

Trip Report: Hobart, Tasmania, July 2024

Note: Mammals are **bolded** during their initial sighting, but not thereafter

I took a short trip to Hobart with my wife, my 2-year-old daughter and my parents. The main purpose was to help my wife recharge her batteries after a tough EOFY at her work. But of course, I managed to sneak in a bit of mammalwatching.

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens:

There were two main areas I visited mammalwatching-wise. The first was the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. We went there to let our daughter run around the lawns and have a good look at the flowers. However, I could see that there were quite a few records of Southern Brown Bandicoot from this location on iNaturalist. This was exciting for me because this had become a bit of a bogey species for me - I had failed to see it at the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens back home in Melbourne after multiple attempts in ideal conditions.

Sure enough, as the sun was setting in the evening, and the gardens were about 15 minutes from closing, my father heard some persistent rustling in a nearby flowerbed. Assiduously scanning through gaps in the shrubbery, I managed to get a glimpse of a **Southern Brown Bandicoot** shuffling through the leaf litter. I even got a good look at its face, forelimbs and torso as it stood on its hind legs to sniff the air. At this point, it quickly disappeared, and I'm guessing that's because it smelled me nearby.

Waterworks Reserve:

The second mammalwatching location was the Waterworks Reserve. This place needs no introduction. My main targets were Southern Bettong and Long-nosed Potoroo, and whilst they are both present there, they seem to be among the harder mammals to see that are reliably resident in this area.

I roped my dad in to accompanying me, and he operated a spotlight whilst I manned the thermal imager. Luckily for me, my wife had agreed to look after our daughter with my mother while my dad and I went mammalwatching.

Since it was the middle of winter, it was very cold. This, together with the thermally homogenous nature of the ground, and the fact that we were looking for terrestrial mammals, greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the thermal imager. I would say 90% of all mammals we saw were first seen by myself using the thermal imager (in some cases, from more than 100 m away), and only once we approached more closely did eyeshine appear in the spotlight.

In terms of mammals, we mostly saw **Bennett's Wallabies** and **Rufous-bellied Pademelon**, unsurprisingly. We did get a short look at an **Eastern Barred Bandicoot** as it walked away from the track, for about 5-10 seconds.

Stuff I missed:

Unfortunately, we dipped on both the bettong and the potoroo. This was somewhat expected, as although they can both be seen here, it's not particularly easy. Bruny Island might be a more reliable spot for Long-nosed Potoroo. French Island, closer to Melbourne, is another potential option, but as far as I know, you need to camp on the island to stay there overnight, and I think that's probably a bit too much to ask from my wife and young daughter. Maybe when the kids are older!

Mammal List (lifers marked with a *):

Southern Brown Bandicoot *Isoodon obesulus* *

Eastern Barred Bandicoot *Perameles gunnii*

Rufous-bellied Pademelon *Thylogale billardieri*

Bennett's Wallaby *Notamacropus rufogriseus*