

# Appendix B: Directory

## PLANNING YOUR TRIP

High on any wildlife enthusiast's list would be to see several of the groups that make Australia's mammal fauna so distinctive, such as the Platypus, Koala, various kangaroos and Common Wombat (boxed texts list good sites for these sought-after species in each state or territory). Most of these iconic species are readily seen in the appropriate habitat in south-eastern Australia a short distance from, or even within, large cities such as Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. Most international travellers will end up in these major centres at some point and all have good sites for watching mammals (and other wildlife) only a few hours' drive away.

Seeing more than a few common species will require a bit of planning because the vast majority of Australian mammals are nocturnal or crepuscular. If your goal is to see as many mammals as possible, the main areas to concentrate on are north Qld (especially the Wet Tropics and Iron Range area of Cape York Peninsula), the island state of Tas, south-western Australia and the Top End of the NT; if time and money are no object, then north-western Australia could be added to this list. Concentrating on these sites will ensure you the greatest number and variety of species. If you have time to visit only one or two sites, then make sure you take in either the Wet Tropics or Tas - ideally both. They are a long way apart, but by driving the eastern seaboard you can also visit many other good sites where particular species can be seen (this would be feasible over, say, 3-4 weeks, and even more so if you fly Cairns-Brisbane-Sydney or Melbourne-Tas and hire a vehicle at each centre to visit local sites).

Travel further afield from these main concentrations of mammals is expensive, time-consuming and will yield proportionally fewer results (however, if you also wish to see other wildlife, such as birds, or visit scenic sites, many other areas are *definitely* worth visiting). Many of the most common species have a wide distribution and travelling to remote corners, such as the Pilbara, will need a lot of extra time and money with no guarantee of seeing extra species unless you are part of a survey or scientific expedition.

A plethora of cruise operators on the east and west coasts gear up for the annual Humpback Whale migration (June-October), and numerous dolphin-watching trips operate from various ports; several are listed later in this chapter. Otherwise, pelagic birding trips are a good way to watch cetaceans in Australian waters; Chapter 10 describes the various options, most of which run monthly more or less year-round, subject to weather conditions.