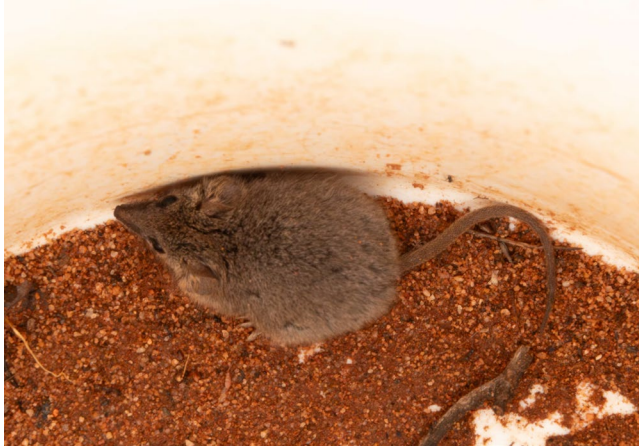


Kowari Magic - South Australia, Nov 2025



We had a brief visit to a couple of areas of South Australia in November 2025 where we saw 14 mammal species – the highlights for us were Southern Ningai, Kowari, Fawn Hopping Mouse and Western Pygmy Possum.

The premise for the trip was to assist with some licensed pit-fall trapping on a property near Renmark over 5 days. Most captures in the pit-fall traps were reptiles, however 3 mammal species were also found: House Mouse, Bolam's Mouse and Southern Ningai. 3 Ningai were seen over 2 days. This was a trip highlight for us as we had never seen this species before despite quite a few nights searching in mallee over the years. One capture was a female with 7 little babies overflowing her pouch.



Southern Ningauai with babies. (Licenced pitfall trap)

Because we had found ourselves in South Australia (compared to home in the ACT) we figured it was only another 1000 odd kms to go up the Birdsville Track and look for some other new mammals in Sturts Stony Desert that we hadn't been able to find during a trip earlier in the year. We put our failure in June, to see any small mammals, to it being mid-winter and most animals would have been in torpor. However, we hoped summer would make the difference and they should be quite active – in fact temperatures in Birdsville were regularly 43-45 degrees. When we saw there was going to be 4-day window with the temperatures in the low 30s (making it bearable for us) right when we were able to go, we decided we should give it a try. So off we went. For people familiar with the area, Coopers Ck was 4m deep and the barge had just commenced after the track closed 4 months earlier due to flood waters heading to Lake Eyre.



Kowari hiding behind the wheel of a road grader

Armed with some advice from Kowari specialists, as well as our own research, we headed up to Sturts Stony Desert around Clifton Hills Station to start looking for Kowari and Fawn Hopping Mouse both of which inhabit the gibber country at night. As soon as night fell we started driving slowly along the road scanning the surrounding stony fields with a thermal. You wouldn't believe it: we found our first Kowari within 100m. We were so excited I can't describe it. After 6 months of actively trying and thousands of kms we had found one and got a good view before it galloped off into the darkness – no photo unfortunately. So we had to keep looking. In the next hour and a half we saw one more Kowari racing away and a Fawn Hopping Mouse frozen for long enough to get a good look and a photo. Luckily we had also found our second target making it a very successful trip. We continued for another hour or two seeing more Hopping Mice and another Kowari. This time the Kowari took shelter under a stationary roadside grader. In due course we were able to get photos of this one as it kept scampering out from under the perceived protection. A most wonderful spotlighting night and in bed before midnight. What more could you ask for?



Fawn Hopping Mouse

While there were undoubtedly other mammal species to be found in this 400 km of gravel road, most were not new to us. Our window of bearable weather was also closing and as we did not want to camp in shadeless areas in 40 odd degrees waiting for nightfall, we started heading south again.

It was off to the Coorong for a couple of days of something completely different. There were a lot of flowering shrubs and trees all through the area, so we were quite hopeful of finding things. Straight after dark we started scanning the bush surrounding the campground and saw a small mammal deep inside some bushes. It was in too deep for a light to show up what it was however we had a feeling it was a Pygmy Possum – 2 sorts possible in this general area (Little and Western). We kept looking and a short time later we found another active mammal and

with some patience it moved along branches where we could see it was indeed a Pygmy Possum and probably a Western. Photos confirmed this.



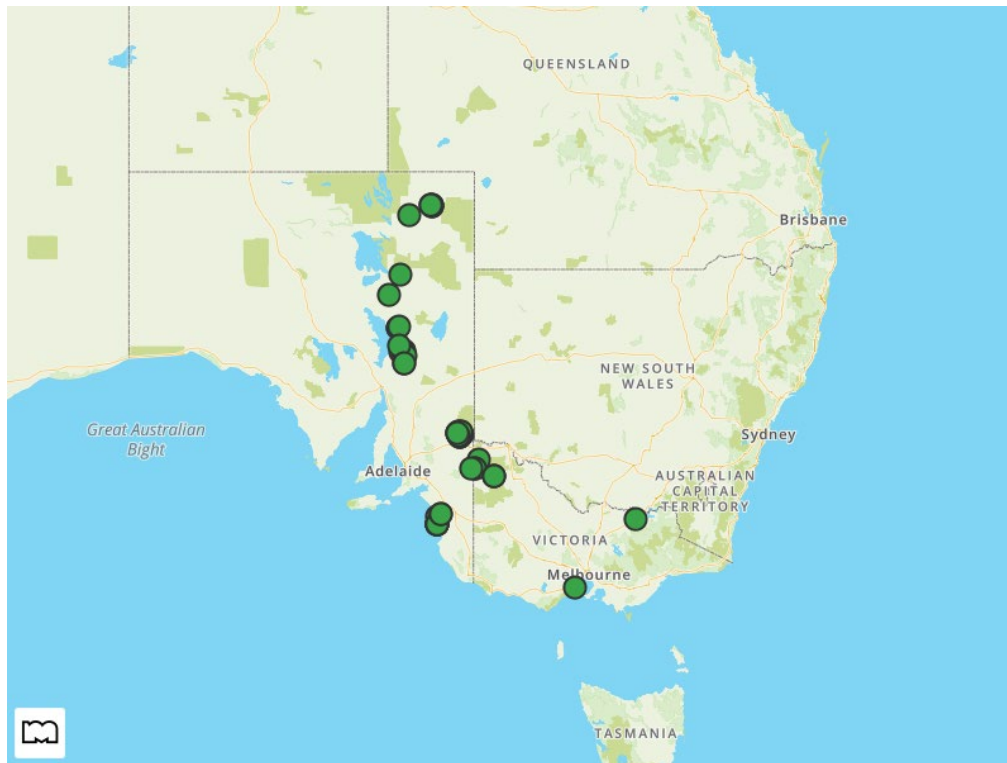
Western Pygmy Possum

Our two weeks were up and we headed for home. The complete list of species seen is:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| • Yellow-footed Antechinus | en-route in Victoria (Chiltern) |
| • Kowari | Sturts Stony Desert, Birdsville Track (a lifer) |
| • Southern Ningau | pitfall trap, mallee near Renmark (a lifer) |
| • Western Pygmy Possum | The Coorong |
| • Eastern Grey Kangaroo | en-route in Victoria |
| • Western Grey Kangaroo | all over, except arid area |
| • Common Wallaroo / Euro | Flinders Ranges and nearby |
| • Red Kangaroo | arid areas as well as mallee around Renmark |
| • Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby | Flinders Ranges |
| • Dingo | Birdsville Track |
| • Red Fox | The Coorong |
| • Feral Goats | huge numbers all over, except arid areas |
| • European Rabbit | plague numbers, except arid areas |
| • House Mouse | pit-fall trap, mallee near Renmark |
| • Fawn Hopping Mouse | Birdsville Track (a lifer) |
| • Bolam's Mouse | pit-fall trap, mallee near Renmark |

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Below is a map showing roughly where our mammal sightings were:



Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby