

# TWIN CREEKS CONSERVATION RESERVE

## FAUNA SURVEY FEBRUARY 2021

### FRIENDS OF THE PORONGURUP RANGE



Bo Janmaat  
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**Survey dates:** February 9,10,11,12 and 13 2021. Starting time: 7am.

**Weather Conditions:** Mild summer morning temperatures 12-18C. Skies from fully covered to clear blue, some days a bit of rain, daytime temperatures in high twenties. New moon on February 12.

**About the traps:** Good rains in the week before the survey led to some traplines having water in the pitfalls: new traplines 7 and 8 could not be used. Traps were opened on Monday February 9 and closed on Saturday February 13. A total of 130 pitfall traps and 650 trap nights. Cage or Elliot traps were not used.

**Total hours:** There were 6 people involved in the survey and a total of 102 hours spent during these 6 days.

**Findings:** Some extraordinary finds were made besides the 'normal' catches like frogs, skinks and honey possums. Firstly there was a 3mm plant hopper bug with big claws at the front of its body from the family Dictyopharidae and later an even smaller sized 'Pebblebug' of the tribe Lipocallini. Both are from the same suborder Auchenorrhyncha (True Hoppers). On day 4 of the survey there was the catch of the year so far, a Telephone-pole beetle: *Beutellius rutherfordi*. This last beetle is endemic to Australia and has only 6 (?) sightings in Australia of which 2 at TCCR, one in December 2009 and one in February 2021. All these beetles elicited interesting reactions from around the world when put on the Internet. Bug lovers as well as scientists were asking if the beetles were kept, but all were released. Since the purpose of these surveys is to register what is living at TCCR and the license does not allow for euthanising and creating a collection. However the Western Australian Museum did request some specimens to be sent up for research which has been honoured.

An essential question is presenting itself: What to do with the location of the observations? Mention TCCR specifically or make mention of the area in a general way to protect the finds. Should TCCR remain open to the public? In the past orchids have disappeared. The *B. rutherfordi* will not be an endangered species because 3 of the sightings were in South Australia therefore its extent is very wide, but it will probably be added to the 'Priority Fauna Ranking' list in WA.

Contrary to previous surveys the Black gloved wallaby has not been spotted during this survey. It has always been hanging around in the same paddock but not this time. This paddock looked very dry.

Further study of trapped skinks lead to 3 species of skinks being observed for the first time: *Hemiergis gracilipes* (South-western mulch skink), *Ctenotus impar* (Odd striped *Ctenotus*) and the *Ctenotus gemmula* (Jewelled south west *Ctenotus*). Thank you Loxley for having a very good look at all the small differences between the skink families.

On the 'TCCR FAUNA COUNT OVERVIEW' sheet totals of animal species caught over the years can be compared. It's good to see the numbers of honey possums going up again.

**A big thank you** to Lucia Quearry, Garry Mulder, Loxley Fedec, Jacob Crowe and Judith McKinnon. We make an effective and inspiring survey team. Another big thank you to Julianne Waldock, Loxley Fedec and iNaturalist for identifications. Images by Bo Janmaat.



Common Garden Skink or Lowlands Earless Skink - *Hemiergis peronii*. It has small limbs so it is a slider not a runner. Brownish overall appearance with a bit of lateral orange. This species has 4 fingers and 4 toes. The *Hemiergis gracilipes* which was also caught during this survey looks the same but has 5 fingers and 5 toes.

A leaf curling spider - *Phonognatha graeffei*. Often you can see a curled leaf, in which the spider lives hanging in a web. How does it curl a leaf? On the ground and carry it up in its web or does it look for curled leaves?



A plant hopper of the family *Dictyopharidae*. Only 3mm but with massive claws relative to its size. The photograph doesn't show the front of the head rising up from the body.



Pebble bug, also of the family *Dictyopharidae* - tribe *Licopallini*. Approx. 2 mm.



Our -now famous- *Beutelius rutherfordi*. Just 10mm and the oldest living Australian beetle species! CSIRO calls it a 'living fossil'.



Western Banjo Frog or Pobblebonk- *Lymnodon dorsalis*. Normally green, grey and yellowish coloured but this one changed the green for blue.



Honey possum - *Tarsipes rostratus*.  
3 were found this time. During the survey it was decided not to take the honey possums to the Silvershed 'lab' but to measure them in the field; less stressful for the animals.



Honey possum escaping a photo opportunity.



A skink of the *Ctenotus* family. In the Southwest there are 4 species occurring. The *labillardieri*, *impar*, *cantifer* and this one: the *gemmula*. Many skinks have a coloured belly, often yellow, orange or sometimes almost red.



A wasp genus *Prionyx*. These wasps feed on grasshoppers and lay their eggs in the grasshopper's body, buried in an excavation. Sometimes they are seen pulling a dead grasshopper over the ground.



A very red short-horned grasshopper. Grasshoppers can be very colourful but in our area they are mostly green, grey or brown. We had never seen one as red as this one. About 20mm long.