



Possums and Gliders of the Granite Belt

Common ringtail possum

Pseudocheirus peregrinus (wandering false-hand)

The common ringtail possum's colour varies from reddish brown, through grey to almost black above, paler below. It's long tail tapers to a white tip with naked underside.

This possum's natural habitat ranges from rainforest, to eucalypt forest and woodlands. However they have become very adept at adapting to urban life and can be found in the gardens of suburban households where they readily feed on fruit, leaves and flowers.

Common brushtail possum

Trichosurus vulpecula (little fox-like hairy-tail)

The common brushtail possum's colour is mostly silver grey above, off-white to cream below. They have dark patches on their snout, light grey paws, large oval ears and a bushy tail with a naked undersurface.

This possum's natural habitat ranges from rainforest, to eucalypt forest and woodlands. However, like the ringtail possum above, they too have adapted to urban live. Their diet is more varied, consisting of leaves, flowers, fruit, seeds, insects and eggs.

Feathertail glider

Acrobates pygmaeus (dwarf acrobat)

The feathertail glider is the tiniest of the gliders, measuring only about 80mm, with a tail just as long to match. It is grey-brown above, white to cream below. A gliding membrane exists between the elbows and knees.

This glider can be found in rainforests, eucalypt forest and woodlands and in some urban parks and gardens. It feeds on nectar, pollen, eucalypt sap and insects.

Sugar glider

Petaurus breviceps (short-headed rope-dancer)

The sugar glider lives in a family group and can reach 10 years of age. It measures about 200mm with a tail just as long. They are blue-grey to brown-grey but paler below and have a distinct dark stripe from forehead to mid back. They have dark patches at the base of large, pointed ears.

This glider can be found in rainforests, and in eucalypt forest and woodland with shrubby undergrowth. It feeds on wattle gum, eucalypt sap, pollen, nectar and insects.

Greater glider

Petauroides volans (flying vaulter)

The greater glider is Australia's largest gliding possum and can make up to 100m glides from tree to tree. It measures about 450mm with a tail reaching 600mm long. They are usually a rich brown colour but can vary through various shades of grey, with cream below. Gliding membranes extend between elbows and ankles.

This glider can be found in the drier eucalypt forests and woodlands. It's sole diet is eucalypt leaves and is usually does not need to drink.

Yellow-bellied glider

Petaurus australis (southern rope-dancer)

The yellow-bellied glider lives in small groups dominated by one male. It can make up to 150m glides using its gliding membrane which extends from wrists to ankles. They are usually dark to pale grey above, with a dark stripe on the forehead and thighs. They are white to cream or yellow below.

This glider can be found only in eucalypt forest where it feeds on eucalypt sap, pollen, nectar and insects. It leaves a distinctive V-shaped notches in trees as it tries to get to the sap.

Text reference:

Jones, C & Parish, S, 2006, *Field Guide to Australian Mammals*, Steve Parish Publishing, Archerfield, Brisbane Images:

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