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BRUSH-TAILED PHASCOGALE

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Phascogale tapoatafa tapoatafa*

IDENTIFICATION: Wambengers are squirrel-sized marsupial mice. They are a small, strongly arboreal dasyurid, grizzled grey above and cream to white below with large naked ears and a conspicuous black 'bottle-brush' tail. The claws are long and sharp and the hind feet have striated foot pads.

Head and body length 160–261 mm (males) 148–223 mm (females)

Tail length 175–234 mm (males) 160–226 mm (females)

Weight 0.18–0.31 kg (males) 0.11–0.21 kg (females)

HABITAT: Dry sclerophyll forests and open woodlands that contain hollow-bearing trees but a sparse ground cover. Records are less common from wetter forests.

DIET: Wambengers are mostly carnivorous. They hunt and kill small mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, spiders, and centipedes. They have been known to kill and eat chickens, and they generally avoid eating carrion. They can be arboreal and have been known to feed on the nectar of eucalyptus flowers.

STATUS: Lower Risk

INTERESTING FACTS:

- When alarmed, the Wambenger taps its forefeet repeatedly against the bark of a tree.
- Male Wambengers die after reaching sexual maturity at one year of age.
- Females may live to three years in the wild by which time their canine teeth are blunt and their incisors worn nearly to the gum.
- The Wambenger is an agile tree climber, and its hind foot can be rotated 180 degrees at the ankle to aid it with its climbing.

