



# Mammals of Freycinet Peninsula

The Freycinet Peninsula has a wide variety of habitats which host a wide variety of mammals.

## Wallabies, bettongs and potoroos

The most common of these mammals which graze on grasses and herbs is the Bennetts or red-necked wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*). They tend to congregate around campsites and picnic areas where feeding by some visitors encourages them to gather in larger than natural numbers. Hand feeding is discouraged as unnatural foodstuffs can cause a fatal disease called 'lumpy jaw'.

The Tasmanian pademelon (*Thylogale billardierii*), although abundant, is rarely seen during the day. It shelters in dense vegetation and ventures out into open areas after dark to feed on grasses, herbs and shrubs. The Tasmanian bettong (*Bettongia gaimardi*), found in dry sclerophyll forests, is much less common and feeds upon fungi, seeds and insects. The long-nosed potoroo (*Potorous tridactylus*) is also uncommon and is found in thick heath and sclerophyll forest undergrowth, where it feeds on roots, tubers, fungi and insects.

## Tasmanian devils

The Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrissii*) is a scavenger often seen on roadsides at night. During the day devils shelter in caves, wombat burrows and thick scrub.

## Possums

The brush-tailed possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) is often seen around campsites at night. Once again, feeding by some visitors has caused this creature to become rather bold in its exploits to find food. 'Brushies' tend to spend most of their time on the ground feeding on grasses, herbs, ferns and various leaves.

Other less common possums are the arboreal (tree-dwelling) possums. The sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*) is found in groups. It nests in tree hollows and feed on insects, flowers and nectar. The common ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) is found in all habitats and feeds on flowers, leaves and fruit. It nests in trees and rarely ventures onto the ground.

## Monotremes

A common diurnal (daytime) creature is the echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*), often seen foraging for ants amongst the forest litter. Echidnas, like platypuses (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*), are monotremes (egg-laying mammals).



Echidna. Image © Adam Holbrook

## Wombats

Wombats (*Vombatus ursinus*) are not often seen because of their nocturnal habits, but their cube-shaped droppings are easily recognised. In cold weather wombats can sometimes be seen during the day grazing on grasses, herbs, shrubs or succulent roots or basking in the sun.

## Quolls

The spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) is rarely sighted, but the smaller eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*) is more common and is best seen by spotlighting at night. It mostly hunts on the ground for grubs, small mammals, birds, grasses and fruit.

## Rodents

Rodents such as the New Holland mouse (*Pseudomys novaehollandiae*) and swamp rat (*Rattus lutreolus*) are omnivorous, feeding on insects, plant material and fungi. The New Holland mouse lives in dry heath and open forest. The swamp rat is found in a wide range of habitats. The water rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) eats a variety of aquatic animals and can sometimes be seen at first light in and around estuaries and lagoons.

## Bats

There are several bats in this area. They are all insectivorous (insect-eating) and roost in trees or tree hollows. The most frequently seen are the lesser long-eared bat (*Nyctophilus geoffroyi*) and the little forest eptesicus (*Eptesicus vulturnus*). The little forest eptesicus

is the smallest Tasmanian bat. The lesser long-eared bat hibernates over winter.

Please report any unusual sightings. These can then be investigated and added to the Natural Values Atlas.

## Native Mammals

Name	Species	Abundance
Echidna	<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>	Common
Platypus	<i>Ornithorhynchus anatinus</i>	Unknown
Tasmanian Devil	<i>Sarcophilus harrisii</i>	Uncommon, endemic
Eastern Quoll	<i>Dasyurus viverrinus</i>	Common
Spotted-tailed Quoll	<i>D. maculatus</i>	Uncommon
Common Wombat	<i>Vombatus ursinus</i>	Common
Ringtail Possum	<i>Pseudocheirus peregrinus</i>	Common
Eastern Pygmy Possum	<i>Cercartetus nanus</i>	Uncommon
Little Pygmy Possum	<i>C. lepidus</i>	Uncommon
Sugar Glider	<i>Petaurus breviceps</i>	Unknown
Brushtail Possum	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	Common
Bennetts Wallaby	<i>Macropus rufogriseus</i>	Common
Tasmanian Pademelon	<i>Thylogale billardierii</i>	Common, endemic
Tasmanian Bettong	<i>Bettongia gaimardi</i>	Uncommon
Long-nosed Potoroo	<i>Potorous tridactylus</i>	Uncommon
New Holland Mouse	<i>Pseudomys novaehollandiae</i>	Rare
Water Rat	<i>Hydromys chrysogaster</i>	Common in habitat
Swamp Rat	<i>Rattus lutreolus</i>	Common
Chocolate Wattled Bat	<i>Chalinolobus morio</i>	Unknown
Large Forest Eptesicus	<i>Eptesicus darlingtoni</i> (formerly <i>sagittula</i> )	Unknown
Little Forest Eptesicus	<i>E. vulturnus</i>	Common
Great Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus tasmaniensis</i>	Unknown
Lesser Long-Eared Bat	<i>Nyctophilus geoffroyi</i>	Common

## Introduced Mammals

Name	Species	Abundance
Domestic Cat	<i>Felis catus</i>	Common
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Unknown
European Hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	Unknown
Black Rat	<i>Rattus Rattus</i>	Common
Brown Rat	<i>R. norvegicus</i>	Common
House Mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>	Common