











MAMMALS OF MYALL PARK BOTANIC GARDEN

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| <p>MONOTREME (egg layers)</p> | |
| <p>Short beaked echidna, spiny anteater <i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i> 30-45cm. 2-7 kg. Eats ants and termites, also earthworms, small beetles, larvae of moths and beetles. Avoids larger biting ants; prefers larvae, pupae, queen, winged ants. Strong front claws burrow into mounds, turn over leaf litter or rip into rotting timber. Snout turns over soft soil. Extracts prey with long, thin, sticky tongue which can extend 18cm beyond end of snout, flicking in and out up to 100 times / minute. A 3kg animal can eat 200 gm of ants in 10 minutes. Activity depends on temperature - no sweat glands, cannot pant, needs to shelter from heat. Hot areas - feeds at night; temperate - dawn and dusk; cold - middle of the day. In cold areas, hibernates for 6-28 weeks of the year depending on local conditions. Both sexes give off a pungent odour during mating season. Trains of up to 10 males may follow nose to tail after mature female, and males compete for females by engaging in head-to-head pushing and bumping contests where the larger animal will be the winner. Usually one young per year; (in cold areas, females may mate only every second year). Eggs soft-shelled and similar to reptile eggs. A single egg is transferred from cloaca to incubation pouch and hatches after about ten days. Embryo has egg tooth enabling it to tear shell open. The young sucks milk from a milk patch or areola on mother's belly. When the young echidna or puggle is too prickly to carry in the pouch, the mother digs it a burrow, returning every few days to feed it until it emerges from the burrow about 6 months old. Important in Aboriginal culture as spines or quills are used as barbs when making spears.</p> |  |
| <p>MARSUPIALS</p> | |
| <p>Koala <i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i> Head-body 72 – 78 cm. Dense fur, gray to brown on top, chin, chest and inner side of forelimbs white, rump often dappled. Ears fringed with long white hairs. Vestigial tail. Large paws with 5 strongly clawed digits. Nocturnal, arboreal, slow-moving, up to 18 hours a day. Come to ground occasionally to move to another food tree. Range from tropics to cool temperate regions where acceptable food trees exist. Herbivorous, preferring small group of Eucalypts (in this area <i>E. camaldulensis</i> and <i>E. tereticornis</i>). Cope with highly toxic leaves as stomach bacteria metabolize toxins. Loud bellowing calls and wheezing growls during mid-summer breeding season, cf donkey's bray. Males compete fiercely for available females. Gestation period 25-35 days. Single young is born tiny and immature, attaches to nipple in pouch. After 5-7 months is carried on mother's back until independent.</p> |  |
| <p>Common brushtail possum <i>Trichosurus vulpecular</i> Body 32-58 cm, tail: 24-35 cm. Fur short but dense, generally silver grey above, pale grey below. Tail moderately prehensile, typically covered in long bushy fur. Large eyes, long oval ears. Found throughout most of Australia and Tasmania - widest distribution of any Australian mammal. Eats leaves, shoots, flowers. Prefers Eucalyptus flowers, but will eat from various trees and shrubs. In addition, eats clovers, grasses, garden fruits and vegetables. Breeds spring and autumn but rare for a female to give birth twice in one year. Gestation period 18 days, and a single young emerges from the pouch in about 4 months. Young are typically weaned by about 6 months, and disperse anytime between 8 and 18 months. Average life span 7 years. Arboreal, nocturnal. During the day rests in hollowed out logs or trees. Typically a solitary species, but populations are so abundant that many individuals' home ranges overlap. Territories are marked using both anal secretions and secretions from scent gland on chest. Deep guttural coughs and hisses are heard in breeding season but few signs of direct aggression among individuals. Throughout range, is a major agricultural pest, causing severe damage to eucalyptus and pine forests, as well as destroying gardens. Also a known carrier of highly contagious bovine tuberculosis. Once hunted extensively for fur in Australia, now protected.</p> |  |
| <p>Red-necked wallaby <i>Macropus rufogriseus</i> Head and body length 70 – 88 cm; tail similar. Males notably larger than females. Reddish napes and shoulders, rest of body fawn-gray with white chest, belly. Tail gray above, white below. Hands and feet gray, becoming black at ends of digits. Muzzle dark brown, ears proportionally longer than in other macropods. Inhabit coastal forests of E and SE Australia, especially common in Qld, NE NSW and Tasmania. Prefer eucalypt forests with moderate shrub cover and open areas nearby. Mainly crepuscular, spending daylight hours resting in cover, although often seen foraging until late in morning and beginning evening foraging late in afternoon. They cool themselves by licking their hands and forearms during nervous excitement or hot weather. Essentially solitary, but may forage in groups of up to 30 individuals. Essentially grazers, consuming largely grasses and herbs. During dry spells juicy roots supply water. One offspring at a time born to each breeding female. Pouch life about 280 days, young may be suckled until 12-17 months old. In the past, this species was hunted for both fur and meat. Now protected by law in all States</p> |  |
| <p>Black-striped wallaby <i>Macropus dorsalis</i> Head and body length 112 - 159 cm; tail 540 – 830 cm. Brown above, mid-dorsal dark stripe neck – rump. black "gloves" and white and black face stripes. Short hop, head held low, body curved with rump tucked under body. Forearms extended forward and outward from body. Common Queensland, found in densely understoreyed eucalypt and accacia forests where it can remain well-hidden, often confused with Red necked wallaby. Feeds dusk – dawn, in daylight rests under cover in more or less permanent camps. If alarmed, form single file and resist efforts to divide or scatter. Gestation period 33 –35 days, pouch life 210 days.</p> |  |

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| Marsupials (continued) | |
| <p>Swamp wallaby, Stinker <i>Wallabia bicolor</i> Head-body 66 - 84 cm, tail 64 – 86. Long, coarse fur brown above and orange below, hence Latin name. Tail long and dark. Hop heavily, head low, tail straight out behind, arms hanging away from body. Abundant Cape York to SW Vic, common in brigalow areas. Frequent damp gullies, swamps, generally alone, but sometimes forms groups to feed. Eat shrubs and ferns supplemented by grasses. Very tame at MPBG and partial to grevillea buds. Females can mate during the last few days of pregnancy allowing continuous breeding and birthing approximately every 8 months. Suckling the newborn temporarily halts development of second embryo which remains dormant until first young is ready to leave pouch. At this time, second embryo resumes development and is born 33-38 days later, the length of one gestation period. Coarse fur and small body size unattractive to commercial shooters</p> |  |
| <p>Eastern grey kangaroo <i>Macropus giganteus</i> Head-body 95 - 230 cm, tail 43 – 110 cm (largest of the macropods). Kangaroos continue to grow throughout lifetime. Grey-fawn above, lighter below. Hair on muzzle. Live in mobs dominated by largest or strongest male often called "old man" or "boomer," controlling younger males by kicking, biting, and boxing. Powerful hind legs can cover 9 meters in one leap. Communication consists of clucks and coughs. Abundant in open forest, rainforest, temperate grassland in E Australia, often reaching plague proportions in agricultural land. Culling permits enable some reduction in numbers. Active dusk – dawn, resting during the day. Herbivorous, eats mostly grass and leaves. Breeds throughout year. Gestation period 28 days. Pouch life 10 months, continues to suckle another 6 months. The natural enemies of kangaroos include large carnivorous birds, goannas, pythons, and dingoes.</p> |  |
| <p>Common wallaroo <i>Macropus robustus</i> Head-body 110 – 198 cm. Tail 53 – 90. Stout, heavy build. Dark grey and brownish above, pale to nearly white below. Fur shaggy, less dense than that of red and grey kangaroos, includes thin, sparse underfur. Muzzle bare. Distinctive stance with shoulders thrown back, elbows tucked into the sides and wrists up. Sedentary and solitary, inhabits most regions of Australia, preferring rocky places for shade. Forage in the evening, rarely more than 200 m from a rock shelter. Can survive in regions of sparse vegetation where temperatures rise to 120 F and average rainfall is less than 380 mm/year. Able to pant to induce evaporative cooling. When threatened or disturbed it utters a loud hissing, followed with exhalation. It also makes a distinct 'cch-cch' sound. Herbivorous, does not require much water or highly nutritious foods, eating spinifex, soft grasses, shrubs, herbs and low protein/ low fibre grasses. Opportunistic breeders with no regular seasonal pattern of reproduction. Under good breeding conditions, nearly all females have one running offspring and one attached to a teat in the pouch. Pouch life 237-269 days.</p> |  |
| <p>Yellow-footed marsupial mouse <i>Antechinus flavipes</i> Head-body 8.6-16.5 cm, tail 6.5 – 15 cm. Head slate grey, body and feet orange brown, fur colour varying with habitat. Light eye-rings, black tipped tail. Erratic, quick movements, very bold, highly arboreal. Occurs most of E Australia, also SW WA in a variety of habitats. Eats mostly insects, also fruit, flowers, nectar, small birds, mice but sometimes found pilfering kitchens. Habitually turns vertebrate victims "inside out", leaving skin behind as evidence. Breeds only once/year. Shortly after mating, all males in colony die leaving food resources for the breeding females. Gestation 1 month. Up to 12 young carried in pouch up to 5 weeks. Weaned at about 3 months, and young share leafy nest until the following winter when become more territorial and intolerant.</p> |  |
| <p>Common dunnart <i>Sminthopsis murina</i> Head-body 7—12 cm, tail 5.5-13 cm. Fur soft, fine, dense buff to grayish, white or grayish below. Pointed muzzle, large ears and eyes. Slender feet with striated or granulated pads, hind part of soles lack pads. Occurs NE Qld, NSW, Vic, in moist forest or savannah. Digs burrows or makes nests of grasses and leaves in hollow logs, under bushes and in stumps. Nocturnal, mainly terrestrial. During periods of low food supply, can enter a state of torpor. Eats mostly insects, also small vertebrates eg lizards, mice. Males fight ferociously in breeding season. Gestation 13 - 16 days, up to 10 young produced in a single litter, develop quickly and weaned at about 2 months.</p> |  |
| PLACENTAL MAMMALS | |
| BATS | |
| <p>Little broad-nosed bat <i>Scotorepens greyii</i> Head-body 4.5 – 5.5 cm. Chestnut – grey brown. Roost in hollows in old, unused buildings, inside hollow fence posts, underneath metal caps on top of telegraph poles, in colonies of 2 to 20. Eat flying insects, including mosquitoes. Fly along creek edges and over waterholes catching prey in flight, also skim over the water surface to take drinks. Mate before winter and females give birth to twins in summer.</p> |  |
| <p>Lesser long-eared bat <i>Nyctophilus geoffroyii</i> Head-body 4 - 5 cm. Light grey-brown. Fluffy. Occur in towns and suburbs. At risk from the pesticides and cats. Roost in hollows and fissures in old trees, under bark, in old fairy marten nests, and in occasionally in caves. Prefer hollows of big old eucalypts for nursery colonies. Eat insects, hunting near the ground and catching flying insects in flight, snatching insects off the ground or leaves. Can be seen at night swooping around street lights. Usually eat prey in flight.*</p> |  |

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| <p>Water rat <i>Hydromys flavigaster</i> Head-body 23-37 cm, tail 24-32 cm. Colour variable, waterproof fur black or dark grey above, white or orange below. Small ears and eyes, nostrils set high on head. Tail thick, hair-covered, usually white tipped. Hind feet broad and partially webbed. Found mainly near permanent bodies of fresh water, occasionally at temporary waterholes. Clumsy on land. Eats insects, fish, crustaceans, frogs, lizards, carrion. Mostly nocturnal but may forage in full daylight. Nests in tunnels in banks, or logs. Up to 5 litters of 3-4 young annually. Suckle for 4 weeks, independent after another 4 weeks.</p> |  |
| INTRODUCED PLACENTAL MAMMALS | |
| <p>Brown Hare <i>Lepus capensis</i> Head-body 52 – 64 cm. Slender body, bushy tail. Oval-shaped head, very long, black-tipped ears, large, reddish-brown eyes. Long powerful hind legs. Ginger-brown fur with shades of black on upper parts, breast and sides ginger, with white inner sides of legs and belly, nape reddish-gray. Introduced from Europe c 1837. Eats grasses, crops, bark. Rests in scraped hollow. Can produce 5-6 litters of 2-5 annually. Considered a pest and difficult to control as not susceptible to disease.</p> |  |
| <p>European Red Fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> Head-body 57 – 74 cm, tail 38 – 45 cm. Tail bushy. Pale yellowish red to deep reddish brown above, white below. Introduced from UK in 19th century. Omnivore eating mostly rodents, insects and fruit, also carrion. Animals remain in the same home range for life. Litters vary in size from 1 to 13 pups with an average of 5. Known to carry rabies.</p> |  |
| <p>House Mouse <i>Mus muscus</i></p> | <p>We think you know what they look like!</p> |
| <p>Rabbit <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i></p> | |