

## Balmford Trip Report: Australia and Singapore

### 9 July – 11 September 2013

The Balmford Australia trek was a family holiday trying to see as great a diversity of mammals, other creatures, and wild places as we could in ten weeks. This report focuses on the mammals we were able to find. Our itinerary involved dad (Andrew) and me (Ben) flying out in early July and pottering round Tasmania before meeting up with my mum (Sarah) and brother (Jonah) in Brisbane. From there we flew north to Townsville and explored Queensland, then flew south to Sydney for some city stuff, and then (without Jonah) on to Uluru, before driving to Alice Springs. From there we continued west to Perth. Next (without mum) we drove north to Shark Bay, and back to Perth. Then we flew to Broome to explore the Kimberley, before returning to Perth for a final leg touring the south-west (trying to coincide with the arrival of spring). That ended our Australian adventure, though we stayed in Singapore for two nights on the way home. Thanks to lots of great advice from kind local naturalists and researchers as well as the fantastic information in the trip reports on [mammalwatching.com](http://mammalwatching.com) we had an extremely successful trip.

#### Tasmania (9 - 16 July)

Dad and I arrived in Tasmania jet-lagged, slightly late and very cold, but buzzing with excitement. Having picked up our campervan (a bit battered and very cold at night but cheap) we headed from Hobart to Bruny Island. Being late, we missed our opportunity to look for the rare Forty-spotted pardalote. But evening spotlighting from The Neck campground north along the main road revealed Red-necked (**Bennett's**) wallaby, Tasmanian pademelon, Eastern quoll, European rabbit and Brushtail possum, all of which appeared fairly common. We also saw a Long-nosed potoroo near the west end of Missionary Road (a side track off the main road).

Taking the first ferry back in the morning we raced onto Pennicott's Tasman Island boat trip. With stunning scenery and geology, informative guides and both New Zealand and Australian fur seal the early start was well worth it. From there we drove north to Devonport. Spotlighting round the Mersey Bluff caravan park that evening we found Eastern barred bandicoot were relatively common, along with the usual pademelons, brushtails and rabbit, and our first Common ringtail possum. Arriving at Warrawee Forest Reserve outside Latrobe early the next morning we were able to meet up with guide Colin Hedditch, who with his two brothers guide people round the lake they established (ask at the visitors centre in Latrobe – very reasonable at \$10/person). Platypus were easily spotted both there and at the bridge in Latrobe, near the visitor information centre. Colin also showed us a large flock of Blue winged parrots with one possibly a very rare (thought yet-to-be confirmed) Orange bellied parrot (lacking pale colouration near the eye and having an obvious orange belly).

We continued from Latrobe onto Narawntapu National Park where Wombats and Eastern grey kangaroos were common at dusk. Pademelons, brushtails and Red-necked wallabies were also obvious. The evening was spent waiting on Hawley beach for the arrival of nesting Little penguins, though we spotted a Long-nosed potoroo in the village too. Heading northwest the next day we stopped at The Nut Rock in Stanley but we couldn't find any whales. During a tremendous evening at **King's Run** (seemingly the only reliable wild devil site left, and strongly recommended) near Arthur River, along with the usual (Red-necked wallaby, pademelon, rabbit) we saw wombat, a Tasmanian devil and a Tiger quoll (though quoll is unusual). There was also a Southern brown bandicoot and another devil

near the side of the Marrawah-Arthur River road, and two more dead on nearby roads. Geoff King, who runs King's Run, also explained that the sealing of the road, rather than the cancer, is what he is most concerned about – he was collecting 30+ dead devils on the 12km stretch of road every year for the first three years. He has since started removing road kill every morning, to make the road less attractive to devils, and devil mortality has roughly halved.

The next morning we saw a flock of Cape Barren geese near Cape Grim. Heading south on the Western Explorer road (rough but a 2WD was just fine) we passed through some absolutely stunning scenery – rolling hills covered with button grass plains. Arriving late at Cradle Mountain National Park we only had time for a brief walk around Swan Lake, though we did find a wombat in the snow. Cars are allowed in the park all the time, but campervans aren't permitted on the park road so we had to catch a park shuttle bus, which stops running near dusk. Spotlighting from the head of the road showed us pademelons, brushtails and red-necked wallabies, as well as Ringtail possums – which were common. Sugar gliders had been spotted recently too, though we failed to find them.

Driving through the next day's horizontal rain east to Mount William National Park was uneventful – apart from a Wedge-tailed eagle in the park itself. At the lighthouse, beneath a large group of Shy albatross very close in to shore we found a pod of Inshore common dolphin. Spotlighting was largely a wash-out – with just pademelons, Eastern greys and Red-necked wallabies. We failed to find the Tasmanian bettongs that others have managed – but this was probably down to the weather. The next morning we drove south, via Freycinet National Park (though we didn't see any cetaceans there) and on to Hobart. A Southern right whale had been reported in the harbour area but we couldn't find it. Apparently when Europeans first settled in Hobart there were so many whales that they kept people awake at night, and the ferrymen wouldn't row across the Derwent River in whale season.

#### Queensland (16 July – 5 August)

Landing in Brisbane mid-afternoon the following day we headed straight out to Lamington National Park. Spotlighting over the following three nights we found mammals hard to come by (at least compared with Tasmania!), but Red-necked and Red-legged pademelons (the latter more in the forest) were common, as were Common brushtail and Common ringtail possums. We found a single Short-eared brushtail possum in Binna Burra campsite, and spotlighting the roadside eucalypts below Binna Burra we saw two Koalas. Along the dry escarpment on the way up to **O'Reilly's** we found a group of Whiptail wallabies, and singles of European hare. Around **O'Reilly's** camp itself and along nearby paths were **Albert's lyrebird**, **Satin** and **Regent bowerbirds**, **Paradise riflebird** and **Logrunners**. Spotlighting the same area, we found Northern brown bandicoot, Bush rat and heaps of ringtails. Heading back towards Brisbane, but still very close to the Park, we saw a large colony of both Grey-headed and Black flying fox.

After picking up mum and Jonah we headed south again. We visited Coombabah Lakes Conservation Area twice in the daytime and on both occasions found Koalas, Eastern greys, and Red-necked wallaby easily. We also saw Grey-headed flying fox once. In **Byron's Bay** we saw Humpback whale and Inshore bottlenose dolphin from the lighthouse. After two days in Brisbane (only spotlighting once at Belmont Hills Reserve where we saw Swamp wallaby and Sugar glider) we flew on to Townsville.

Near Woodstock we saw Agile wallaby, Eastern greys and Feral pigs, as well as Budgerigars. Townsville Town Common had very large numbers of Magpie geese, and a Pink eared duck; Agile wallabies were also common. Spotlighting in the Alligator Creek section of Bowling Green Bay National Park produced Agiles, Common brushtails and several Allied rock wallabies; the Park closes early, but you can walk in from the gate to the campsite. At Paluma we saw Agiles and a **Victoria's riflebird**. We tried driving out from Townsville to Herveys Range (apparently good for Rufous bettongs) but about 50kms out from town realised we hadn't got the time or energy to carry on, so headed home. We still saw Agiles and Eastern greys.

Heading north from Townsville we caught a boat from Lucinda out to the reef, where we stayed as volunteers at James Cook University's field station on Orpheus Island, working for four hours a day. Good reef, including tremendous Giant clams, Green turtles, several species of stingray and young Black tip reef sharks. The only mammal we saw was a Northern brown bandicoot, although the staff there told us of an Echidna that swims in the bay every now and then.

Back on the mainland we continued north to spend five nights on the Atherton Tablelands, stopping first at Cassowary House, in Kuranda, where hosts Sue and Phil Gregory were tremendous sources of local information. In one evening's spotlighting in their grounds we saw Fawn-footed melomys, Striped possum, Prehensile-tailed tree mouse, and Northern freetail bats, and in Kuranda itself Red-legged pademelons (which we noticed, in the absence of Red-necked pademelons, were more often in open vegetation). In the morning, a young Cassowary came through, while Musky rat-kangaroos were common. Spotlighting at Davies Creek National Park the next night we saw a single Northern bettong as well as a Northern brown bandicoot and several Common ringtails. At Granite Gorge the tame Mareeba rock wallabies were impossible to miss.

On to Chambers Lodge near Yungaburra, where Sugar gliders came to honey-baited trees in the grounds, as did Long-nosed bandicoots. In the surrounding forest Fawn-footed melomys were also around and Red-legged pademelons were common, and we also saw an apparently resident Herbert River ringtail. Platypus were seen at both Winfield Park near Malanda and Peterson Creek Bridge in Yungaburra. Thanks to a tip-off from Alan Gilanders we also saw a group of Large-footed myotis roosting under the bridge. Alan is extremely helpful and offers highly recommended spotlighting tours of the area. Over the course of a couple of spotlighting trips to Curtain Fig National Park we saw Green ringtail possum and Coppery brushtails, as well as a leaf-tailed gecko on the fig itself. Mount Hypipamee National Park had Green ringtails, Coppery brushtails, Herbert River ringtails and Lemuroid ringtail possums, even in heavy rain. So far tree kangaroos had proved elusive, but at Nerada Tea Plantation south of Malanda there is a very small fragment of forest left in which, amazingly, **Lumholtz's tree kangaroo** still survive. We saw one ~100m into the strip of gallery forest on the left as you cross the bridge into the tea estate.

In Tolga Scrub near Atherton there was a relatively small colony of Spectacled flying fox – depressingly the population that used to live in the Lakeside area of Yungaburra has been moved on, even though the species is recognised as being threatened by urban development. South-west of Herberton is a dry woodland along Springvale road. Spotlighting here, we saw Common brushtails and rabbits but again failed to find Rufous bettongs, though we did see a small unidentified macropod hopping away. We also spent a while spotlighting at **Halloran's Hill Conservation Area** near Atherton – recommended for Long-tailed pygmy possum

on flowering bumpy ash trees. We didn't find any, but Long-nosed bandicoots, Red-legged pademelons, Green ringtails and Coppery brushtails were common. Around Lake Barrine we found a Musky rat-kangaroo carrying nesting material in its tail, as well as a Yellow breasted boatbill and an Eastern water dragon.

From the Atherton Tablelands we headed to Cairns, and in the outskirts we saw a feral pig. After two nights in the city – and a brilliant reef trip – we headed further north still to Daintree National Park. On the first morning we took a boat trip with Murray Hunt who was able to show us a good range of birds and Saltwater crocodiles. Spotlighting around Crocodylus Camp was largely unsuccessful, though we did see two Black-footed tree rats scamper across the road. There was also a resident Northern brown bandicoot within camp. Around tea time one afternoon a Cassowary also wandered through, and around 2pm on another day we saw one by the side of the main road, halfway to Cape Tribulation. From Cape Tribulation we took a really fantastic reef trip (the reef is so close it is only 30 mins from shore) with Ocean Safaris; they were excellent. The reef and its fishes were incredibly diverse, with the added bonus of Squid, Green turtles and Inshore bottlenose dolphin, not to mention a breaching Humpback whale on the way out.

We also drove further north to Shiptons Flat to meet up with the Roberts brothers (we had difficulty getting their number, but thankfully Murray Hunt had it). The Cooktown road was fine for our soft-roader, though one creek crossing was quite deep. Going out with the Roberts brothers was fantastic in itself – so knowledgeable, enthusiastic and unassuming. Lewis found us the main attraction – **Bennett's tree kangaroo** – within about two hours, though he explained that they usually carry on until they find them anyway. The sighting was excellent, with a mother and a large joey perched on a thin branch twenty metres away. Charlie and Lewis were also able to point out many great birds, including Bridled honeyeater and Lovely fairy-wren. Promisingly, they were explaining that with hunting now banned the kangaroos have expanded their range down off mountain tops, even being seen in open eucalypt woodland. They also said Northern quolls were making a comeback after being depleted by the cane toads, and suggested that had we spotlighted we would likely have seen one.

Returning towards Cairns, we spent a night at Kingfisher Park. Spotlighting in their grounds was unbelievably successful with Giant white-tailed rat, Bush rat, Red-legged pademelon, Spectacled flying fox, Northern brown bandicoot, Long-nosed bandicoot, Fawn-footed melomys, Eastern blossom bat, and Agile wallaby. During the day we also saw an Eastern horseshoe bat and a Northern broad-nosed bat. We were told where to look for all of these by the owners Keith and Lindsay Fisher, who are fantastically knowledgeable and helpful. Spotlighting at nearby Mount Lewis National Park was also great, with Daintree River ringtail (one at the clearing ~11km up the road and one close the bridge immediately before it), Giant white-tailed rat, Fawn-footed melomys and Yellow-footed antechinus.

After such a great night spotlighting we headed back to Cairns via Bustard Downs, feeling very lucky. Our luck was to continue, with us finding two Australian bustards (these were surprisingly difficult) and Red kangaroos – apparently quite a way out of their usual range (perhaps because of the extreme dryness in the interior). And a lunchtime stop at Wangetti Beach (before an afternoon flight down south) produced a great sighting of Beach stone-curlew.

## New South Wales (5 – 12 August)

Our time in Sydney was mainly a city break, sightseeing and catching up with old family friends, though we also had a few trips out. In the city itself we saw **Black rat** in the late evening. More excitingly we were able to meet up with and help a Macquarie PhD student, **Nathan Bass**, working on Port Jackson sharks in Jervis Bay National Park. This meant we got to ferry them by canoe from the bay back to land, and help record data and tag them, all of which was great fun. Meanwhile Inshore bottlenose dolphins splashed about 50m from shore.

We also made use of our time in Sydney to go out on a Halicat pelagic trip to **Brown's Mount**, ~45km offshore. The seabirds were terrific, with six species of Albatross (**Black-browed**, **Gibson's**, **Campbell**, Indian yellow-nosed, White-capped and **Buller's**), three Shearwaters (**Wedge-tiled**, **Fluttering and Hutton's**), and Providence petrel. We also saw Humpback whale, Inshore common dolphin, Offshore bottlenose dolphin, and Australian fur seal. Pelagic veterans said that for the Sperm whales we would've had to go a further 10km out, which they sometimes do, but not on our trip. But we did see Flying fish, and Marlin breaking the surface. And what appeared to be some mysterious small whales disappearing quickly. A trip to the Blue Mountains National Park was great for landscapes, and turned up Superb lyrebird – near Scenic World (at the base of the train).

## Northern Territory (12 – 16 August)

After saying goodbye to Jonah, the three of us continued on to Uluru. The rock itself is stunning, though Kata Tjuta was equally spectacular and with many fewer tourists. Spotlighting at Yulara campground and surrounds was almost entirely unsuccessful, not helped by the almost complete absence of any park employee with a clue as to where to look. We saw only White-striped freetail bat and lots of European rabbits, despite spotlighting for well over five hours across three nights. We were later told that to see the Spinifex hopping mice the best thing to do is to stay in any of the sunset car parks within the park until dark when they emerge to feed on leftover scraps; though the park closes at dusk, there is no barrier gate.

Driving to Alice Springs took only five hours – though it was fairly nerve-racking as that's where I would collect my A-level results. With time to kill during the day there we went to the Desert Park – which has a great exhibition of, albeit captive, local wildlife (and far more knowledgeable rangers than at Uluru-Kata Tjuta). After good news on the exam front we went to **Simpson's Gap** in West MacDonnell NP, where we saw Black-flanked rock wallaby, before returning to celebrate in town. At the back of Heavitree Gap Hotel we saw another Black-flanked rock wallaby. Early in the morning we went looking for, but failed to find **Major Mitchell's** cockatoo around Temple Bar, though just 1km before getting there we saw a Dingo walking along the side of the road.

## Western Australia (16 August – 9 September)

Our first stop in WA was Perth – probably my favourite city in mainland Australia (though I liked Hobart even more). Perth and surrounds were surprisingly good for mammals. Rottnest Island was hopping with Quokka, and offshore we had great close-up views of the resident colony of New Zealand fur seals in the water near Cathedral Rocks, as well as Inshore bottlenose dolphin and Humpback whales

farther out. On the roads **King's skinks** were common and we even saw a Dugite. On the very expensive ferry ride (nearly \$100/person including bike hire – though a company on the island also does the latter) we saw more Humpback whales. We also drove to Rockingham to look out at Seal and Penguin Islands. The boat trips weren't operating because it was the penguin breeding season, but Australian sea lions and Little penguins were easy to 'scope from shore.

Mum flew home after our stay in Perth, while me and dad drove north, heading for Shark Bay. We broke the journey in Kalbarri. Going out just before dusk along the western edge of Kalbarri National Park we managed to find Euro above the cliffs. European rabbit were abundant, as were Humpback whales – we were easily able to see 20+ despite concentrating on the Euros. On the way back to the campsite, after dark, we saw a Feral cat.

The next morning we headed off early so that we would get to the midday boat trip from Monkey Mia. The main target was obviously Dugong – though we knew we were out of season (as it was still only late August, when they are just beginning to move back into the bay from warmer waters). Going out on the Shotover cruise was good – with Inshore bottlenose dolphin, Tiger sharks, Green and Loggerhead turtles, Stingrays, Giant shovel-nosed rays and an Eagle ray, but no Dugong. Afterwards we phoned up the operators of Aristocat 2, who explained that they have a different permit which allows them to go into the shallower, warmer water favoured by early-returning Dugong. True to their word the Aristocat 2 trip the following morning found Dugong fairly easily, as well as plenty of Loggerhead turtles and Inshore bottlenose dolphin. The dolphins were showing extraordinary behaviour – using sponges to protect their beaks while stirring up sediment to scare a favourite fish species that otherwise remain undetected because they lack swimbladders. That evening we were lucky enough to be shown around the Department of Parks and Wildlife captive breeding facility near Denham. As well as seeing captive Bilbies, Mala, and Banded hare-wallabies we saw House mouse and Feral goat nearby. We also saw a Red kangaroo during the day.

We then headed south - via the incredibly ancient 2.5 billion (!) year-old stromatolites at Hamelin Pool - and camped for the night in Geraldton. This gave us just enough time on the next day's drive to Perth to call in at Lesueur and Nambung National Parks. The flowers at the former (where we also saw Western grey kangaroos), and the still-unexplained Pinnacles at Nambung were both amazing. We also saw a dead Echidna, plus a group of Red kangaroos and a large flock of **Carnaby's black cockatoos** just south of Nambung.

Flying from Perth to Broome the following day we began our Kimberley adventure. Picking up a two wheel drive (perfectly fine) we headed out for two nights at the fantastically hospitable Broome Bird Observatory. Going out on a dusk plains tour one of their excellent guides was able to find us Northern nailtail wallaby, while during the daytime we enjoyed great birdwatching around camp and along the shore of Roebuck Bay. Watching for Snubfin dolphin from One Tree Lookout had mixed results. On the first day I think we were slightly too late, with the tide almost in. But on the second day of scanning - and at the right time (on a rising tide) - we were able to spot a group of four. We watched them from roughly three kilometres out as they (presumably) chased fish towards the shore. After roughly an hour of great views – eventually within 300m of us – we lost them as they swam towards the mouth of Crab Creek.

The next day we exchanged our car for a 4x4. We had gone for a commercial pickup through Budget, as this seemed to be slightly more affordable than the alternatives,

but we would not recommend them. The car was in bad shape – with soft brakes and poor tyres – and by the time we'd been charged for our excess kilometres and for \$500-worth of routine repair work that we felt we weren't responsible for, we wished we'd rented elsewhere. All roads turned out to be in pretty good condition, too, apart from a few inside Mornington Sanctuary and Mitchell River National Park.

Heading into the Kimberley our first stop, for three nights, was Mornington Sanctuary, owned and managed for conservation by the not-for-profit Australian Wildlife Conservancy. This is a stunningly beautiful area. A PhD student there kindly took us trapping at Sir John Gorge where we caught four Northern quolls, three Common rock rats, and (best of all) a Ningbing, as well as spotlighting a Short-eared rock wallaby. Around camp we had both Dingo and Agile wallaby - plus Purple-crowned fairy-wrens in nearby *Pandanus* thickets, a Freshwater crocodile in the stream and a Red backed spider in the loo. Dimond Gorge had plenty of White-quilled rock pigeons, a calling Sandstone shrike-thrush, and a **Merten's water monitor**.

From Mornington we drove (via seeing a large King brown snake on the road) to Mitchell River National Park, where dad had arranged for us to volunteer on a Department of Parks and Wildlife mammal-trapping survey. During our time with them we saw Common rock rat, Kimberley rock rat (dad only), Northern quoll, Golden bandicoot, Northern brown bandicoot, Grassland melomys, Western chestnut mouse and Pale field rat. On an evening's walk to Mitchell Falls we spotted a Monjon and joey just below Little Mertens Falls (the latest thinking is that all rock wallabies there are Monjons), and a Western brown snake in the same area. We failed to find either Golden-backed tree rat, or Scaly-tailed possum, though I suspect we didn't stay out late enough – Golden-backed tree rat and Brush-tailed rabbit rat were trapped several times after we left. Dingos were quite common in the camp, and in the palm forest on the road into the park we saw a group of six Antilopine wallaroos. We felt very lucky to have visited the Kimberley before the Cane toads arrive. The latest forecasts suggest they are perhaps five to seven years away, though one biologist told us the first animals could already be there and they wouldn't know.

From Mitchell River we headed back towards Broome and our flight back to Perth. On the way we had one night at Drysdale Station (where we were too tired to go spotlighting) and a second at the marvellous Windjana Gorge National Park. The area to the west of the Gorge, in the Napier Range is supposed to be good for Rock ringtail possums, but we didn't look. Instead we spent our evening bat-spotting in Tunnel Creek National Park, where we saw Common sheath-tail bat, Kimberley cave bat, Northern cave bat, Black flying fox (which roost in the second chamber, just beyond the roof fall) and Ghost bats (seen at dusk in the chamber that you step into as you enter). Eerily we were also sharing the cave with Freshwater crocodiles. On the drive home that evening, a cow, an Agile wallaby, and a Bustard all made concerted efforts to join us inside the car; even driving at just 50km/h they got within touching distance. After driving back to Broome the next day we spent the evening looking out over the mangroves from the corner of Carnarvon and Hamersley Streets as there was a Black and Little red flying fox roost there, though it was surprisingly quiet. The eventual departure, almost half an hour after sunset, was spectacular, with tens of thousands of bats streaming across the sky. The two species were easy to distinguish – with the Little reds conspicuously smaller and with translucent wings; they also far outnumbered their larger relatives.

From Broome we flew back down to Perth and immediately drove out to Dryandra Woodlands, where another depressing story for conservation in Australia is

unfolding. The success of the Western Shield 1080 fox baiting programme has resulted in nearly no Foxes, which for a while resulted in a recovery of medium-sized mammals. But since then, populations of several species – importantly Woylie and Numbat - have collapsed in key areas like Dryandra and Perup. This is most likely due to mesopredator release of Cats. There is not yet a way for these to be controlled and so they are seen as a significantly greater threat even than the foxes.

That said, we still had a tremendous time at Dryandra, and got great advice on where to look from the very knowledgeable caretaker. During our two days we saw Echidna four times and Western grey kangaroos lots, along with the resident campground **Carnaby's cockatoos**. We were also lucky enough to meet up with a Department of Parks and Wildlife scientist tracking Numbats. We tracked three to burrows, and saw one in a log - though without the collars there would have been very little chance of seeing any. We spent a total of six hours spotlighting, mainly along Darwinia Drive, finding several Tammar wallaby, a single Western quoll and dozens of Brushtail possum and Western greys - but despite an awful lot of effort no Woylie.

We headed onto Stirling Range National Park after that, in search of Honey possum. We looked for about three hours (from 3.30pm onwards) at the flowering Banksias and eucalypts alongside the Bluff Knoll Café but with no luck. The very helpful manager at Stirling Range Retreat suggested the Banksias by their pool might also be a good place to look, but it was the same story there. But along the park road to Bluff Knoll in the late afternoon we saw a Western brush wallaby with joey, and Western grey kangaroos. On a long evening we also spotlighted at both Porongorup National Park and Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve. At both we had European rabbit and Western grey kangaroo. About halfway between the two we saw a Red fox, and Brushtail possum at Porongorup. But the real prize came at Two Peoples Bay, when after nearly an hour of spotlighting we finally found a Western ringtail possum on the Heritage Trail.

Driving south and westwards the next morning we stopped at Albany, and though there were no Southern right whales visible from the rain-swept cliffs, a whale spotter for the tour boats told us to look at Nanarup Beach, ~25km to the east. Even though by the time we got to Nanarup visibility was down only to 100m or so due to torrential near-horizontal rain we still managed to see one. It gave us quite a show – breaching, tail slapping and rolling around just 30m from shore. By far the best view I have had of a Southern right whale despite watching them for hours in South Africa. With that luck we headed along the south coast west to the Valley of the Giants. The scale Tingle trees was staggering, and the Tree top walk great too. Arriving late at Perup Ecology Centre was probably a bad idea – the last 50km, or so, was mainly on dirt road through areas with Western grey kangaroos living at very high densities. Spotlighting was remarkably good considering the heavy showers that persisted. We saw Tammar wallaby, Western quoll, Brushtail possum, and Western grey kangaroos. There were also Western banjo frogs and Long-necked turtle in the Swamp area – plus, after nearly ten hours of searching, one Woylie hopping away in the 4km<sup>2</sup> cat-proof enclosure.

After that we headed north and back to Perth for our flight to Singapore.



## Singapore (9 – 11 September)

Arriving in Singapore in mid-afternoon we checked into the NUS Guest Lodge – our base for the next two nights. We were advised against driving around as it was fairly chaotic (not India-style but close) and so instead used the brilliant taxi service. On our first night we went out spotlighting with two Singaporean ecologists at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. It was clear they thought that we had fantastic luck – seeing four Malayan colugos (including one gliding, though it took an experienced eye to find ones on trees) as well as two Red-cheeked flying squirrels (one staying within a metre of us for at least 15mins) and two Common palm civets; we were thrilled. At Sungei Buloh the next morning we saw Common tree shrew and Plantain squirrel, as well as Saltwater crocodiles, and Malayan water monitor. Mid-afternoon we went to the (old) Botanic Gardens seeing Common tree shrew again, as well as an Oriental house rat. That night we spotlighted both Lower Pierce Reservoir and Nee Soon Swamp. The former is supposed to be a good place to see Lesser mouse deer, but we only saw Wild boar. At the latter (where there are no paths) we found Common fruit bat and a great diversity of frogs and as well as fish, freshwater crabs and prawns, and fireflies. On the last morning we went to the Tree Top Walk near MacRitchie Reservoir where it was straightforward to find Slender squirrel (in apparent association with Greater racket-tailed drongo), Plantain squirrel, and Long-tailed macaque.

That rounded off nicely a fantastic, extraordinarily lucky, and thoroughly enjoyable trip round Oz and then Singapore. I hope to be back soon!

### Equipment used

We used two different spotlights, and would highly recommend both:

a Clulite with 2.5 hours of charge:

<http://clulite.cluson.co.uk/lithium-ion-battery-packs/391-pp19-12v-92amp-rigid-lithium-ion-battery-pack.html>

and a Waypoint rechargeable:

<http://www.streamlight.com/product/product.aspx?pid=261>

Both were excellent. The Clulite gave a better light, with truer colours, but had a shorter battery life. The real advantage of the Waypoint was its extended battery life for some longer nights, but the beam is slightly too focused for work in forests.

|    | <b>Common Name</b>             | <b>Scientific Name</b>            | <b>State(s) Seen</b> | <b>Place</b>  |
|----|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---|
|    | <b>Australia</b>               |                                   |                      |   |
| 1  | Platypus                       | <i>Ornithorhynchus anatinus</i>   | Tas, Qld             | Warrawee FR, Latrobe visitors centre, Malanda, Yungaburra |
| 2  | Echidna                        | <i>Tachyglossuse aculateus</i>    | WA                   | Dryandra Woodlands  |
| 3  | Yellow-footed antechinus       | <i>Antechinus flavipes</i>        | Qld                  | Mt Lewis NP   |
| 4  | Western quoll                  | <i>Dasyurus geoffroii</i>         | WA                   | Perup Ecology Centre, Dryandra Woodlands                  |
| 5  | Northern quoll                 | <i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>        | WA                   | Mornington, Mitchell R NP                                 |
| 6  | Tiger quoll                    | <i>Dasyurus maculatus</i>         | Tas                  | King's Run  |
| 7  | Eastern quoll                  | <i>Dasyurus viverrinus</i>        | Tas                  | Bruny Island  |
| 8  | Ningbing false antechinus      | <i>Pseudantechinus ningbing</i>   | WA                   | Mornington, Mitchell R NP                                 |
| 9  | Tasmanian devil                | <i>Sarcophilus harrisi</i>        | Tas                  | King's Run  |
| 10 | Numbat                         | <i>Myremecobius fasciatus</i>     | WA                   | Dryandra Woodland   |
| 11 | Golden bandicoot               | <i>Isoodon auratus</i>            | WA                   | Mitchell River WS   |
| 12 | Northern brown bandicoot       | <i>Isoodon macrourus</i>          | Qld, WA              | Davies Creek NP, Orpheus I, Crocodylus Camp               |
| 13 | Southern brown bandicoot       | <i>Isoodon obesulus</i>           | Tas                  | Arthur-Pieman NP  |
| 14 | Eastern barred bandicoot       | <i>Perameles gunnii</i>           | Tas                  | Devonport   |
| 15 | Long-nosed bandicoot           | <i>Perameles nasuta</i>           | Qld                  | Chambers Lodge, Halloran's Hill CA, Kingfisher Park       |
| 16 | Common wombat                  | <i>Vombatus ursinus</i>           | Tas                  | Narawntapu NP, Cradle Mountain NP                         |
| 17 | Koala                          | <i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>     | Qld                  | Lamington NP, Coombabah Lakes CA                          |
| 18 | Short-eared brushtail possum   | <i>Trichosurus caninus</i>        | Qld                  | Lamington NP  |
| 19 | Brushtail possum               | <i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>      | Tas, Qld, WA         | widespread  |
| 20 | Coppery brushtail possum       | <i>Trichosurus johnstonii</i>     | Qld                  | widespread on Atherton tablelands                         |
| 21 | Striped possum                 | <i>Dactylopsila trivirgata</i>    | Qld                  | Cassowary House   |
| 22 | Sugar glider                   | <i>Petaurus breviceps</i>         | Qld                  | Belmont Hills Reserve, Chambers Lodge                     |
| 23 | Lemuroid ringtail possum       | <i>Hemibelideus lemuroides</i>    | Qld                  | Mt Hypipamee NP   |
| 24 | Western ringtail possum        | <i>Pseudocheirus occidentalis</i> | WA                   | Two Peoples Bay NR  |
| 25 | Common ringtail possum         | <i>Pseudocheirus peregrinus</i>   | Tas, Qld             | widespread  |
| 26 | Green ringtail possum          | <i>Pseudocheirus archeri</i>      | Qld                  | Curtain Fig NP, Halloran's Hill CA, Mt Hypipamee NP       |
| 27 | Daintree River ringtail possum | <i>Pseudocheirus cinereus</i>     | Qld                  | Mt Lewis NP   |
| 28 | Herbert River ringtail possum  | <i>Pseudocheirus herbertensis</i> | Qld                  | Mt Hypipamee NP, Chambers Lodge                           |

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|----|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|--|
| 29 | Musky rat-kangaroo         | <i>Hypsiprymnodon moschatus</i> | Qld      | Cassowary House, Lake Barrine                        |
| 30 | Woylie                     | <i>Bettongia penicillata</i>    | WA       | Perup Ecology Centre - in 4km <sup>2</sup> enclosure |
| 31 | Northern bettong           | <i>Bettongia tropica</i>        | Qld      | Davies Creek NP                                      |
| 32 | Long-nosed potoroo         | <i>Potorous tridactylus</i>     | Tas      | Bruny Island, Hawley Beach                           |
| 33 | Bennett's tree kangaroo    | <i>Dendrolagus bennettianus</i> | Qld      | Shiptons Flat  |
| 34 | Lumholtz's tree kangaroo   | <i>Dendrolagus lumholtzi</i>    | Qld      | Nerada Tea Estate                                    |
| 35 | Agile wallaby              | <i>Macropus agilis</i>          | Qld, WA  | widespread   |
| 36 | Antilopine wallaroo        | <i>Macropus antilopinus</i>     | WA       | Mitchell River NP                                    |
| 37 | Tammar wallaby             | <i>Macropus eugenii</i>         | WA       | Perup Ecology Centre, Dryandra Woodlands             |
| 38 | Western grey kangaroo      | <i>Macropus fuliginosus</i>     | WA       | widespread   |
| 39 | Eastern grey kangaroo      | <i>Macropus giganteus</i>       | Tas, Qld | widespread   |
| 40 | Western brush wallaby      | <i>Macropus irma</i>            | WA       | Stirling Range NP                                    |
| 41 | Whiptail wallaby           | <i>Macropus parryi</i>          | Qld      | Lamington NP   |
| 42 | Euro                       | <i>Macropus robustus</i>        | WA       | Kalbarri NP  |
| 43 | Red-necked wallaby         | <i>Macropus rufogriseus</i>     | Tas, Qld | widespread   |
| 44 | Red kangaroo               | <i>Macropus rufus</i>           | Qld, WA  | Bustard Downs, Shark Bay, near Nambung NP            |
| 45 | Northern nailtail wallaby  | <i>Onychogalea unguifera</i>    | WA       | Broome Bird Observatory                              |
| 46 | Allied rock wallaby        | <i>Petrogale assimilis</i>      | Qld      | Alligator Creek                                      |
| 47 | Short-eared rock wallaby   | <i>Petrogale brachyotis</i>     | WA       | Mornington, Mitchell R NP                            |
| 48 | Monjon                     | <i>Petrogale burbidgei</i>      | WA       | Mitchell River NP                                    |
| 49 | Black-flanked rock wallaby | <i>Petrogale lateralis</i>      | NT       | Simpson's Gap, Alice Springs                         |
| 50 | Mareeba rock wallaby       | <i>Petrogale mareeba</i>        | Qld      | Granite Gorge  |
| 51 | Quokka                     | <i>Setonix brachyurus</i>       | WA       | Rottnest Island                                      |
| 52 | Tasmanian pademelon        | <i>Thylogale billardieri</i>    | Tas      | widespread   |
| 53 | Red-legged pademelon       | <i>Thylogale stigmatica</i>     | Qld      | Lamington NP, Atherton Tablelands                    |
| 54 | Red-necked pademelon       | <i>Thylogale thetis</i>         | Qld      | Lamington NP   |
| 55 | Swamp wallaby              | <i>Wallabia bicolor</i>         | Qld      | Belmont Hills Reserve                                |
| 56 | Black flying fox           | <i>Pteropus alecto</i>          | Qld, WA  | widespread   |
| 57 | Spectacled flying fox      | <i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>  | Qld      | Tolga Scrub, Kingfisher Park                         |
| 58 | Grey-headed flying fox     | <i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>   | Qld      | Lamington NP, Coombabah Lakes CA                     |
| 59 | Little red flying fox      | <i>Pteropus scapulatus</i>      | WA       | Broome - mangroves on edge of town                   |
| 60 | Eastern blossom bat        | <i>Syconycteris australis</i>   | Qld      | Kingfisher Park                                      |

|    |   |                                |         |   |
|----|---|--------------------------------|---------|---|
| 61 | Ghost bat                                   | <i>Macroderma gigas</i>        | WA      | Tunnel Creek NP                               |
| 62 | Eastern horseshoe bat                       | <i>Rhinolophus megaphyllus</i> | Qld     | Kingfisher Park                               |
| 63 | Common sheathtail bat                       | <i>Taphozous georgianus</i>    | WA      | Tunnel Creek NP                               |
| 64 | Northern freetail bat                       | <i>Chaerephon jobensis</i>     | Qld     | Cassowary House                               |
| 65 | White-striped freetail bat                  | <i>Tadarida australis</i>      | NT      | Yulara campground - Uluru - Kata Tjuta NP     |
| 66 | Large-footed myotis                         | <i>Myotis macropus</i>         | Qld     | Yungaburra                                    |
| 67 | Northern broad-nosed bat                    | <i>Scotorepens sanborni</i>    | Qld     | Kingfisher Park                               |
| 68 | Northern cave bat                           | <i>Vespadelus caurinus</i>     | WA      | Tunnel Creek NP                               |
| 69 | Kimberley cave bat                          | <i>Vespadelus douglasorum</i>  | WA      | Tunnel Creek NP                               |
| 70 | Grassland melomys                           | <i>Melomys burtoni</i>         | WA      | Mitchell River NP                             |
| 71 | Fawn footed melomys                         | <i>Melomys cervinipes</i>      | Qld     | widespread in Atherton Tablelands             |
| 72 | Black-footed tree rat                       | <i>Mesembriomys gouldi</i>     | Qld     | near Crocodylus Camp                          |
| 73 | House mouse                                 | <i>Mus musculus</i>            | WA      | Denham  |
| 74 | Prehensile-tailed tree mouse (southern pop) | <i>Pogonomys</i> sp            | Qld     | Cassowary House                               |
| 75 | Western chestnut mouse                      | <i>Pseudomys nanus</i>         | WA      | Mitchell River NP                             |
| 76 | Bush rat                                    | <i>Rattus fuscipes</i>         | Qld     | Lamington NP, Kingfisher Park                 |
| 77 | Black rat                                   | <i>Rattus rattus</i>           | NSW     | Sydney  |
| 78 | Pale field rat                              | <i>Rattus tunneyi</i>          | WA      | Mitchell River NP                             |
| 79 | Giant white-tailed rat                      | <i>Uromys caudimaculatus</i>   | Qld     | Kingfisher Park, Mt Lewis NP                  |
| 80 | Common rock rat                             | <i>Zyzomys argurus</i>         | WA      | Mornington, Mitchell R NP                     |
| 81 | Kimberley rock rat                          | <i>Zyzomys woodwardi</i>       | WA      | Mitchell River NP                             |
| 82 | Dugong                                      | <i>Dugong dugon</i>            | WA      | Monkey Mia                                    |
| 83 | Dingo                                       | <i>Canis lupus dingo</i>       | NT, WA  | near Alice Springs, Mornington, Mitchell R NP |
| 84 | Red fox                                     | <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>           | WA      | Porongorup area                               |
| 85 | Feral cat                                   | <i>Felis catus</i>             | WA      | Kalbarri NP                                   |
| 86 | New Zealand fur seal                        | <i>Arctocephalus forsteri</i>  | Tas, WA | Tasman Island NP, Rottneest Island            |
| 87 | Australian fur seal                         | <i>Arctocephalus gazella</i>   | Tas     | Tasman Island NP                              |
| 88 | Australian sea-lion                         | <i>Neophoca cinerea</i>        | WA      | Seal Island                                   |
| 89 | Feral goat                                  | <i>Capra hircus</i>            | WA      | Denham  |
| 90 | Feral pig                                   | <i>Sus scrofa</i>              | Qld     | Woodstock, Cairns                             |
| 91 | European hare                               | <i>Lepus europaeus</i>         | Qld     | Lamington NP                                  |

|    |                             |                               |              |                                |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 92 | European rabbit             | <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>  | Tas,         | widespread                     |
| 93 | Inshore common dolphin      | <i>Delphinus delphis</i>      | Tas, NSW     | Mt William NP, Halicat pelagic |
| 94 | Australian snubfin dolphin  | <i>Orcaella heinsohni</i>     | WA           | One Tree Lookout               |
| 95 | Inshore bottlenose dolphin  | <i>Tursiops aduncus</i>       | Qld, NSW, WA | widespread                     |
| 96 | Offshore bottlenose dolphin | <i>Tursiops truncatus</i>     | NSW          | Halicat pelagic                |
| 97 | Southern right whale        | <i>Eubalaena australis</i>    | WA           | Nanarup                        |
| 98 | Humpback whale              | <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> | Qld, NSW, WA | widespread                     |

### Singapore

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|----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Common treeshrew            | <i>Tupaia glis</i>                |  | Botanic Gardens, Sungei Buloh |
| 2  | Malayan colugo              | <i>Galeopterus variegatus</i>     |  | Bukit Timah                   |
| 3  | Long-tailed macaque         | <i>Macaca fascicularis</i>        |  | Tree Top Walk                 |
| 4  | Plantain squirrel           | <i>Callosciurus notatus</i>       |  | Sungei Buloh                  |
| 5  | Slender squirrel            | <i>Sundasciurus tenuis</i>        |  | Tree Top Walk                 |
| 6  | Red-cheeked flying squirrel | <i>Hylopetes spadiceus</i>        |  | Bukit Timah                   |
| 7  | Oriental house rat          | <i>Rattus tanezumi</i>            |  | Botanic Gardens               |
| 8  | Common fruit bat            | <i>Cynopterus brachyotis</i>      |  | Nee Soon Swamp                |
| 9  | Common palm civet           | <i>Paradoxurus hermaphroditus</i> |  | Bukit Timah                   |
| 10 | Wild boar                   | <i>Sus scrofa</i>                 |  | Lower Peirce Reservoir        |