



Fourth Crossing Wildlife factsheet



Brush-tail Possum

Trichosurus vulpecula
"little-fox-like hairy-tail"

other names

Silver-grey Possum, Common Brushtail Possum
Eastern Brushtail Possum (east coast), Western
Brushtail Possum (west coast) and Northern
Brushtail Possum (north coast)



Fourth Crossing Wildlife



<https://mol.org/species/>

Description

Head and body length 350mm to 550mm with a tail length of 250-400mm. Weight 1300g-4500g for males and 1200g-3500g for females. Generally silver-grey or brown above and white to pale grey on chest and underparts. Long oval ears (50-60mm long). The tail varies from being bushy to sparsely furred with a naked area underneath (for gripping while climbing).

The Brushtail Possum is the most familiar of the possum family, and is abundant throughout the eastern side of mainland Australia and Tasmania. Colour and size of the possum vary greatly depending on the area, eg: in northern Queensland the possum is short-haired with a copper coloured coat and the larger Tasmanian Brushtail Possum has a woolly blackish or grey coat. Males are generally larger than the females. The possum lives in areas where there are plenty of trees, especially open forests and woodland. It is a nocturnal animal, spending its day in a "dray", which is often made in the hollow of a tree. In urban areas any dark recess can be used, a house roof cavity being a favoured place. The possum eats a variety of leaves, mainly Australian natives and particularly eucalypts. Rose leaves and flowers are also favoured by the possum, along with some fruits and tree bark. It has also been known to raid bird nests eating eggs and chicks. Most populations of the Brushtail Possum breed in Autumn and Spring, but births can occur year round in favourable weather conditions. A possum joey will spend 4 to 5 months in the pouch, with a further 1 to 2 months riding on the mothers back. The Brushtail Possum is protected in all states of Australia.