

Notes on the fauna of the mountains of south-eastern Queensland, pp 101-106 in Walkers Guide to S. E. Qld's Scenic Rim. Brisbane Bushwalkers Club, Brisbane.

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**WALKER'S GUIDE**  
**TO SE. QLD'S**  
**SCENIC RIM**

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# FAUNA

## NOTES ON THE FAUNA OF THE MOUNTAINS OF SOUTH-EASTERN QUEENSLAND

by

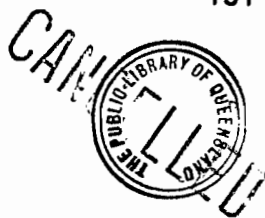
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### INTRODUCTION.

The fauna of an area comprises all members of the Animal Kingdom that occur there, both invertebrate and vertebrate. The fauna of south-eastern Queensland is particularly varied and interesting, firstly because this area offers a diversity of habitats, from dense rainforest to open heath, from permanently shaded gorges to exposed rock slopes, from swift cascading streams to reedy swamps; secondly because this is a region where the ranges of some species typical of our northern tropics, and of others typical of southern temperate areas overlap.

Much of the country that the bush-walker will traverse is in National Parks in which all animals, invertebrate as well as vertebrate, are totally protected. Much more is in State Forests which are Fauna Sanctuaries, wherein all birds and mammals are totally protected. Outside these, almost all native birds and mammals are protected, subject to declaration of open seasons, at which time a permit must be obtained before the species can be taken.

One or two, or even a small party, walking or sitting quietly, may see many animals which will flee or hide at the sound of heavy tramping or loud voices.



## INVERTEBRATES

The invertebrates are no less interesting than the vertebrates, but species are usually difficult for the non-expert to recognise. After heavy rain Giant Earthworms several feet long may emerge from the ground in the rainforest. Many small species of crayfish occur in the creeks and a spectacular species, the Giant Blue Crayfish, is sometimes seen in pools in streams running through rainforest. Giant cockroaches occur under bark and stones. Small primitive bugs, Peloridiids, are found in wet moss, usually in association with Antarctic Beech trees, only on the highest part of the Macpherson Range and Springbrook; related species occur in Tasmania, New Zealand, and Patagonia. Many beautiful moths will come to rest on a white sheet stretched in front of a bright light at night. At night, too, on damp mossy banks or under overhanging rocks, glow-worms may be seen; these are the larvae of a fly, whereas the fire-flies whose flashing lights are also seen in places are, in fact, beetles. A tremendous variety of spiders may be met with; most are harmless, but Red-back Spiders and venomous Funnel-web and Trap-door species do occur, and it is advisable to watch for them in selecting camp sites, in moving logs or stones, or in pulling bark for camp fires. In these locations scorpions and centipedes may also be found. Comparatively few cases of bites or stings from these animals occur, but it is well to be wary of them. Two animals much more likely to attack man are the rain-forest and fresh-water species of leeches, and the Scrub Tick, which is common in places, particularly in Spring, and can seriously affect a child if not removed promptly. At night in the rainforest it is interesting to watch the activities of the snails, the largest of which, the globular-shelled Giant Panda, may grow up to 4 inches across.

## FISH AND TORTOISES.

As this area is one of steeply running streams there are comparatively few places inhabited by fish. A species of Galaxia, a very slender fish sometimes called Mountain Trout, is found in very cold waters high up near the heads of streams, but it returns to the sea to breed. At lower levels many kinds of fish occur, Eels, Cat-fish, Gudgeons, etc.

The Long-necked and Saw-shelled (commonly called Short-necked) Tortoises are met with in many places where there is good water and fairly large pools and swamps, but are rarely seen in the headwaters of streams.

## LIZARDS.

Among lizards we find a whole gamut of species ranging from large goannas down to very small skinks. In the rainforest one may see Australia's largest skink, the Land Mullet, a robust shining black lizard up to 2 feet or more in length, sometimes met basking in a patch of sunlight, and the curious Leaf-tailed Gecko, with flattened head and flattened leaf-like tail. Geckos are common among the rocky outcrops of the Wyberba area where several species occur. Blue-tongues, Bearded Dragons, Water Dragons, Legless Lizards. and many small skinks occur in the areas to be traversed and at Cunningham's Gap there is a beautiful dragon with yellow body stripes and a bright red tail.

SNAKES.

The south-eastern highlands of Queensland are recognised as the northern limit of the Tiger Snake; among other notable venomous species in this area are the Black Snake, Brown Snake, and the Rough-scaled (or Clarence River Brown) Snake which has sometimes been mistaken for the harmless Fresh-water Snake, with some fatal bites resulting; the Death Adder also is found in some places. The Carpet Snake is common and many smaller species also occur.

BIRDS

Birds abound in wonderful variety. Throughout the mountains are heard the Pied Currawongs, which in some places will come close in search of food scraps, or even raid camp sites. Round some of the guest-houses or picnic sites near rainforest come, too, the glossy blue-black Satin Bower-Birds and golden-and-black Regent Bower-Birds (these are the males, the females are speckled greens and browns) and the Brush-Turkeys. whose great nest-mounds in the forest are more frequently seen than are the bowers of the Bower-Birds. Australia's famous mimics, the Lyrebirds, occur in the deep shaded and forested gullies; they are seldom seen but their clear loud calls carry far. The Wyberba district is the northern limit of the Superb Lyrebird whose very shrill whistle may be heard in the early morning or late evening. The Main Range and Macpherson Range are the haunts of the smaller Albert Lyrebird, which is restricted to northern New South Wales and southern Queensland; the rufous Scrub-Bird, another excellent mimic with similarly restricted distribution, is a small scratching ground bird with a bristly erect tail. Black and White Cockatoos, Rosellas and Lorikeets frequent the tree tops. Among the pigeons the most spectacular is the large Wompoo with its purple, green, and lavender plumage. Here and there in the for-

est areas fringing the scrub the ringing of colonies of Bell-Miners is heard. Above the rocky cliff-faces Wedge-tailed Eagles soar in the wind currents. The Whip-bird's call is heard in many places, and in the rainforest the plaintive wail of the Green Catbird. Scarlet Honeyeaters and Variegated and Redbacked Wrens frequent the grass-trees of the Glasshouses.

### MAMMALS.

Platypus inhabit some of the large pools in lower reaches of the streams, and Echidnas may be encountered even on the mountain tops. The Wyberba area is the only part of Queensland where Common Wombats occur; their burrows may be seen in the park, and one might, if very quiet, see the animals themselves in the early morning or late evening. In this area Grey Kangaroos, Wallaroos, and several species of wallabies and gliders are found; these last can be seen at dusk gliding into the native honey-suckle when it is in bloom. In rocky areas there are Rock Wallabies and in rainforested areas Pademelons and Scrub Wallabies, Tiger Cats, possums and gliders. In the eucalypt forests the Koala is occasionally seen, or heard at night. Bandicoots, Brush-tailed and Ring-tailed Possums, Native Cats, and Brush-tailed Phascogales occur in many places. Most of these marsupials and others not mentioned are of course very difficult to see since they are nocturnal and also very wary of man.

Where there is abundant fruit or blossom, the raucous squabbling cries of Flying-foxes resound at night; these animals retreat to a few favoured camps by day where they may be seen in enormous numbers (watch out for snakes if you visit one). Several species of bats inhabit caves, rock crevices, and hollow trees, and may be seen hawking for insects at night. Water-rats occur in the creeks and Tree-rats in the forests.

Dingos are not uncommon throughout the area and may be heard howling at night; foxes and hares also occur, but rabbits are not found here east of the Dividing Range.

May your visit to this fascinating area be rewarded by many glimpses of its varied and interesting fauna.

Acknowledgments. We have been considerably helped by Mesdames Harslett and Goebel, and by other naturalists. Two useful references are:

- Young, J. E., 1937. The Fauna of Lamington National Park. QD. Nat. 10: 50-59.
- Jack, N., 1941. Some Birds and Mammals of the Glasshouse Mountains District. QD. Nat. 11: 127-132.