

## ABORIGINE HUNTERS

(beetles larvae) found in the roots—as also in the limbs—of trees particularly those of the acacias, and this family of trees was certainly the Dalgite's favourite.

### THE SQUIRREL

This small animal, otherwise known as the Brush Tailed Warbenger (*Phascogale tapua tafa*) in the late eighties and early nineties of last century could often be seen climbing along the branches of trees during the night hours. It had a bushy tail, was very active and could move easily and rapidly from one limb to another.

At one homestead built of stone, a squirrel would find its way into the house, then run all around the top of the wall, no doubt looking for moths, cockroaches, etc., and showing not the slightest fear of human beings. Like other native animals, it disappeared in the late nineties of last century, but was noticed again for two years only in 1917-18 both being very wet years.

### SPOTTED NATIVE CAT

This Wild Cat (*Dasyurus geoffroyi fortis*) was more slender than the domestic cat, but very strong for its size. In the early days of settlement, it used to make raids on settlers' fowls, killing them by biting through the neck and sometimes severing the head. After doing this it would often drag the fowl away and devour it in thick bush.

Being a good climber, on moonlit nights, the cat could sometimes be seen up a tree, but it was a shy marauder and had the habit of moving around a limb to avoid being detected. When killed and skinned it always appeared very fat, the skin being particularly greasy.

In its pouch it carried up to seven young which remained there for about seven weeks. After that the young would appear outside, hanging on the mother's teats and being dragged about wherever she went, until they were old enough to fend for themselves.

The native cat is still found further south in the jarrah country.

### THE ECHIDNA

The Echidna or Spiny ant eater (*Tachyglossus*) generally called porcupine with its covering of long, sharp, strong quills, is and always has been found in the Eastern Wheatbelt inhabiting timber country.

( 92 )

# EASTERN WHEATBELT WILDLIFE

Experiences of a W.A. Naturalist

By BRUCE W. LEAKE

1962

OSWALD LIBRARY  
FISHBURN  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
18 1973

PERTH

Printed by Docket Book Co. (Aust.)

FRANCIS & TAYLOR