

Megafauna

A number of giant native mammals inhabited this region before they became extinct about 50,000 years ago. In fact, there have been a number of significant 'megafauna' fossil discoveries in the Camperdown district.



In 1843 a local pastoralist, William Adeney, found pieces of an animal skull at Lake Colongulac,

near Camperdown. He sent these remains to the renowned British anatomist and palaeontologist Richard Owen. Based on the bones, Owen named the creature **Thylacoleo carnifex**, today known as the **Marsupial Lion**, Australia's largest marsupial carnivore. Weighing over 100kgs, this lion even had a pouch to carry its young.

Evidence of other megafauna has been found at other local lakes - most notably a set of fossil footprints thought to have been left by a **Diprotodon**

as it walked across soft volcanic mud around 100,000 years ago. **Diprotodon optatum** is a Giant Wombat the size of a rhino!



Procoptodon golia, the **Giant short-faced Kangaroo** sure would have been a sight, weighing in at 200kg and reaching 2.2m tall.

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE WILDLIFE ON MOUNT LEURA & MOUNT SUGARLOAF RESERVES

- Treat any wildlife you see with respect and give them space.
- Please do not feed wild animals or birds.
- Keep all dogs on leads while in the reserves, pick up after your dog. Fines apply.
- Follow the 40kmh speed limit on the Mount Leura Road.
- If you see injured wildlife call 1300 094 535

Further Information:

Website: www.mtleura.org.au



@friendsofmontleura



friendsmtleuramtsugarloaf



Swamp Wallaby

Brochures:

- Indigenous Flora Guide
- Walking Trails of Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf Reserves
- Volcanic Banksia

Booklet:

- The Volcanic Edge – Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf Reserves

Printed material available at:

- Camperdown Newsagency
- The Courthouse Camperdown Visitor Information Centre

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References: Krishna-Pillay, Shamthi H., 1968. A dictionary of Keeraywoorrong and related dialects.



Koala



Striped Marsh Frog



Copperhead Snake

MAMMALS, AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

of
MT LEURA & MT SUGARLOAF RESERVES
Camperdown - Victoria



Reserves

BACKGROUND

Mount Leura & Mount Sugarloaf Reserves are parcels of land on the Victorian Volcanic Plains at the edge of Camperdown in the Corangamite Shire. Totalling an area of 50ha (125acres), the two reserves include the scoria cones of Mount Leura and Mount Sugarloaf, as well as the crater between the mounts. The reserves are located within the Leura Volcanic Complex which is listed (June 2004) on the National Trust Register of Significant Sites. It is estimated that the Mount Leura volcanic complex was formed some 30 thousand years ago. Be sure to see the Volcanology Trail information displays located on the summit of Mt Leura for more information.

The original inhabitants of this area are the Leehura people of the Djargurd Wurrung tribe. They call Mt Sugarloaf "Tuunumbee Heear", which translates to "moving moving woman". The mounts were important landmarks, used for navigation on the plains beyond and as lookouts for monitoring the movements of neighbouring people and game.

Established in 1995, the Management Committee aimed to revegetate the reserves with indigenous flora to reflect the scoria cone woodland vegetation communities existing at the time of European arrival. Due to the revegetation on the reserves many amphibians, reptiles and mammals have returned to this island of scoria cone woodlands. The indigenous trees and shrubs provide them with ideal habitat and protection.

"IT IS ONE OF THE LARGEST MAAR AND TUFF RINGS IN VICTORIA AND ONE OF A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF NESTED OR COMPLEX MAARS FORMED BY ERUPTIONS OF THE NEWER VOLCANICS."

Extinct IN THE AREA



COMMON WOMBAT

(*Vombatus ursinus*)

Traditional name: "meeyam"

Don't let the name "common" fool you, as my numbers are in decline. I was once widespread in this district and a traditional food for Aboriginal people, but now

there are only small scattered populations of my species in Western Victoria. Larger numbers occupy Eastern Victoria. I have a shiny black nose, short legs and short tail. Long claws on my front feet are for digging the burrows that I live in. Like other burrowing marsupials, my pouch faces backwards to keep the dirt out. I should mention my distinctive cube shaped poo!

SOUTHERN BROWN BANDICOOT

(*Isodon obesulus*)

Traditional name: "karooy"

I have a shorter nose than the Eastern Barred Bandicoot and brown fur with no stripes or spots; I'm slightly smaller too.

My preferred habitat is coastal heathland around the southern parts of Australia. We are much rarer than we used to be. The closest populations to Mt Leura are on the coast around Port Campbell. There are also populations in inland mountainous habitats like the Grampians (Gariwerd). You could say we are a solitary and territorial species. We forage at night on plants, roots, fungi, insects and spiders and hide in scrub during the day.



EASTERN BARRED BANDICOOT

(*Paramelops gunii*)

Traditional name: "warron"

I'm a small native marsupial about the size of a rabbit and weighing less than 2kg. I look quite different to a rabbit, with my long snout, small ears and distinctive white stripes, or bars, across my rump. My long snout is particularly useful for foraging for insects and worms in the soil. I too was once common and widespread in this region, particularly on the Victorian Volcanic Plains, but with the introduction of foxes and cats my numbers declined so dramatically that I was thought to be extinct on mainland Australia. Then, in the 1980's, a small wild population was discovered in the Hamilton tip! Since then much conservation work has been done to establish populations through captive breeding programs.



TIGER QUOLL (*Dasyurus maculatus*)

Traditional name: "kapang"

I'm a carnivorous marsupial, sometimes referred to as a native cat. I have recognisable white spots on reddish-brown fur. I'm a good climber and I have a powerful bite, which allows me to prey on anything from insects and crayfish to reptiles, birds and mammals. I don't mind scavenging larger dead animals as well. I was common and widespread in this region before European arrival but now I'm endangered and restricted to only a few populations in Victoria, including the Otways. The kind of habitat I require is also in decline as I prefer dense, wet forests.



SWAMP WALLABY

(Wallabia bicolor)

Traditional name: “parrarr”

I’m mostly a nocturnal animal with dawn and dusk being my favourite times to move about and feed. I’m a herbivore, feeding on grasses and other soft plants such as ferns and leaves. I can be identified by my dark fur, usually with lighter brown to orange colouring on my chest.

Unlike my macropod cousins the kangaroos, I am smaller and more solitary.

Utilised for food and fur by Traditional Owners.



SC

KOALA

(Phascolarctos cinereus)

Traditional name: “weengkeel”

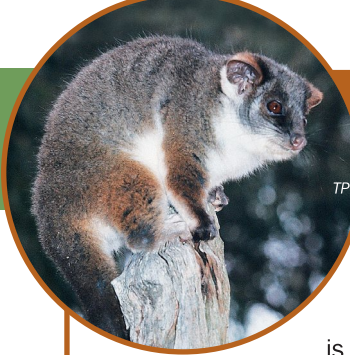
Yes, gum leaves are my favoured food. In fact, it’s all my diet consists of, and not just any old gum leaves will do – I’m particularly fussy about which species of eucalypts I consume. In this region it’s mainly the Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*). Sadly, many of my favourite trees have been removed so I’m happy to find refuge at Mount Leura to eat and sleep the days away. My favourite trees will often have scratches, that I have left in the bark.

I’m not a bear at all! I’m actually a marsupial. It’s very useful having a pouch to carry my young in. From about six months of age you might see my joey riding on my back.

We are solitary and territorial animals. If I am a male then I have scent glands located on my chest to transfer my scent to trees that I am climbing. You may hear me grunting and squealing like a pig during mating season, which is approximately August to February.



SC



TP

RINGTAIL POSSUM

(Pseudocheirus peregrinus)

Traditional name: “weeyan”

I’m much smaller and more elusive than my brush tailed cousins. My preferred habitat is dense forest or woodland.

I use my tail to manoeuvre easily through the trees and rarely come to the ground. I like to feed at night on foliage, flowers and fruits from native and introduced vegetation. I get extra protein in my diet by consuming some of my faeces (poo). My main threats are loss of habitat, as well as predation by foxes, dogs and cats.



Utilised for food and fur by Traditional Owners.

BRUSHTAIL POSSUM

(Trichosurus vulpecula)

Traditional name: “koorramook”

Thank you for these cosy nesting boxes and man-made hollows in the reserves. I prefer natural hollows in old gum trees, but there are not many of those around anymore. Our population success is because I can adapt my habitat and diet and I produce many offspring during my lifetime. We will start breeding at one year old and have a gestation period of just 16-18 days. My young take refuge in my pouch. I am cat-sized with a distinctive bushy tail and greyish-brown fur. I have few natural predators, but introduced foxes, cats and dogs certainly give me a scare!



EASTERN GREY KANGAROO

(Macropus gigantus)

Traditional name: “koorrayn”

With my grey-brown fur and long tail, I’m a very recognisable and iconic native animal. I use my long tail for balancing and standing up tall and straight. Full grown males are up to 66kg, almost twice the size of females. I’m a marsupial. My young are called joeys and they can stay in mum’s pouch until they become independent at around 1 year old. When first born my joeys are tiny, pink and hairless. They weigh less than 1 gram and suckle on mum’s teat.

I’m considered to be common and widespread. I’m quite adaptable to various habitat types such as woodlands and coastal areas but I favour the more open grasslands or farmlands where I can be seen in a mob.



SB

CHOCOLATE WATTLE BAT

(Chalinolobus morio)

We’re nature’s tiniest pest controllers. We are nocturnal, feeding at night on insects; we can consume at least half our body weight per night. During the day we roost in small gaps, under bark or in man-made structures. I am smaller than a mouse and chocolate brown in colour.

The smallest micro bats in this region weigh about 3 grams. At least 9 different species of micro bats have been discovered on the reserves so far.

SWAMP RAT

(Rattus lutreolus)

I’m a native species even though I might sometimes get confused with the introduced black rat; I actually have a shorter tail and rounder ears. I’m a shy creature, so you won’t see me hanging out in the same places as feral rats. I prefer dense scrub or woodland so I can make some burrows to nest in. I’m nocturnal and herbivorous; I like to eat sedges and grasses. I’m pretty good at hiding, I have to be or else I’ll be hunted by birds of prey. Since feral cats and foxes came along I’ve got even more chance of becoming someone’s dinner.



TP

SOUTHERN BROWN TREE FROG

(Littoria ewingii)

My colouring and markings can be quite variable but usually I’m pale to dark brown with green stripes. I have a pale stripe from my mouth to my arm and a pale cream underbelly. I can inhabit a wide range of environments but somewhere with a wetland or pond is favourable. My toe pads help me to climb. I am about 5cm long.



GF

The best way to identify me is from my call; a fast “creeee creee creee cree cree.”

TIGER SNAKE

(Notechis scutatus)

Traditional name: “koorang”

Like all native reptiles I am a protected species. I can be identified by the light and dark banded stipes across my body but the colours can be highly variable and change seasonally. I am a venomous snake, feeding on a diet of frogs, rodents, lizards, birds and even fish and other snakes. I can be up to 2m long. I am cold blooded so I am more active during warm days and nights.



TP

Many species of snake lay eggs. Tiger snakes and Copperheads give birth to up to 30 live young. All snakes in this region are venomous and bite can be fatal.



TP

COPPERHEAD SNAKE

(Austrelaps superbus)

I’m usually a glossy coppery colour but can vary from greyish brown to orange-brown or even black in appearance. My lips have faint vertical stripes. I am up to 1.7m long. I’m found in a variety of environments from grasslands and woodlands to disturbed and modified agricultural areas. My favourite spots to live are among some rocks, logs and tussocks near a source of water.



SC

ECHIDNA *(Tachyglossus aculeatus)*

Traditional name: “weelangeel”

If you’re lucky, you might see me around the Reserves because I’ve made a comeback to the Mounts since my habitat improved. The wattle trees that have been planted attract the ants that I love to eat. I dig ants up with my sharp claws and lick them up with my long sticky tongue. If you don’t see me it’s because I’m very shy. If I feel threatened, because I can’t move very fast, I’ll tuck myself up to protect my head. I am about the size of a football, with spines. You might see my scratch marks and diggings in the soft soil where I have inserted my long nose to find some worms or other tasty treats.

My closest relative is the platypus. We are both monotremes; the only egg-laying mammals in the world!



SC

SPOTTED MARSH FROG

(Limnodynastes tasmaniensis)

I will grow to approximately 4.5cm in length. As the name suggests I’m marked with spots. I usually have a light brown body with olive-green spots but my colouring and markings are variable. I lay eggs in floating foam masses in water and then tadpoles hatch out. My tadpole stage lasts about 3-5 months while my legs and arms grow. Then I hop out onto land.



TP

Listen for my “kuk-kuk-kuk” call.

STRIPED MARSH FROG

(Limnodynastes peronii)

Most frogs need unspoiled environments and clean water but I’m quite tolerant of all kinds of habitats and I’m commonly seen in gardens. You’ll recognise me by my brown colouring with darker stripes down my back and a pale underside. I am up to 8cm long.



GH

My frog call is a kind of “tok” or “whuck” sound.