I should have tried this area instead. On 11th I visited another area of Box-Ironbark at Chewton Railway Dam for Painted Honeyeaters, parking at [-37.104781, 144.298188](#).

Short-beaked Echidna – One on the afternoon of 10th along Hookes Lane (roughly [-36.918669, 144.644459](#)), in one Eye State Forest.

[dunnart/antechinus sp – frustrating views of one in One Eye State Forest on 10th; all I saw was eyeshine and a glimpse of small mammal with a pointed snout before it disappeared down a hole under a log]

Yellow-footed Antechinus – A brilliant chance encounter with two mid-morning at Chewton Railway Dam, at [-37.105786, 144.296343](#). They were running were scampering around the broken branch of the tree down the slope in the centre of the image from the link, so at eye level from the road.

Common Brushtail Possum – Two on Forest Drive, and one crossing the road in Heathcote.

Eastern Grey Kangaroo – About a dozen Mt Ida track, and two in One Eye Forest.



Left, Yellow-footed Antechinus pair, Chewton Railway Dam; right, Black Wallaby, Deniliquin

Deniliquin, 11th-14th November

I visited this area for a weekend looking for Plains-wanderer and other birds as part of a group guided by [Phil Maher](#); we picked up quite a few mammals in the process. Andrew mentions that Platypus can be seen in the lagoon between the town and Island Sanctuary, but asking around it seems that this is no longer the case; apparently they are now rare in the district. Nevertheless, I decided on a dusk watch between the start of the footbridge ([-35.531788, 144.965734](#)) and the mouth of the creek, predictably without success. However, the plague of mosquitoes attempting to feast on me brought out large numbers of microbats, and Phil had received recent reports of Little Red Flying-foxes. According to the tourist office, Water Rats can often be seen in the artificial ponds of parks such as Waring Gardens, in the town centre (I had a very quick look but didn't see one). My plan to do some spotlighting in either Gulpa or Deniliquin State Forests on 13th was scuppered by horrendous weather.

Fat-tailed Dunnart – Just one seen, after a couple of hours, in the paddocks north of Deniliquin, on 12th; they were apparently more difficult in late 2016 due to massive vegetation growth following good rains.

Common Brushtail Possum – Two seen on the Plains-wanderer trip, and one resident outside my room at Riverside Caravan Park.

Eastern Grey Kangaroo – At least 30 south of Deniliquin, mainly at Gulpa State Forest, and a few on the plains north of town, overlapping with Western Grey.

Western Grey Kangaroo – Largely replaced the above species on the Hay Plains, where common.

Red Kangaroo – At least ten on the plains north of town, with some excellent views.

Black Wallaby – Three in the Island Sanctuary (around [-35.532815, 144.970605](#)) on 13th & 14th.

House Mouse – One or two on the plains; Phil suggested that the first signs of a boom in rodent populations were beginning to appear.

White-striped Free-tailed Bat – several over the Edward River on 11th.

Gould's Wattled Bat – Decent views of one at dusk at the Plains-wanderer paddock.

[microbat spp. – plenty over the Edward River, two or three species based on flight/size. One low over the river appeared to be trawling on a couple of occasions and was probably Large-footed (Southern) Myotis.]

Hattah-Kulkyne NP, 15th-16th November

I stayed overnight in Ouyen on 14th (a practical stopover but of no real wildlife interest) before spending a full day and early morning in Hattah-Kulkyne, which was barely any better for mammals to be completely honest! I slept in the car at the Lake Mournpall campground (I'd originally booked at Hattah Lakes, but that site was flooded); I had to take a circuitous route via the sandy 4WD tracks as the main road was underwater. Driving and exploring on foot at night, I hoped to maybe bump into an interesting small mammal or two, but drew a blank, leaving my Hattah-Kulkyne tally at one species. While excellent for birding and reptiles, probably not worth including if you're only after mammals.

Western Grey Kangaroo – Several seen around Lake Mournpall Campground and along the tracks to the north.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Renmark, 16th November

After departing Hattah, I headed west via a couple of birding stops before stopping for lunch by the river at Renmark. As suggested by the Andrew guide, I asked the helpful staff at the [Renmark Paringa Visitor Centre](#) if they knew of any Koalas, and was soon watching a sleepy individual.

Koala – One off Patey Drive, roughly [-34.178167, 140.760839](#) (introduced in SA).

Brookfield CP, 16th November

After dropping some bags at my AirBnb accommodation in Barmera, I headed directly to Brookfield for an evening attempt at wombats, with the backup plan of a night drive down to Sedan/Swan Reach if I failed. The access details (and limitations) are well covered in the Andrew guide; I used Jimmy Lamb's [excellent report](#) for up to date information as well.

Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat – After arriving at 4pm, I spent a couple of hours driving the tracks to find a likely spot – and there are plenty of wombat burrows on the reserve. I ended up returning to one right next to the entrance track, not far from the entrance, to maximise the time available (theoretically, the park was closing just after 8pm, though I didn't see anyone who could have locked me in). This burrow had lots of fresh diggings, was on the west side of the entrance track at [-34.374542, 139.492940](#). I waited about 25m away from 6.30pm – it was pretty warm so I was fairly confident any occupants wouldn't have left. Eventually, just after 7.30pm, clouds of dusk started to appear above the burrow, followed several minutes later, by the head of a wombat! It eventually emerged almost fully for a few minutes, before getting spooked by something and ducked back down the hole.

Western Grey Kangaroo – Very common.

Red Kangaroo – A female and well-grown young in the southeast section of the reserve.

Wild Goat – Two east of the entrance track.

Barmera/Gluepot, 17th November

The 17th was a long, very hot day in [Gluepot Reserve](#); like Hattah-Kulkyne, it's more of a birding destination than one for mammals, unless you can stay over and do some trapping. A mosey around the Murray River west of Barmera turned up large numbers of microbats over the wetlands.

Common Brushtail Possum – One in Barmera.

Western Grey Kangaroo – Several on the drive into Gluepot.

White-striped Free-tailed Bat – One seen and heard near Lake Bonney, Barmera.

Wild Goat – A few sightings in Gluepot.

Telowie Gorge, 18th November

During the planning of the trip, I had been struggling between heading north to Flinders Ranges, or south to Kangaroo Island for the last couple of days. I eventually decided that there would already be enough driving, so settled on the latter (despite being keen on Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby)... until later finding out about Telowie Gorge. With my main targets under the belt, and news that

others had recently [succeeded there](#), a snap decision was made. Why have a relaxing day in Adelaide, when you can do a 650km twitch?

From Barmera it would probably take about 3.5 hours without stopping (I made a few birding and food breaks). The Conservation Park is signposted from the A1. I arrived late afternoon and spent a pleasantly warm evening exploring this lovely area. Once darkness fell, I drove the 3 hours down to my hostel in Adelaide who were very tolerant of an early hours arrival.

Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby – Two individuals up on the rocks from about 6.30pm, roughly 1.4km along the track, excellent scope views; superb little animals, well worth the journey. The Andrew guide mentions the area about 1km (the gorge closes in a bit here), but I had to walk a little further.

[Euro – I caught a glimpse of a larger macropod disappearing noisily up the slope in the evening (probably about 900m along the track) which I think was probably this species.]

Adelaide, 20th November

I had a quick morning wander around before heading south to Rapid Bay, where I met up with [Diving Adelaide](#) to spend the middle part of the day swimming with Leafy Sea Dragons (highly recommended).

Grey-headed Flying-fox – A decent sized camp in trees south of Adelaide Zoo, off Frome Road.

Kangaroo Island, 19th – 20th November



Tammar Wallaby, Flinders Chase NP

Another fantastic place, and yet again a place I spent too little time in. I caught the 6pm ferry from Cape Jervis, and returned at 7.30pm on 20th; with so little time, I booked to stay in hostel accommodation at [Flinders Chase Farm](#). This was just the job for one night, with abundant wildlife on the property and around during a couple of hours spotlighting. It did, however, necessitate a ninety minute drive across the island (about 130km), facing into the sun, as macropods were coming out onto the verges. I arrived before dark as I was one of the first off the ferry, but it was nerve-racking to say the least, and definitely best avoided. Definitely the closest I came to adding to Australia's profuse roadkill when a young kangaroo launched itself almost under the front wheels, somehow not connecting with the car.

The next day I birded the coastal heaths of the Cap de Couedic area, before strolling around the Rocky River area of Flinders Chase NP; I couldn't resist a look at the Platypus Pools for a last look at the species, but mid-morning clearly isn't an ideal time. I then worked my way to Seal Bay in the middle of the day, and potted around various other birding spots. After disembarking the ferry, I spent my last night at Cape Jervis Accommodation & Caravan Park, driving heading back to Adelaide to fly back to Brisbane, then to the UK via Singapore (a totally ludicrous plan that took 50 hours).

Short-beaked Echidna – One by the roadside somewhere east of Parndana in the evening of 19th; I was hoping for some more views and photo opportunities the next day by that was my only sighting on KI. The 20th was hot (mid-30s C), which may have reduced activity.

Koala – Two in Flinders Chase NP, both along the first 200m of the circular walking trail behind the visitors centre (introduced on KI).

Southern Brown Bandicoot – At least one on the lawns at Flinders Chase Farm on 19th.

Western Pygmy-possum – One at Flinders Chase Farm. First seen outside the washroom facilities, then followed past the southwestern dorms before feeding in flowering banksias. Skittish in the torch beam, but could be watched at length using a red filter, though extremely hard to see at times even when I knew it was there. A real highlight.

Common Brushtail Possum – Five around Flinders Chase Farm, two back on the mainland at Cape Jervis.

Western Grey Kangaroo – Almost too many by the roadsides on my drive west across the island (including one I nearly hit); 35+ (some very confiding) around Flinders Chase Farm, and many Flinders Chase NP around the Rocky River precinct on 20th

Tammar Wallaby – Masses around Flinders Chase Farm, and quite a few approachable ones around the Rocky River precinct in the NP early on 20th.

New Zealand Fur Seal – At least 40 from the Admiral's Arch viewpoint at Cap de Couedic.

Afro-Australian Fur Seal – At least one bull hauled out with the NZ Fur Seals.

Australian Sea-lion – Impressive numbers at Seal Bay (I didn't count how many). I decided to pay for the organised tour (\$35), which was worth it for the close views and to watch the animals interacting.

Short-beaked Common Dolphin – Three seen from the ferry not far out from Cape Jervis on 19th.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin – Seven from the ferry shortly before arriving in Penneshaw on 19th, and three in the same area on 20th. Three (including a very young animal) feeding in the estuary of Pelican Lagoon on the rising tide on 20th from [Independence Point](#) shelter, quite far from open water.



Australian Sea-lions, Kangaroo Island