

Mammal Watching Report Australia 2018

I found the mammal watching forum in late 2017. I've been primarily a herper for most of my life and now that I've found most of the herps within a 500km radius I've started to hunt down mammals. I even went on a mammal specific trip! Here's a few from the last few years.

I'll start with the most recent.

I spent a month in Western Australia with my fiancé and friend. We started in Perth and drove to the Pilbara and back down inland through to Laverton. Whilst it was still primarily a herp trip we did see some cool mammals.

We spent several days in Dryandra. We tracked down three numbats on the first afternoon of searching. Unfortunately I didn't get any photos and we found no other numbats over the next 20 hours of searching.

Fortunately I did manage to get some decent photos of Red Tail Phascogales, an endangered dasyurid species that used to cover most of inland Australia. At Dryandra they seemed to favour sheoak-dominated forest. I also managed to get some decent photos of a Yellow Footed Antechinus in the afternoon.

We also saw Tamar Wallabies and Brush Tail Bettongs.

We quickly drove to Perth, hopped onto a ferry and went to Rottnest Island, we sat down with a family of Quokkas for a few hours by the beach but this is my favorite photo. Despite being a world-renowned location, people still treat it like trash.



Quokka – near the Rottneest Island Shops



Red Tail Phascogale – Dryandra State Forest

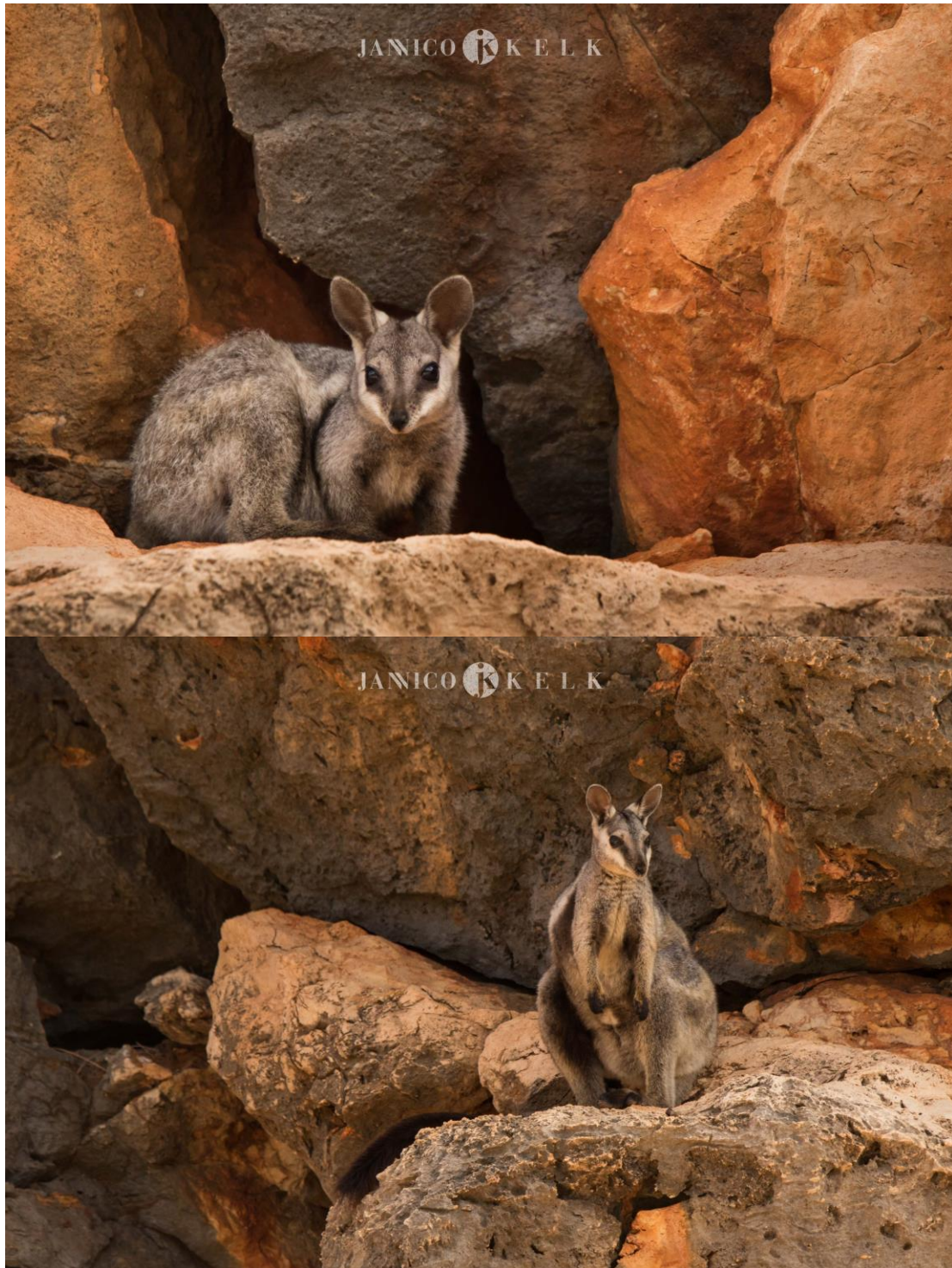


Yellow Footed Antechinus – Dryandra State Forest

We returned to Perth to pick up a friend and drove north. Pretty far north all the way to Cape Range National Park. Here we managed to see a pair of Dingos, several Spinifex Hopping Mice and loads of Black Flanked Rock Wallabies.



Dingo – Cape Range National Park



Black Flanked Rock Wallaby – Cape Range National Park

We saw the dingos most mornings just after sunrise on the road (there's only one road in the NP). You will see hopping mice crossing the road during the night. You just have to find sandy areas with good clumps of spinifex, if you're there on a full moon, your chances of seeing one are diminished greatly. The rock wallabies were very easy, if you head to Mandu Mandu Gorge. A few sit on the right hand side of the gorge as soon as you walk into the dry creek bed.

I'm positive there's a few bat caves in the rock formations here but I never found one. Additionally, I think that Northern Quolls would be in good numbers but you would probably need to put camera traps out.

On a side note, Cape Range NP is extremely windy in the summer/wet season. Bring an extra layer if you plan to be out at night spot lighting.

From Cape Range NP we drove east to Panniwonica and Port Hedland. We didn't much luck with mammals in both of these locations (although we did find bulk reptiles). My fiancé did manage to see a Rothschild Rock Wallaby and I captured the tail of a Northern Quoll on my camera trap.

We spent at 5 days in Karijini National Park. This has to be one of the most spectacular NP's in Australia. It's loaded with reptiles and a few mammals. There's several water holes here that are fed by underground springs which means they have water all year round.

The wet/summer season is the least busiest part of the year. You can rock up without having to book any camping sites. However. It is extremely how. Often 45 + degree days. Which can make searching for rock wallabies hard.

I set up a DSLR camera trap here for 4 nights and managed to get some cool photos of Northern Quolls which I'm quite happy about. I got a few rock rats as bycatch as well. We also saw a few quolls by road cruising and I spot lighted one on foot.



Northern Quoll – Karijini National Park

We had a long drive to our next destination and spent one day at Paynes Fine.

Between here and a town named Yalgoo is an ex-mine shaft named Jokers Tunnel that is home to Common Sheath Tail Bats and Finleysons Cave Bats.



Common Sheath Tail Bat – Jokers Tunnel

The next mammal watching part of the trip was at Lake Cronin. We were here mostly for a very rare and cryptic snake. The conditions were quite bad. Cold and windy. However, we found it in the first night, which took the pressure off and meant we could concentrate on mammals.

The most common mammal we saw here was the ultra cute western pygmy possum. We found several of these crossing the road at night. Additionally, my partner managed to find a Brush Tail Phascogale.



Western Pygmy Possum – Lake Cronin – in the heath communities

The last part of Western Australia trip was at Cheynes Beach searching for Honey Possums. I spent the afternoon and night searching for areas with a high flower load. I found several just behind the caravan park and marked them on my phone. The next morning, at sunrise we made a bee-line to those areas and spent a few hours walking around looking at flowers in hopes of spotting a small obligate nectar feeder. An hour in I managed to see one get attacked by a New Holland Honey Eater, which quite frankly really annoyed me as I didn't get a photo. My friend Kelly managed to find one about two hours later feeding. We had great views and watched it for about 10 minutes.



Honey Possum – Cheynes Beach Caravan Park

In August 2018, my fiancé and I spent 10 days in Tasmania. This is widely held as the best mammal watching state in Australia. With several of our large carnivores still being quite easy to find.

We spent two nights at Mountain Valley Lodge and managed to see spotted quolls and glimpsed a tasmanian devil (however my partner made the decision to wake up and scare it away).



Spotted Quoll – Mountain Valley

At Bruny Island we saw bulk eastern quolls, they're very easy to see on North Bruny Island on the main road and the roads circumnavigating the bushland. You'll also see long nosed potaroos, water rats, Bennets wallaby and echidnas. I managed to capture some cool camera trap photos of an eastern quoll feeding by the bay.



Eastern Quoll – Bruny Island



White form of the Bennets Wallaby – Bruny Island Caravan Park

If you have the time head towards the caravan park and search the woods at the back. If you're lucky you'll spot one of several white Bennets Wallabies.

Another top spot is Cradle Mountain, at Ronnies Creek you'll be very unlucky if you don't see a Wombat. Road-cruising at night should produce more eastern quolls, brush tail possums and echidnas.



Wombat – Cradle Mountain National Park



Quolls feeding

After heading to Tasmania I'm trying to find a way to study there for post-graduate. One of the only bad things I can say about wildlife spotting in Tasmania is the huge amounts of road kill. This threatened long nosed potaroo was found DOR on bruny island.

I happen to live a pretty nice suburban area that backs onto some bushland. It was logged many years ago but still holds a fair bit of wildlife. Some culverts not far from my house are home to a colony of Large Footed Myotis.



Large Footed Myotis – Mt Cotton

My mums house is shared with a southern brown bandicoot which steals the dogs food.



Southern Brown Bandicoot – My mums place in the Redlands

Squirrel Gliders, feather tail gliders, greater gliders are also somewhat common in most of the national parks with Eucalyptus forest in SEQ and Northern NSW. Richmond Range National Park is a hot spot for yellow belly gliders and greater gliders. I've managed to see all the arboreal possums and gliders of SEQ/Northern NSW in one night here.



Squirrel Glider – Karawatha Reserve



Feathertail glider - Karawatha Reserve



Greater Glider - Mt Mee National Park



Bobuck – Mt Mee National Park



Sugar Glider – Greater Glider Conservation Park



Brushtail Possum on my friends roof



Yellow Bellied Glider – Mount Lindsey National Park

My friend who lives near Dayboro is lucky enough to have several water rats in her dam. This is one I caught on a DSLR camera trap. Not far from her house is a disused train tunnel that's home to several species of bat. It's locked off to the public now but I was lucky enough to get in there and photograph horseshoe nose bats.



Rakali (Water Rat) – Friends dam on the outskirts of Brisbane

I have been lucky to work on a few projects as an ecologist where the main target of our surveys are bats (I won't give out locations for these).



Corbans Long Eared bat



Little Forest Bat



Goulds Wattled Bat



Eastern Cave Bat

I've done a lot of herping around Australia, and every now and again you come across some mammals.



Herbets Rock Wallaby we found at Kroombit Tops after looking for some rare frogs



Jannico Kelk

Mareeba Rock Wallaby – these are stupidly easy to see, they're almost not wild – head to Granite Gorge near Mareeba



Jannico Kelk

Common Dunnart from near Longreach we found on the road. There was dozens of these just after a small flood came through.