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BURROWS

Bare-nosed wombat burrows

One of the earliest and most interesting studies of wombats and their burrows was made in 1960 by a schoolboy, Peter Nicholson, who was then a student at Timbertop, the country branch of Geelong Grammar School. This school is situated in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range in north-eastern Victoria, and it was in these forested hills, between 500 metres and 1300 metres above sea-level, that Nicholson made his subterranean explorations of bare-nosed wombat burrows. Armed with a torch, a mattock and spade, and half a kerosene tin for his booty, he crawled along the narrow tunnels, sieving the floor dirt to remove any bones he found there. He eventually amassed enough to assemble a complete wombat skeleton.

Nicholson also mapped several burrows by driving pegs into their floors and stretching cords between the pegs. He drew a plan of one of the larger burrows he explored, and he also made many interesting observations of the wombats themselves. The written account of his wombat study, which was entered for a students' science competition and later published