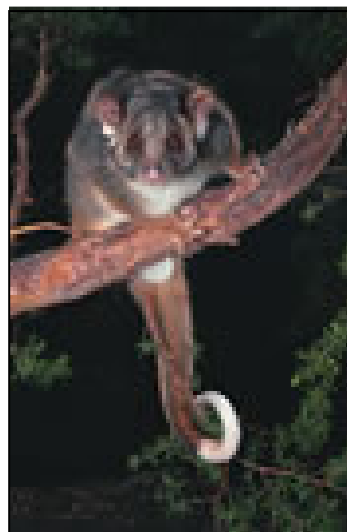


Ringtail Possum

Pseudocheirus peregrinus

What do they look like?

Ringtail possums have a long white tipped prehensile tail that can be used for carrying nesting materials as well as for gripping branches when climbing. It also has two thumbs on each foot, which help them to grip in the trees. The soles of their feet and the underside of their tail are hairless which also helps them grip onto the branches. The short fur is grey-brown on the back with white underneath. When immature, the ring-tailed possum is reddish brown. They weigh about 700 to 1100 grams. Its tails grows to about 30 to 35 cm long.



The ringtail Possum is a very social animal and has a soft, high pitched twittering call. It is a nocturnal animal and has very good night vision.

Where do they live?

The ring-tailed possum can be found in rainforests, shrubby woodlands, eucalypt forests, coastal shrub and suburban gardens. They are a tree dwelling animal which has adapted its behaviour to live in close association with humans and their gardens



and are able to make use of a wide range of introduced flowers and fruit. They can also live in the roofs of houses. The ringtail builds nests, called 'drays' amongst dense undergrowth and on tree hollows. They are usually shaped like a ball and about 30 cm in diameter. The male and female build the nest together, carrying grass, leaves and shredded bark curled up in their tails.

What do they eat?

The common ringtail possum is primarily a leaf eater and is one of only a few marsupials able to feed on eucalypt leaves. Ringtail possums also eat a wide variety of flowers (mainly eucalypt), fruits, nectar and shoots.

Breeding and Lifecycle

The Ring-tailed possum breeding season takes place from April to November. The female has four teats but normally only rears two young. When born, the joeys are hairless and are about the size of a jellybean, and leave the pouch when they are about



4 months of age, travelling on the mother's back. The young are fully weaned after 6 months of age. When the mother is feeding, the male carries the young on his back and cares for them. This is the only species of possum currently known where the male helps to care for the young.

Ringtail possums live in family groups that usually contain a male, one or two females and the young from the previous year. Family groups tend to nest and forage together until the young disperse. The young do not become adult until they are 18 months old and then they leave the group to form their own families.

Conservation threats

In the treetops, the ringtail possum is safe from predators, however, while on the ground they are prey to dingos, goannas, quolls and foxes. Ringtail possums are also under threat due to increased human activity in their native habitat. Power lines, cars and domestic animals account for many possum deaths.

While possums are protected fauna in NSW, people still trap them without a licence. This can lead to the possum being injured.

How you can make friends with possums

As possums are increasing in urban areas, many people end up sharing a roof with one or more possums. If you have a possum in your roof, you should provide an alternate home for your possum. This can be done by building a possum-house and placing it near your roof. A bright light in the roof for three days and nights will also help to deter the possums. When you are sure that your possum is not in the roof, block the entrance using chicken wire or timber.

