

Wildlife of Western Sydney Mammals

Did you know that Western Sydney is home to Platypus, Koalas, and Wombats? How about Possums that glide and Bats that go fishing?

Western Sydney's woodlands and grasslands are home to some of the most outstanding wildlife in the world. This guide introduces the local mammals of the 'Cumberland Plain' – the open woodlands of Western Sydney - and the best places to see them.

A DISAPPEARING RESOURCE: Sadly, land clearing and the introduced Red Fox continue to decimate the wildlife of the region, and unless things change many mammals will disappear before future generations can enjoy them.

Small ground-dwelling mammals have been the hardest hit, and the Long nosed Bandicoot and Bush Rat are now the last small ground mammals remaining. Both species are found in the Holsworthy Military Barracks on land earmarked for the Transport Intermodal. The Long-nosed Bandicoot is also found in the former crown lands of Castlereagh (including the tiny Agnes Banks Nature Reserve), where it is similarly unprotected. Both species require protection and active fox control if they are to survive in the region.

TIPS FOR MAMMAL WATCHING: While it's easy to see Kangaroos resting in the day, most of our mammals are nocturnal, so your best chances are to look in the morning or evening, or to go spotlighting at night. A filter of red cellophane over your torch will help avoid damage to animals' sensitive eyes. Make sure you have permission, keep safe, and record what you see!

ORGANISED ACTIVITIES: Greening Australia run the *Frogs, Furries & Flapjacks Twilight Walk* at Mamre Homestead, South Creek. Bookings can be made via the Homestead on (02) 9670 6178. National Parks occasionally run spotlight tours – check online at www.wildworld.com.au.

The Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority (HNCMA) was formed to help protect the natural values of the Hawkesbury-Nepean and ensure it continues to be a healthy and productive catchment. This brochure is one of a series of brochures on the fauna in western Sydney to raise awareness, promote landcare / bushcare, and protect biodiversity.

Wildlife of Western Sydney: Mammals



Wildlife of Western Sydney Mammals



Catchment Management Authority
Hawkesbury-Nepean

Small Ground Mammals



Long-nosed Bandicoot *Perameles nasuta*
Formerly common. Last (small) populations are Castlereagh region (inc. Agnes Banks NR) and Holsworthy Barracks/Corryton Park; at risk from clearing and fox predation.



Bush Rat *Rattus fuscipes*
Formerly common. Now restricted to Holsworthy Barracks. Unlike introduced rats, the tail is shorter than the body.



'Common' Dunnart *Sminthopsis murina*
Formerly common. Unconfirmed reports from Castlereagh.



Eastern Pygmy Possum *Cercartetus nanus*
Vulnerable (NSW). A tiny possum of shrubby woodlands; on sandstone (e.g. The Oaks), possibly Castlereagh.

Arboreal Mammals



Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*
Vulnerable (NSW). No longer locally breeding; males disperse through northwest and southwest regions (corridor dependent) e.g. Noorumba Res; Windsor Downs NR, Wianamatta RP.



Common Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*
Common, especially thick creekside vegetation e.g. Mulgoa NR, Agnes Banks NR.



Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula*
Common, especially open, dry country e.g. Western Sydney Parklands; Scheyville NP.

Gliders



Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps*
A small gliding possum; generally uncommon e.g. Kemps Creek NR; Shanes Park.



Squirrel Glider *Petaurus norfolcensis*
Vulnerable (NSW). A rare species similar to the smaller Sugar Glider. Prefers open dry forest on clay. Only confirmed local population at Castlereagh, scheduled for development.



Feathertail Glider *Acrobates pygmaeus*
An uncommon species of tiny gliding possum; easily overlooked e.g. Agnes Banks NR, Wianamatta NR, Scheyville NP.

Large Herbivores



Swamp Wallaby *Wallabia bicolor*
Common in shrubby areas and along creeks e.g. Scheyville NP; Cranebrook NR.



Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*
Common but declining; corridor & open habitat dependent; e.g. Wianamatta RP; Shanes Park.



Eastern Wallaroo *Macropus robustus robustus*
Common in south; a bulky, shaggy coated species e.g. Australian Botanic Gardens.



Wombat *Vombatus ursinus*
Uncommon/declining resident of larger grassy woodlands e.g. Bents Basin SCA, Mulgoa NR, Western Sydney Parklands.

Want to help protect Western Sydney's fauna?

Join your local landcare or bushcare group. For information, contact the Regional Landcare Facilitator at the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority, Penrith

P: 02 4725 3050

W: <http://www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au/landcaregroup/>

or speak to your local Council or National Parks and Wildlife Service office.

Have you seen these animals?... please report sightings of **RED** species to westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com to help us protect our wildlife.

Other Mammals



Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

An uncommon resident of large remnants e.g. Mulgoa NR; Scheyville NP.



Spotted-tailed Quoll *Dasyurus maculatus*

Vulnerable (NSW). Uncommon wide ranging predator; semi-arboreal; e.g. Castlereagh.



Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*

Locally restricted to the Hawkesbury-Nepean river between Camden and Appin; occasionally elsewhere; declining.



Water Rat *Hydromys chrysogaster*

A rare resident, formerly common in larger waterways; occasional in farm dams (e.g. near Gulguer)

Fruit Bats



Grey-headed Flying Fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*

Vulnerable (NSW). Common nomad; present roosts include Cabramatta Ck, Brownlow Hill, and Menangle.

Microbats

The small insectivorous bats that use sonar are called 'microbats'. At least 20 species of microbat are found in Western Sydney, most preferring fertile open rural landscapes to reserves. Two species are shown below.



Fishing Bat *Myotis adustus*

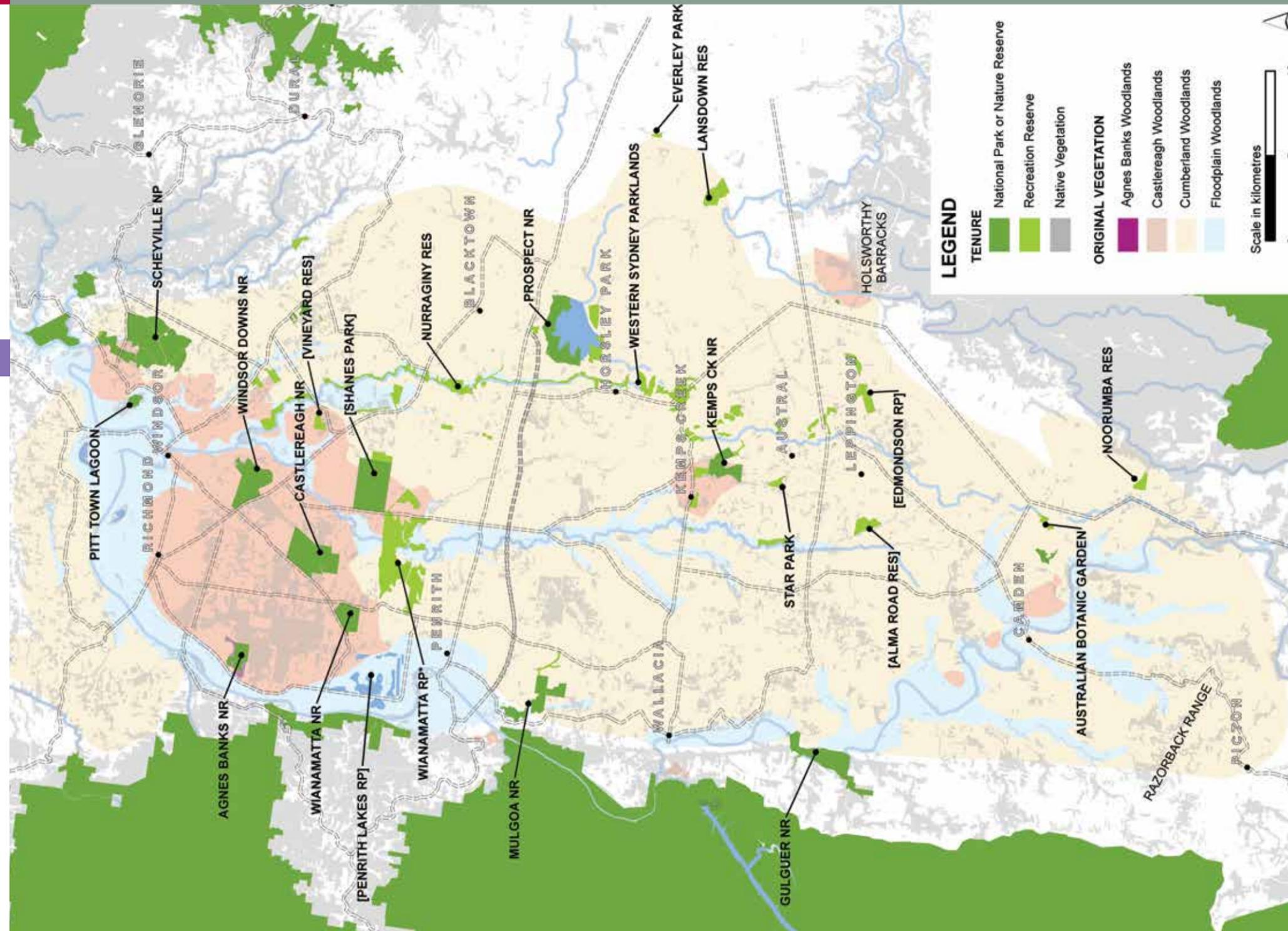
Vulnerable (NSW). Uses large feet to 'trawl' water surface catching small fish and insects; rare – mostly rural (private) land with hollow trees beside open water.



Greater Broad-nosed Bat *Scoteanax rueppellii*

Vulnerable (NSW). Edges of the Cumberland Plain.

THE CUMBERLAND PLAIN



HABITAT - SOIL & FIRE: The Cumberland Plain's vegetation is driven by soils, and understanding soils can help in understanding the area's fauna. The flat clay areas support open grassy woodland of Grey Box or Spotted Gum called *Cumberland Plain Woodland*. Around Castlereagh this is covered by ancient river deposits of lower nutrient sands, silt and pebbles. This supports a shrubby forest of *Castlereagh Ironbark Woodland* on the flats, and *Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland* on rises. Near Agnes Banks, this is further covered by wind-blown sand deposits supporting *Agnes Banks Woodland*, a shrubby community of *Angophora* and Scribbly Gum. Beside the Hawkesbury-Nepean and alongside major creeks, recent river sediments support *Alluvial Woodland* dominated by Forest Red Gum or the endangered Camden White Gum.

The fertile Cumberland Plain Woodlands and grasslands are the best habitat for many open-woodland specialists. However, these communities have suffered the most from clearing, and many of the woodland fauna are now found only in the large remnants of the less fertile, shrubbier Castlereagh and Agnes Banks Woodlands. Originally, grasslands and grassy glades were a key part of all these communities, but clearing and the suppression of fire has made grasslands the rarest habitat type in the region. A number of species rely on grasslands, so those that remain are well worth a visit.

The vegetation preferences of each species are noted in the text (where known). These can be correlated with the habitat colour coding on the map to give a better idea of the species distributions.

CONSERVATION STATUS: The legal status (if any) under NSW law is listed for each species.

REPORTING RARE WILDLIFE: If you think you have seen any of the species indicated in **RED** you should report your findings. Knowing where these species are helps community and government protect them. If possible, take a photo and record the nearest street address.

You can report your sightings to the Western Sydney Wildlife Record westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com

Injured wildlife should be reported to WIRES on 1300 094 737

ABBREVIATIONS:

[...] denotes future Park or Reserve (not yet open to public)

Protected Lands	Other Public Lands
NR Nature Reserve	RP Regional Park
NP National Park	RES Council Reserve

PHOTOGRAPHY: Photographs donated by: Alan Kwok: **AK** / Bidgee: **BJ** / Dean Lewis (<http://dl.id.au>): **DL** / 'Eyeweed': **EW** / George Cruiser: **GC** / Gordan Smith: **GS** / Greg Miles: **GM** / 'Greg the Busker': **GB** / Gus McNab: **GMc** / Jean-Marc Hero: **JMH** / Jonathan Ayres: **JA** / Ken Stepnell/OEH: **KS** / 'LiquidGhoul': **LG** / Lindy Lumsden: **LL** / Michael Jarman/OEH: **MJ** / Narawan Williams: **NW** / NSW Office of Environment & Heritage: **OEH** / Peter Ridgeway: **PR** / Peter Street: **PS** / Rosie Nicolai/OEH: **RN** / Retama: **RT** / Ray Williams: **RW**

Cover photo:

Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*, © Edwin Vella

Text: Peter Ridgeway

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