

Western Australia – Rottnest Island

(below) **Quokka** (*Setonix brachyurus*)

Day 1, December 28th. Rottnest Island, WA

Primary Target Mammal Species

- **Quokka** (*Setonix brachyurus*)

Rottnest Island is a small islet off the coast of Perth with a large population of habituated **Quokkas**, small macropods which have been largely extirpated on the mainland, save from a few regions near Albany.

Once on the island, it did not take long to find an animal, albeit surrounded by tourists, so I went further to try and get a more ‘intimate’ encounter. The animals here are not hard to locate, albeit far from omnipresent.

The first animal I found away from the crowds led to a tragic situation; it was standing in the middle of a road, and as I stopped to take some photographs, a ranger came barreling down the road and struck the animal, paralyzing it. Fortunately, this was the only event of the trip that ended in this way.

Further viewings of the animals went without a hitch or tragedy, although of interest was the wide range of behavioral differences observed. While some animals were quite approachable, with some actively approaching me, others would bolt at the slightest sight or sound.

Road-incident aside, I would easily recommend this as a ‘quick’ tick for any mammal watcher with limited time in the area, and for those desiring more lengthy times observing the animals, you would be hard pressed to find a better location. If you want a ‘wilder’ encounter, my understanding is that the animal can still be found without (*too*) much difficulty in the Albany region, particularly near Two-People’s Bay and Cheynes Beach, both of which being notable mammal-watching locations in their own rights.

Mammal Species Seen

- **Quokka** (*Setonix brachyurus*), **12+** individuals. **Lifer!**

Tips for Others Visiting

- The Ferry (Rottnest Express) from Perth takes over an hour to arrive at the island, and returns to the mainland. Take this into account when planning how much time you intend to spend on the island.
- The Ferry, in my case, was a gut-wrenching ride both times. If you get seasick, be advised.
- I ended up missing the ferry I was scheduled for by a matter of seconds, but I was able to turn in the ticket and replace it with one for the subsequent ferry. AFAIK, this is standard procedure and should be possible if the same happens to you.
- To avoid tragic scenes, avoid roads.
- As stated earlier, if you wish for wilder encounters, major locations in Albany are available



Western Australia – Dryandra National Park

Day 2, December 29th. Yanchep National Park, Craigie Bushland & Murdoch University

Primary Target Mammal Species

- **Kangaroo, Western Gray** (*Macropus fuliginosus*)
- **Quenda** (*Isodon fusciventer*)

On the 29th I had scheduled to arrive at Dryandra National Park, where I would be spending the bulk of the trip. Before arriving, however, I intended to make a few stops along the way. On my prior visit to AUS, I had only a fleeting glimpse of a trio of Kangaroos, and so I was hoping to get a longer look and better pictures.

Yanchep National Park is considered an effectively ‘guaranteed’ location for Western Grays, and while not widely associated with the park, the Quenda can be found widely distributed across much of the South-Westerly portions of WA, and crucially is the only bandicoot species (that I know of) which is reasonably active during daylight hours and thus conducive to high quality photography and filming.

Before I even parked my vehicle, a large mob of **Western Gray Kangaroos** was easily viewable, and on approaching on foot they took little heed of my presence. I was able to get plenty of shots at very close range, including of a particularly impressive and half-blind male.

Bird life was the most prominent at this location than at any other during the trip, albeit given the target audience it will not be receiving a major detailing. I only spent a few hours here, no Quenda were forthcoming, but I had other locations which I intended to check on my way to Dryandra, so I moved on once the local Kangaroo mob cleared out.

I attempted to seek the Quenda at two spots, **Craigie Bushland & Murdoch University**. The latter will make a future appearance, so all I will state on it for now is that no Quenda were found on my first search there. I similarly had no luck at Craigie Bushland, and given the relatively small size of the area (42 hectares, just over 100 acres), it might be approaching the grey area where ‘wild’ begins and ‘captive’ ends.

Mammal Species Seen

- **Kangaroo, Western Gray** (*Macropus fuliginosus*) **15+** individuals. **Lifer!**

Tips for Others Visiting

- I had no idea beforehand that Western Grays were effectively omnipresent at Dryandra. If you are already planning on visiting there, you will get all the kangaroos you need.
- Tips for Murdoch will appear later in the report.

(below) **Kangaroo, Western Gray**
(*Macropus fuliginosus*)



Western Australia – Dryandra National Park

Days 3 to 8, December 29th to January 4th. Dryandra National Park

Primary Target Mammal Species

- **Numbat** (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*)
- **Chuditch / Quoll, Western** (*Dasyurus geoffroii*)
- **Woylie / Bettong, Brush-tailed** (*Bettongia penicillata*)
- **Echidna, Short Beaked** (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)
- **Quenda** (*Isodon fusciventer*)

Dryandra National Park was to be the primary stop of the trip. With at least four iconic primary target species and easily twice that number in possible bonus lifers, there can be few more promising destinations for mammal-watching in AUS, especially so close to a major city (just 2 hours from Perth), and with such luxurious accommodations; I stayed at the Lions Dryandra Village, which was not only extremely affordable, but offered a shower, hot showers (use sparingly if possible given water shortage), refrigerator and freezer. The relatively nearby town of Narrogin (35-minute drive) offers fuel and a surprisingly wide range of groceries at the Coles. I must also say that as one-person accommodations were sold out at Lions Village, I went one step up to the ‘medium’ size, which for only \$10 AUD more, included 3 bedrooms with 1 large and 6 small beds. For just one visitor I felt like I was nearly in a mansion, and the total price, about \$80 AUD at the time, was an absolute steal; similar lodging at other national parks in WA (For example, in the Shark Bay region) contain an extra two digits in the asking price.

On arriving at the location at around 5pm on Dec 29th, I was delighted to discover that directly behind the cabins of the village was an open plain positively overflowing with **Western Gray Kangaroos**. These animals seem quite habituated, while I doubt they would tolerate physical contact, you could get even closer to these animals than the ones at prior Yanchep, and at the heat of the day I found they often lounged in the shade of the cabin or near my rental vehicle. Near the head office of the village this first evening I had the luck of spotting a **Short-Beaked Echidna**, striking one of the primary targets from the list before the first true ‘day’ in Dryandra! I took it to be a young animal; in zoos I have seen echidnas the size of soccer balls, this was scarcely the size of a hedgehog. Due to fading light, the images were so-so. I had hoped to find another individual at better lighting, but aside from an unfortunate roadkill carcass I encountered no other echidnas for the remainder of the trip.

The following morning ‘numbating’ began in earnest. Most users of this site will probably be familiar with the method, but effectively it consists of driving very slowly (No more than 15 KPH, and preferably far under this) and scanning nearby logs for the outline of a numbat. Numbats are small, squirrel-sized, and are typically considered to be very flighty animals.



(above) **Echidna, Short Beaked**
(*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)

Western Australia – Dryandra National Park

The first day of searching yielded a number of **Western Grays**, as well as a new mammal species, the **Brush Wallaby** (*Notamacropus irma*). These were beautiful macropods whose colorations made them blend in excellently with the bleached gray trees of Dryandra. On the first day of searching, four were seen but all for only moments, at the slightest indication of the vehicle they exploded off through the brush with speed unmatched by any other macropod I have witnessed. Interestingly, while most images online display the animal with pure black tails tips, many I saw had bright, white-tipped tails, making them stand out as I saw them crashing through the bush.

No numbats made an appearance on the first day of searching, which I can thankfully (and with shock) state was an anomaly for the trip. Night offered many opportunities for mammals as well, including two primary targets, the **Chuditch** and **Woylie**. The first night offered no mammals beyond bats which I was unable to identify, once again a thankful anomaly compared to future nights.

The second day of searching went largely the same as the first; plenty of **Western Grays** and occasional glimpse of **Brush Wallabies**. Reckoning that my chances of seeing a Numbat (or Echidna) would be poor in the hottest part of the days, I divided 'numbating' into two portions of the day: a shift from about 6:00 AM – 12:00/01:00 PM, and an additional shift from 3:30pm to 6:00/07:00 PM. Before or following this period seemed too dark for Numbat, and in-between temperatures were at their peak. As my evening drive of the second day was ending, I suddenly spotted my first **Numbat** at 06:09 PM, on Gura Road! The sighting was decent but brief, light was fading and in my panic to ready my camera the images were all out-of-focus. The animal potted about on a log for about 15 seconds before suddenly exploding away towards the horizon. Elated, I returned for the night, and prepared for spot-lighting.

Along with aforementioned unidentified bats, **Common Brushtail Possums** (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) were not difficult to find, albeit in lower densities than might be expected. No other species were seen that night, until it was time to return to my cabin to rest up for the next day. I came across an animal I initially took for a young and rather slim brushtail, until the animal turned broadside revealing a spotted coat, a **Chuditch**! The animal only remained for a moment, as I raised my camera in an attempt to photograph it, the animal bolted into brush. The cabins at Lions Dryandra Village currently contain a group (family?) of three resident Chuditch, likely attracted by the promise of scraps of human-cooked foods, so sighting this otherwise hard-to-find animal was not entirely surprising, although certainly still exciting!

To go through future days in more brevity, 4 more **Chuditch** were seen on various nights spotlighting, but only one animal remained still long enough for (poor) images to be taken. 2 were seen near the Lions Village, and the other 2 along Gura Road.

(below) **Wallaby, Brush**
(*Notamacropus Irma*)



(below) **Numbat**
(*Myrmecobius fasciatus*)



(above) **Chuditch**
(*Dasyurus geoffroii*)

Western Australia – Dryandra National Park

(below) **Numbat**
(*Myrmecobius fasciatus*)

Through the rest of the trip in Dryandra, 8 more **Numbats** were seen! Of the 9 total animals seen, 7 were while ‘numbating’ in vehicle, and 2 were seen while on foot, both at the Kawana Walk Trail directly behind the cabins at Lions Village (directly opposite the field of kangaroos). One day yielded a total of four; one early viewing, one on foot, and at one point in vehicle, one animal dashed across the road suddenly, only to be intercepted and chased off by a second **Numbat** which erupted from a nearby bush! As for on foot viewings, one animal was expectedly skittish, but the other was surprisingly obliging and allowed me quite close for about 10 minutes before it pattered off into the distance.



Given that conventional wisdom seems to be that a newcomer should expect at least 3 days in Dryandra to find a Numbat, what explains the stupendous luck I had with them? My best guess comes down to three main factors:

1. Visitation is much lower during AUS Summer months (reversed northern hemisphere). During peak season, particularly Spring, I was told that the area can be crowded with photographers. On my visit here, I would go for literal hours on the drive without seeing another human being.
2. During AUS Summer months, joeys (also called ‘Numbubs’) are starting to gain independence and leave their mothers, and males are beginning to pursue females to produce the next generation. This appears to produce a surge of numbat activity beyond the norm, and given the size of most animals I encountered I suspect the majority of my viewings were of non-mature individuals.
3. Speed while ‘numbating’ matters immensely. While the conventional wisdom recommends speeds of 10-15 KPH (the village even recommends 20 KPH), I found that with all species I had far better success at the 4-8 KPH range. Any faster than this, and even if an animal was spotted, it would typically bolt immediately. At the slower end of the range, I was able to get quite good photographs and even video of the otherwise skittish Numbats, Brush Wallabies, and non-mammalian goannas.

I discovered shortly after leaving Dryandra that only two bat species in Western Australia produce calls which are audible to the human ear, and having heard the sounds as a pair of rather large bats swooped near my head during one night of spotlighting, I am counting this as a tick for a **White-striped Free-tailed Bat** (*Austronomus australis*). I rarely list species with such uncertain sightings (I still have a pinniped from my last visit to AUS unlisted due to uncertainty of identity), but given the size, sounds (which listening to recordings seem the same), and range of the possible species this seems beyond a reasonable doubt. This also makes the first micro-bat of my listing! Certainly not the first I have seen, but the first which I feel confident of an identification on.

The final mammal of Dryandra was to be the **Woylie**. I spent several nights almost exclusively searching for this species, and eventually decided to go on foot to the (aptly?) named Woylie Walk. After a little over an hour on the walk I caught a look at an animal feeding in the undergrowth. While the viewing was quite clear, it was brief and the animal exploded away before I had an opportunity to photograph it. No more woylies

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appeared on the rest of the walk, and as this occurred my final night at Dryandra there were to be no further sightings here. Fortunately, the species would be more forthcoming elsewhere.

Lastly, I'd like to make mention of the **Barna Mia** tour. Barna Mia is an enclosed breeding facility in the heart of Dryandra. At scarcely 4 hectares and with roughly 20 total individual animals, fed by staff with a bucket and lacking any fear of man, these certainly, at least in my eyes, fail to meet the criteria of wild animals, so unique species sighted here would not be counted on my mammal list. *However*, the tour does provide up-close views of its animals, supports conservation works, and has a gift shop if you are keen on obtaining a memento for your trip. Woylies, Quenda, and Brushtail Possums can be seen here, and indeed when they overpopulate the enclosure, they are simply released outside into the national park where they can (hopefully) add to the gene pool of regional animals. Given their lack of fear of man, I must confess I am uncertain how successful this is.

Of animals not readily viewable in the park are the Mala / Rufous Hare Wallaby (*Lagorhynchus hirsutus*), Boodie / Burrowing Bettong (*Bettongia lesueur*), and the Greater Bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*), albeit a few of the latter remain at Barna Mia, and I did not have the fortune of seeing any during my visit. I was told that it's very uncommon for the species to make appearances as of late. Additionally, the Marl / Western Barred Bandicoot / Shark Bay Bandicoot (*Perameles bougainville*) was once held here but has since been phased out for reasons the staff I spoke too did not know, although some of the flyers handed out at Lions Village still list it.

All above four species could once be found in Dryandra at the time of European colonization, and the Bilby still had wild populations here as late as the 70s. Between the years of 2007 and 2010 an attempted reintroduction occurred from releases of Barna Mia bred animals into the park; three females and one male. The females died almost immediately but the male lasted for several years (seeing this must have been equivalent to finding bigfoot), as far as I know his time has ended unfortunately. Speaking with the staff at Barna Mia there are no current plans in the foreseeable future for another release, but the ultimate goal is, at some point, to do so for all species held at Barna Mia.

If you would like to see these animals in the wild, Mala and Marl can both be seen at Dirk Hartog Island in Shark Bay, along with half-a-dozen other rare mammals, and as such is certainly a major future target for myself. The Bilby is a tricky one, Broome in WA was once the go to spot but may have fallen off, a few areas in Queensland have wild populations but are difficult to reach and have no guarantee. Sturt National Park in NSW has a fenced and free-range population, but the latter is estimated at only 16 individuals and there is no public access to the fenced region. A reintroduction did occur at Francois Peron national park, but the last known sighting of an animal was in 2018, and the population is feared doomed due to a heavy feral cat presence in the region. At 12,000+ hectares the Arid Recovery Reserve in South Australia certainly qualifies, at least in my eyes, as a meaningfully wild population and is almost certainly the easiest location to go for it.

Despite once being the most wide-ranging and successful marsupial, the Boodie has been annihilated on the Australian mainland following intensive persecution via every conceivable disaster and enemy, and can now only be found in either fenced reserves or islands. Unlike the mala and marl, none of the islands (that I am aware of) with boodies are publicly accessible. It does occur in the Arid Recovery Reserve, and AWC's Scotia often offers volunteering opportunities in the later parts of the year. The animal is slated for eventual reintroduction to Dirk Hartog, but AFAIK no specific timeline on this has been set.

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Mammal Species Seen

- **Kangaroo, Western Gray** (*Macropus fuliginosus*) **Omnipresent.**
- **Possum, Common Brushtail** (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) **15+** individuals.
- **Wallaby, Brush / Wallaby, Black-Gloved** (*Notamacropus Irma*) **8+** individuals. **Lifer!**
- **Echidna, Short Beaked** (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) **1** individual. **Lifer!**
- **Numbat** (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*) **9** individuals. **Lifer!**
- **Chuditch / Quoll, Western** (*Dasyurus geoffroii*) **5** individuals. **Lifer!**
- **Woylie / Bettong, Brush-tailed** (*Bettongia penicillata*) **1** individual. **Lifer!**
- **Bat, White-striped Free-tailed** (*Austronomus australis*) **2+** individuals. **Lifer!**

Tips for Others Visiting

- As stated before, Western Grays are effectively omnipresent at Dryandra.
- Lions Village is a fantastic place to stay, and has a resident group of 3 Chuditch. I was told to try cooking out some food to lure them in, but the only animal this attracted was a Brushtail Possum (likely the same individual repeatedly) who was so bold that it leapt onto the table and attempted to eat the food off of my plate. At one point I had to grab the animal to move it away, to which it hardly reacted. I generally advise against baiting animals (albeit I never planned on allowing a wild animal to eat human food), and this has not done much to change my view.
- Summer probably isn't best for many of these animals, but it seems to be a solid time for numbats and avoiding large crowds.
- As stated before, drive **slowly**. I had significantly better luck (and shots) when under 8 kph. 4-5 appeared to be the sweet spot.
- While I never made it there, I found out afterwards that the Gnaala Mia campground seems to be the current wildlife hotspot. At one point this was the Lol-Gray Campground, but it seems that this has shifted.
- Invest in a proper red light. While I had a spotlight with a red filter, I was able to use a true red light briefly and discovered there is a marked difference in the way animals reacted.
- Thermals are of little use this time of year. The rocks and trees will glow just as much as the animals, and even the road or sand will as well. It is likely better in the winter or fall months.
- As stated earlier, the town of Narrogin is the best nearby spot for fuel and food. Google initially recommended Williams but Narrogin is a bit closer and has much better food selection.
- Almost all of my animal daylight spots were either just after dawn or just before dusk. If you have the ability (superpower) to sleep at command for long stretches, you might focus on shorter drives at the peak day periods and dedicate more energy to night searches. There were at least another four marsupials I could have seen if I had spent longer at night.
- The Village has no Wi-Fi, Air Conditioning, and poor mobile reception. Plan accordingly.

Western Australia – Mount Caroline Nature Reserve & Swan Valley

Day 9, January 5th. Mount Caroline Nature Reserve & Swan Valley

(below) **Rock-Wallaby,
Black-flanked**
(*Petrogale lateralis*)

Primary Target Mammal Species

- **Rock-Wallaby, Black-flanked** (*Petrogale lateralis*)
- **Quenda** (*Isodon fusciventer*)

As wonderful as my time at Dryandra had been, my time there was up, and after the prior night had secured a Woylie, I made my way to **Mount Caroline Nature Reserve**, about 2 hours from Dryandra and 2.5 from Perth. The drive is beautiful, going past salt-flats and dried lakebeds which flood during the wet season. Following an unfortunate collapse of the population in Paruna Wildlife Sanctuary much closer to Perth, this is the most readily accessible location I am aware of for this species. It did not take long to find the first animal, but the wariness of this species was beyond anything I had encountered thus far. The **Black-flanked Rock-Wallabies** had a peculiar behavior, once they saw you they would 'allow' you to be near them so long as you stood still, but the slightest movement or sound would send them bounding away. This meant that while not difficult to see, they were extremely difficult to photograph. I reckon I saw a bit over a dozen individuals, but less than half of these I photographed, and none of the photographs turned out particularly well.



While up on a raised bit of terrain, and quite near a group of the **Rock-Wallabies**, I was in for quite a shock when a huge reddish animal came bounding past! I only got glimpsing views, but it was certainly of the *Osphranter* genus, and given the terrain type I feel fairly confident in identifying the species as a **Euro / Common Wallaroo** (*Osphranter robustus*). The wallabies were my primary focus, but I did keep an eye peeled for a possible Quenda. Sadly, no bandicoots of any sort appeared. I left early in the hopes of reaching my hotel in **Swan Valley** at a good time, leaving opportunities for evening or night searching in the region. I made a brief effort scanning a river and park-side near the **Swan Valley Hotel** for Quenda, and while teeming in birds and turtles, mammals made no appearance. Quite tired from the day, I chose to turn in early.

Mammal Species Seen

- **Rock-Wallaby, Black-flanked** (*Macropus fuliginosus*) **12+** individuals. **Lifer!**
- **Euro / Wallaroo, Common** (*Osphranter robustus*) **1** individual.

Tips for Others Visiting

- I would have stayed much longer if I had known I was going to turn in early for the night; while not hard to find, these are challenging to get shots off. I wonder if the use of a ghillie suit or staking out a likely perch would be a good option.
- When you arrive at the park, entering the visitor trail, there are two great mounds. One to the left is reddish with green lichens and very vertical and treacherous, the one to the right is black with ruddy lichens and much more sloped and forgiving. I had far more luck taking the right-hand approach, most likely due to the ability to move silently that the former did not provide.

Western Australia – Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary

Day 10 to 11, January 6th and 7th. Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary

Primary Target Mammal Species

- **Bilby, Greater** (*Macrotis lagotis*)
- **Hare-Wallaby, Banded** (*Lagorchestes hirsutus*)
- **Marl / Bandicoot, Western-Barred** (*Perameles bougainville*)
- **Woylie / Bettong, Brush-tailed** (*Bettongia penicillata*)
- **Numbat** (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*)

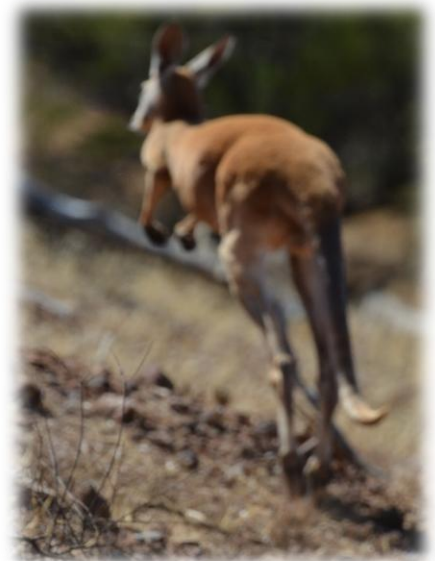
While there were many targets of this trip, there were two that stood above the rest; a week spend in search of the Numbat at Dryandra, and the ultimate target of the trip, the Bilby. Originally my plans for the trip were to search in Francois Peron National Park, where a population had been reintroduced. In speaking with those familiar with the region, however, it seems the animals there have either been exterminated or are well on their way to this due to high numbers of uncontrolled feral cats in the region. To my immense shock, however, I was extended an opportunity for a two-night visit to a location with a healthy population of Bilbies, and that was an offer I simply could not refuse!

Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary is a colossal property in WA, well over 130,000 hectares with a 7800 hectare (over 19,000 acres) fenced area with a great number of reintroduced species, the populations of any reaching into, if not past, the thousands. In the wildflower season the area is considered to be the most beautiful location in all of Australia, and must certainly be in contention for worldwide status as well. Along with Newhaven, Scotia, and Yookamurra, Mt. Gibson is one of the jewels in the crown of the **Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC)**, the premier conservation organization for land animals in Australia, and so far as I am aware is likely, ‘pound-for-pound’ the most effective and well-organized of its type on the planet. Any conservation organization would do well to model themselves on the successes of this entity, and indeed AWC works with a number of major conservation organizations and locations.

I was guided by the incredible Owen Cumming, who guides tours across the continent in a wide range of biomes and ecoregions, and yet had high detailed information about nearly every conceivable aspect of natural life in the region that could be considered, (The quandong, for example, is a particularly favored food of the Woylie), and made for an excellent travelling companion. The road into Mt. Gibson yielded an immediate new lifer, **Red Kangaroos** (*Osphranter rufus*)! These and **Euros** (*Osphranter robustus*) were common sights near our accommodation, and I must confess on many occasions the both of us were uncertain as to which were before us. Luckily, on at least one occasion for both we had very clear daylight views were they were readily distinguished.

In mid-day, I had the opportunity to meet with the staff who work and live at Mt. Gibson (affectionately called ‘Gibbo’), all wonderful, charming, and intelligent

(below) **Kangaroo, Red**
(*Osphranter rufus*)



(above) **Euro**
(*Osphranter robustus*)

Western Australia – Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary

people who made me wish I might have been a fly on the wall for longer parts of the day. As night fell, we were joined by leader of the ecologists at Gibbo, Louis O'Neill, whose humor, knowledge, and outstanding charisma were a delight of the trip. The three of us set out on the first night within the fence for a night of spotlighting.

No more than 5 minutes within the fence yielded our first animal, none other than a **Greater Bilby!** The view was fleeting, because as soon as the light was put upon the animal it exploded off into the bush. While I am told a man can outpace and catch the animal at sprint (this is even how they are occasionally captured if needed for a radio-tag retrieval or installation), I must confess I feel an asterisk must be added of *quite well in shape. For a supposedly slow-moving animal the bilbies seen on this trip were all very fleet of foot in my eyes. New species came quickly as well; **Banded Hare Wallabies** and **Woylies**, the latter offering much better views than the quick glimpse at Dryandra, were not difficult to find this night, and a lone **Marl** even made an appearance. The total count for the first night was **8 Banded Hare Wallabies, 8 Woylies, 1 Marl**, and an astounding **14 Greater Bilbies!** Seeing even one of these animals seemed nearly impossible at the onset of the journey, so passing double digits on the first night was truly unbelievable!

The only downside of this night related to photography / filming. The team at AWC uses white light at Mt. Gibson, and for straightforward reasons. Without a need to take shots of animals, white light is easier for human eyes to see with and is more than sufficient for detecting and counting animals for surveying purposes. The downside, for cameras that is, is that white light will spook animals far quicker than red light. Of the 14 bilbies seen this night, none were viewed for more than a few seconds each, as each made haste off into dense brush immediately upon being revealed by light. Thankfully, the other three species were more accommodating, especially the **Banded Hare Wallabies**, which were generally unfazed by the presence of man and his artificial lights.

The following morning, our daylight search within the fenced area yielded a single mammal, but an excellent one, a **Numbat**, the 10th of the trip! This animal was much larger than any previously seen, and of a much more vivid and uniform orange compared to the duller but more varied patterns on those seen in Dryandra.

The second night of spotlighting had quite different cast of characters. Thankfully, the **Greater Bilby** remained the most common customer, with **8 individuals** spotted. Thankfully as well, this night provided the only individual allowing more than a moment's glimpse,



(above) **Hare-Wallaby, Banded**
(*Lagorchestes hirsutus*)



(above) **Numbat**
(*Myrmecobius fasciatus*)



(above) **Bilby, Greater**
(*Macrotis lagotis*)

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enabling a crude, albeit functional, image to be recorded. The Banded Hare Wallabies made no appearance this night, and while only a single **Woylie** and **Marl** appeared respectively, both gave good views, the former of which being so placid I was concerned the animal was injured before it finally moved off at pace. This night had a profusion of small mammals; half a dozen hopping mice appeared at various points, but as they moved so rapidly once light appeared it was impossible to photograph them in order to identify. By range they should have been either Spinifex or Mitchell's hopping mice, but I have not the confidence to claim either on my list. More **White-striped Free-tailed Bats** made an appearance, and even a small mammal seeming to be a dunnart of some type appeared briefly. Given that there is almost a dozen species of dunnart that occur in the region, I would not dare hazard a guess for listing purposes. While not a mammal, an Owlet Nightjar also appeared this night, and so mouse-like was it in stance and proportions it almost felt worthy of receiving that 'honorary mammal' title that is sometimes awarded to the Kiwi of New Zealand.

My time at Mount Gibson was absolutely wonderful, opportunities to visit are few and far between, so I unfortunately cannot offer much advice for others about visiting. What I can strongly recommend, however, is supporting AWC. I truly cannot give enough praise for the incredible work they do for Australian wildlife conservation, and I desperately wish that there more organizations out there like them.

Mammal Species Seen

- **Euro / Wallaroo, Common (*Osphranter robustus*) 10+** individuals.
- **Kangaroo, Red (*Osphranter rufus*) 10+** individuals. **Lifer!**
- **Bilby, Greater (*Macrotis lagotis*) 22** individuals. **Lifer!**
- **Hare-Wallaby, Banded (*Lagorchestes hirsutus*) 8** individuals. **Lifer!**
- **Marl / Bandicoot, Western-Barred (*Perameles bougainville*) 2** individuals. **Lifer!**
- **Woylie / Bettong, Brush-tailed (*Bettongia penicillata*) 9** individuals.
- **Numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*) 1** individual.
- **Bat, White-striped Free-tailed (*Austronomus australis*) ≥1** individual(s).

Western Australia – Karakamia Sanctuary & Murdoch University

Day 12, January 8th. Karakamia Sanctuary & Murdoch University

Primary Target Mammal Species

- **Quenda** (*Isoodon fusciventer*)

My final day in Western Australia this trip. As I returned to Perth, we happened to pass by **Karakamia Sanctuary**, “Home of Cockatoos”, the very first of AWC’s sanctuaries. Given that my guide Owen needed to deliver some items to the base of operations here, I was offered the opportunity to visit, which was certainly not something I could turn down! After making our delivery, we took a brief drive through the property. In spite of the name, the Quenda is the flagship species of the reserve, and given my failure to see it across the trip it was top priority. On our drive we ended up ‘flushing’ a pair of **Woylies**, albeit from my perspective in the vehicle they were little more than brown specks shooting across the bush. Near the end of our drive, Owen was able to spot that most elusive (somehow) animal of the trip, the **Quenda!** My view was, admittedly, not the best, seeing the rump of the animal as it dashed into a nearby grass tree for cover, although I briefly saw it’s face poking out from underneath before it burst off to another plant for cover. No picture of the animal was possible in this instance, and it was the only of it’s kind we saw as we ended the drive. Despite this, I was quite happy to have finally laid eyes on the animal, and as the sighting was sufficient for identification, I’m adding it as a lifer!

That said, I was still hopeful for a clearer view of the animal, and one with photo opportunity. I returned to Murdoch University, this time not in the afternoon, as I had prior, but at sunset, planning on seeing the animals in darkness when they would be most comfortable. The good news is that the animals were not hard to *locate*, in the span of two hours I spent searching, I ‘saw’ **5 Quendas**. However, each view was exceedingly brief, of the animal either exploding across the road in front of me, or darting into dense bushes when I turned a corner and came upon it. None enabled a photo to be taken, and for an animal that is generally regarded as easily approachable, I was quite surprised. However, exhaustion was taking effect and I had a flight to catch in the morning, and so I called it after the fifth animal evaded a shot.



(above) **Quenda**
(*Isoodon fusciventer*)

(Image taken at Barna Mia)

Mammal Species Seen

- **Woylie / Bettong, Brush-tailed** (*Bettongia penicillata*) **2** individuals.
- **Quenda** (*Isoodon fusciventer*) **5** individuals. **Lifer!**

Tips for Others Visiting

- I had no idea beforehand that Western Grays were effectively omnipresent at Dryandra. If you are already planning on visiting there, you will get all the kangaroos you need.
- Tips for Murdoch will appear later in the report.

Western Australia – Total Mammal List

Mammal Species Seen | 16 Species, 14 Lifers!

Monotremes. 1 Species, 1 Lifer!

- Echidna, Short Beaked (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) 1 individual. **Lifer!**

Macropods (Kangaroos). 8 Species, 7 Lifers!

- Quokka (*Setonix brachyurus*), **Lifer!**
- Kangaroo, Western Gray (*Macropus fuliginosus*) **Lifer!**
- Wallaby, Brush / Wallaby, Black-Gloved (*Notamacropus Irma*) **Lifer!**
- Woylie / Bettong, Brush-tailed (*Bettongia penicillata*) **Lifer!**
- Rock-Wallaby, Black-flanked (*Macropus fuliginosus*) **Lifer!**
- Euro / Wallaroo, Common (*Osphranter robustus*)
- Kangaroo, Red (*Osphranter rufus*) **Lifer!**
- Hare-Wallaby, Banded (*Lagorchestes hirsutus*) **Lifer!**

Peramelemorphians (Bandicoots). 3 Species, 3 Lifers!

- Bilby, Greater (*Macrotis lagotis*) **Lifer!**
- Marl / Bandicoot, Western-Barred (*Perameles bougainville*) **Lifer!**
- Quenda (*Isodon fusciventer*) **Lifer!**

Dasyuromorphians (Carnivorous Marsupials). 2 Species, 2 Lifers!

- Numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*) **Lifer!**
- Chuditch / Quoll, Western (*Dasyurus geoffroi*) **Lifer!**

Phalangeriformes (Possums). 1 Species

- Possum, Common Brushtail (*Trichosurus vulpecula*)

Chiropterans (Bats). 1 Species, 1 Lifer!

- Bat, White-striped Free-tailed (*Auromotus australis*) **Lifer!**



(above) **Numbat**
(*Myrmecobius fasciatus*)