

Easy mammal watching in south east Queensland July 2020 and July 2022

Here's some sites for Australian mammalwatching in SEQ where you can take your kids or less mammal-obsessed spouse and have a good time while being reasonably assured of success. Some have been mentioned in earlier reports, some not, but all have personally worked for me.

Black flying foxes (*Pteropus alecto*) in the Brisbane City Botanic Gardens adjacent to the CBD. I have found them in trees closest to Alice Street in July 2020. I also found them in Kearney's Spring Park in Toowoomba, along with **European Hares (*Lepus europeaus*)**. But I think the best place is the Ipswich Nature Centre, a charming free zoo (\$2 donation, July 2022) with nice displays of many Australian animals, and the black flying foxes wild roosting in the trees, clearly seen during daylight. Smaller than the Grey-headed Flying Foxes (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) found in larger colonies and sometimes alongside the *alectos*, including at Ipswich and Toowoomba.



Toowoomba also has **Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies (*Petrogale penicillate*)** living alongside the dam wall of Perserverence Dam, 35 km north of town. They come out to forage late afternoon.

Further north in the Sunshine Coast hinterland near Maleny is the Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve (A\$2 donation, July 2022) which has an easy loop walk (about 1.5 km) called (naturally enough) the

Pademelon loop, with numerous **Red-legged Pademelons** (*Thylogale stigmatica*) happy to forage near the path and unafraid of humans.



Another drive north gets you to the famous Hervey Bay where migrating **Humpback Whales** (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) stop off to rest between late July and October. Sightings guaranteed by local tour operators. We visited mid-July and our 4 hour tour (A\$130 pp, Tasman Venture, July 2022) saw some individuals breaching, tail slapping and fin slapping, and a good view of one whale's face as it came up to the boat for a look at us!



The World Heritage listed Fraser Island (K'gari) is a 45 minute ferry ride across the bay where lucky mammalwatchers can see pure-bred **Dingos (Canis lupus dingo)** on 75 mile Beach near Eli Creek, or inland at Lake McKenzie. This requires some degree of luck, and experience and confidence in driving a 4WD vehicle – the only motorized option on this huge island. We signed up for the one day tour (A\$260 pp, K'gari Explorer Tours, including lunch, ferry tickets and 4WD tour, July 2022) and let someone else do the driving, leaving us free to enjoy the forests, lakes, creeks and beach. We scored two dingos on our trip.



South of Hervey Bay is Tin Can Bay, where a small pod of **Australian humpback dolphins (Sousa sahlensis)** have been visiting the town most mornings for over fifty years to be fed a small feed of fish by volunteers and tourists. About 80 of these dolphins live in the area but only one family group comes in and there is no contact with people except the small amount of fish offered (not enough to meet their daily requirements). Purists may argue over this one, but seeing the dolphins approach up the river and leave when they want to was good enough for me. Good value at A\$10 pp (July 2022) but be prepared to get there early and wait until the dolphins decide to visit. Allow a 7am-10am window.



There are many other species to be found in SE Queensland but these ones were mostly easy to see, in daylight, in very accessible and mostly flat walking places.