

Victoria 22nd November – 25th November 2024

I was in Australia for just over 6 weeks from 5th November to 17th December 2024 and visited Tasmania; Victoria; New South Wales and Western Australia. The following trip reports cover each of the states visited.

Tasmania 5th November – 22nd November

Victoria 22nd November – 25th November

New South Wales 25th November – 6th December

Western Australia 6th December – 17th December

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Photographs: Tim Bawden (TB) & John Wright (JW)

I had 4 days (2 full days) in Melbourne, Victoria after visiting Tasmania and before going to New South Wales. I contacted Jon Hall who put me in touch with Melbourne based wildlife watcher Tim Bawden (many thanks Jon). Tim ensured I had a fantastic 2-day wildlife watching tour around Melbourne and further afield. I can't thank Tim enough for giving up his weekend and taking me out and about and finding me some super wildlife. I think I would have struggled to see what I did see in the time I was there without Tim's help and local knowledge. I was on my first visit to Australia and Victoria was the second state I visited.

Friday 22nd November

I flew in from Launceston Airport, Tasmania, and landed at Melbourne Airport at 18:00. I got a taxi from there to my motel, the Ringwood Inn, in Ringwood east of Melbourne.

Saturday 23rd November

Tim picked me up at 08:00. We were making our way to Morwell National Park which is about a 3-hour drive east of Melbourne. We stopped off on route at Dandenong Creek, Hallam to have a look at some Grey-headed Flying Foxes in their roost trees. Driving on we arrived at Morwell National Park a couple of hours later. We quickly found my target species – a Koala, a female with a joey

on her back. We walked a few trails and after about an hour we found another Koala. But it was hard going in the forest as it was hot and humid, so we decided to move on.



Female Koala with joey

JW

We spent the rest of the day visiting some very interesting sites, in the west Gippsland region, mainly birding around ponds, reservoirs and farmland. In the late afternoon we went to Bunyip State Park, east of Melbourne. At dusk there were many Eastern Grey Kangaroos in fields adjacent to the forest and after dark a few Swamp Wallabies hopped out of the way of our vehicle as we drove the forest roads and tracks. We also saw European Rabbits and a herd of 6 Sambar. Tim then got down to the serious business of finding me Leadbeater's Possum. He found one after about 10 minutes of searching, but it was skittish and vanished in a couple of seconds before I got a proper view of it. However, the second one Tim found was more obliging and stayed around for a minute or two and showed well I'm pleased to say. Moving on a little way we began searching for Gliders. First up was a Krefft's Glider that stayed put as it licked sap from a tree trunk. Continuing our search, we found 5 Greater Gliders and heard but didn't see a Yellow-bellied Glider. There was also Common Ring-tailed and Brush-tailed Possums, and we heard a male Koala calling. We did some higher areas for Mountain Brush-tailed Possum but no luck.

Time was moving on and so we decided to call it a night. We headed back to Ringwood where Tim dropped me off at my motel at 01:30.

Below Koalas

JW





Above Leadbeater's Possum
Below Swamp Wallaby

TB
JW





Greater Glider

TB

Sunday 24th November

Tim picked me up at 10:30 and we made our way to Melbourne Botanical Gardens in Cranbourne, southeast Melbourne. After yesterday's hot and humid day, today was dull and damp with rain. The botanical gardens are well worth a visit in themselves, but I had a species to find here – Eastern Brown Bandicoot. The botanical gardens are known for being one of the easiest places in the Melbourne area to see Brown Bandicoot which live a diurnal lifestyle in the gardens. So why it took us 2 hours before we came across our one and only Bandicoot remains a mystery. Tim said he usually had multiple sightings without any trouble and without much effort. He hoped that it was just a one off this morning and that the population hadn't crashed. Whilst wandering the gardens we also came across a Short-beaked Echidna, 3 Swamp Wallabies and a very wet juvenile Eastern Ring-tailed Possum.

After leaving the botanical gardens we again visited a variety of sites mainly for birding. We then made our way once again to Bunyip State Park in the late afternoon. Just before dusk in the fields there were around 50 Eastern Grey Kangaroos, a few Fallow Deer and a Wombat. Once it was dark we drove the roads and tracks and came across a few Swamp Wallabies and a single Wombat. We then concentrated on looking for Yellow-bellied Glider which we missed last night. The first Glider seen was a Greater but soon after that Tim found a Yellow-bellied Glider which showed nicely for us. We then drove higher up to look for Mountain Brush-tailed Possums but were beaten by fog which was unexpected and certainly stopped any chances of finding the Possums. Lower down and out of the fog a 'rodent' hopped out in front of the car. Tim braked and we both leapt out of the car, Tim saw it and swiftly dashed over and caught it at the side of the road – an Eastern Pygmy Possum. Tim didn't keep it in hand for long, so as not to stress or injure it any way. It was then great to watch it make its way up the roadside bank and away into the trees.

At the end of another great day wildlife watching Tim drove me back to my motel around midnight. It was time to say thank you and goodbye as I was leaving in the morning.



Swamp Wallaby

JW



Short-beaked Echidna

JW



Eastern Brown Bandicoot

JW

Monday 25th November

I was picked up at my motel by taxi at midday to take me to Melbourne Airport for a mid-afternoon flight to Sydney, New South Wales. Last night's fog had lingered into the morning and the knock-on effect of delayed and cancelled flights meant my flight to Sydney was delayed a couple of hours.

Systematic List: Mammal names follow those in the single volume All the Mammals of the World (Lynx). 17 mammals seen.

Short-beaked Echidna

Eastern Brown Bandicoot

Koala

Common Wombat

Common Brush-tailed Possum

Eastern Pygmy Possum

Leadbeater's Possum

Kreffft's Glider

Yellow-bellied Glider

Greater Glider

Eastern Ring-tailed Possum

Tachyglossus aculeatus

Isodon obesulus

Phascolarctos cinereus

Vombatus ursinus

Trichosurus vulpecula

Cercartetus nanus

Gymnobelideus leadbeateri

Petaurus notatus

Petaurus australis

Petauroides volans

Pseudocheirus peregrinus

Eastern Grey Kangaroo
Swamp Wallaby
Grey-headed Flying Fox
European Rabbit
Sambar
Fallow deer

Macropus giganteus
Wallabia bicolor
Pteropus poliocephalus
Oryctolagus cuniculus
Cervus unicolor
Dama dama

Herps: Brown-striped Grass Frog; Eastern Banjo Frog.

Selected bird species: Pink-eared Duck, Blue-billed Duck, Australian Spotted Crake, Australian Hobby, Greater Sooty Owl, White-throated Nightjar, Gang-Gang Cockatoo, Sacred Kingfisher, Superb Lyrebird, Eastern Yellow Robin.



Eastern Ring-tailed Possum, a wet juvenile

JW

End