

Western ringtail possum (ngwayir)

Activity book



[Suggested ages: 7-12]

WHICH POSSUM IS IT?

The south coast is home to two large possum species. Draw lines to match the description with the correct species. You may need to do some research to find the right answers!

Grey fur

Large, pointy ears

Bushy tail

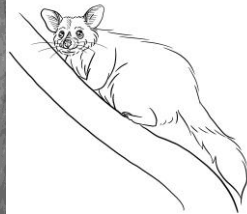
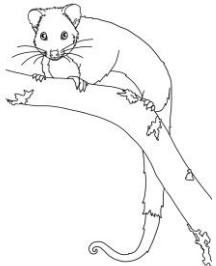
Small, round ears

Slim tail

Larger
(1.3-1.9kg)

Smaller
(0.8-1.2kg)

Brown fur



Both species have a white chest and a long tail. Western ringtail possums always have a white tail tip, and brushtail possums sometimes do.

COLOURING IN



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you find 10 differences between the top and the bottom drawing? Circle each difference.



Clarissa Bairstow



Clarissa Bairstow

WORD SEARCH

Can you find all the words listed below inside the word search box? Do you know what each word means? If not, ask an adult to help you find out.

Peppermint

Endemic

Possum

Tree

Sheoak

Endangered

Ngwayir

Joey

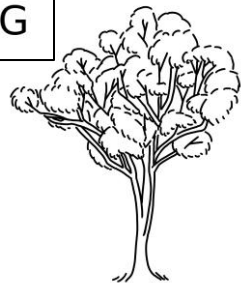
Jarrah

Marsupial

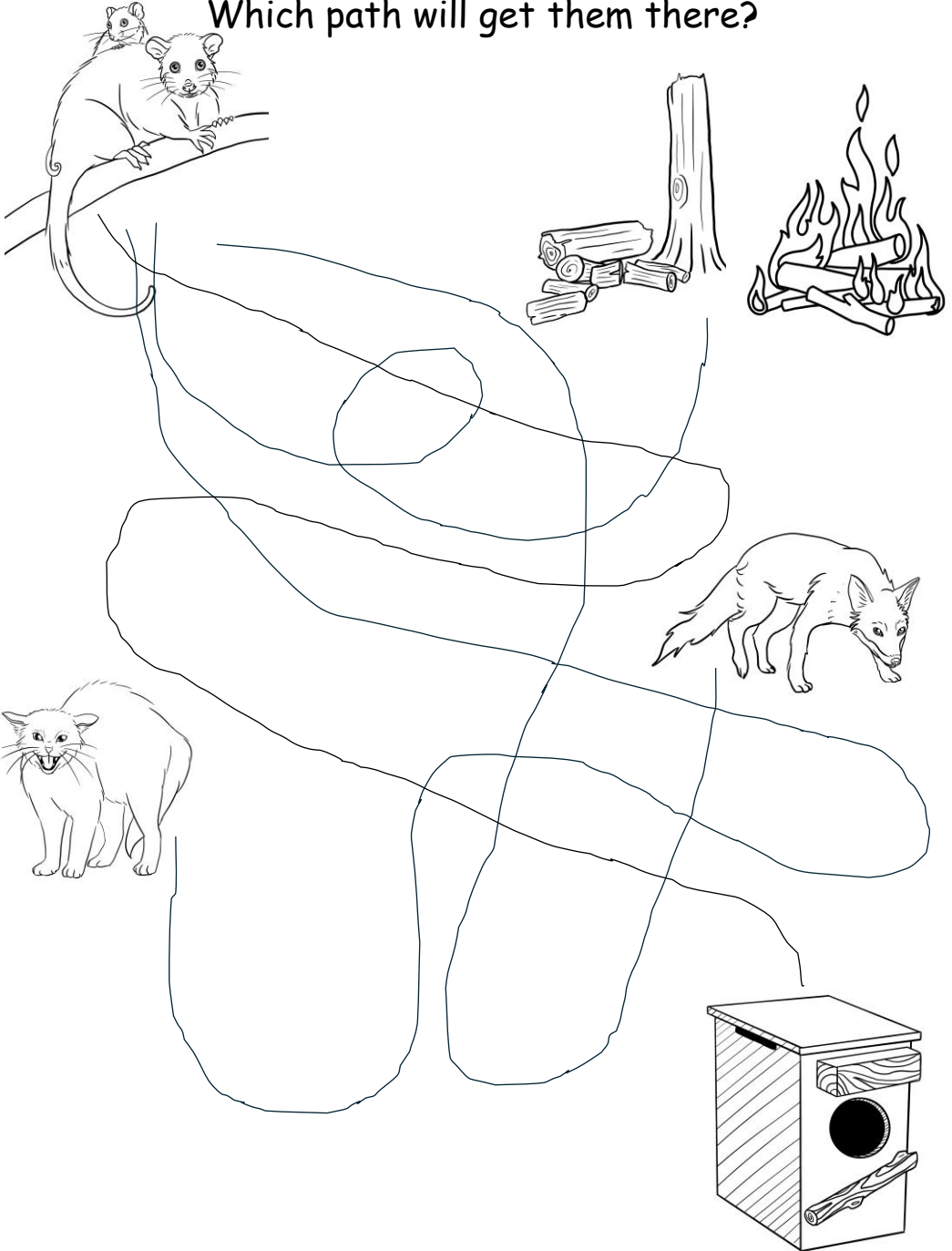
Arboreal

Mammal

C	Y	N	F	S	E	N	D	E	M	I	C	C	I	P
A	W	T	N	G	W	A	Y	I	R	U	F	P	N	E
J	R	L	T	N	G	K	O	J	A	R	R	A	H	P
G	N	B	U	M	F	C	J	Z	Z	F	H	A	A	P
L	P	O	O	N	I	N	T	B	J	O	W	B	X	E
M	O	Q	M	R	K	X	R	H	B	S	E	N	O	R
P	A	Z	V	A	E	V	L	R	Z	H	N	R	A	M
A	W	R	V	P	M	A	Y	V	F	E	D	G	E	I
N	Z	P	S	V	J	M	L	U	K	O	A	K	J	N
K	T	G	O	U	L	Z	A	O	S	A	N	X	O	T
P	H	T	A	S	P	A	O	L	J	K	G	T	E	Z
Y	I	R	D	R	S	I	W	N	G	T	E	O	Y	J
F	Q	E	O	B	F	U	A	Z	B	I	R	C	O	T
X	O	E	Y	Z	E	I	M	L	A	Z	E	A	N	G
Y	C	S	D	X	Q	F	A	U	L	R	D	G	R	G

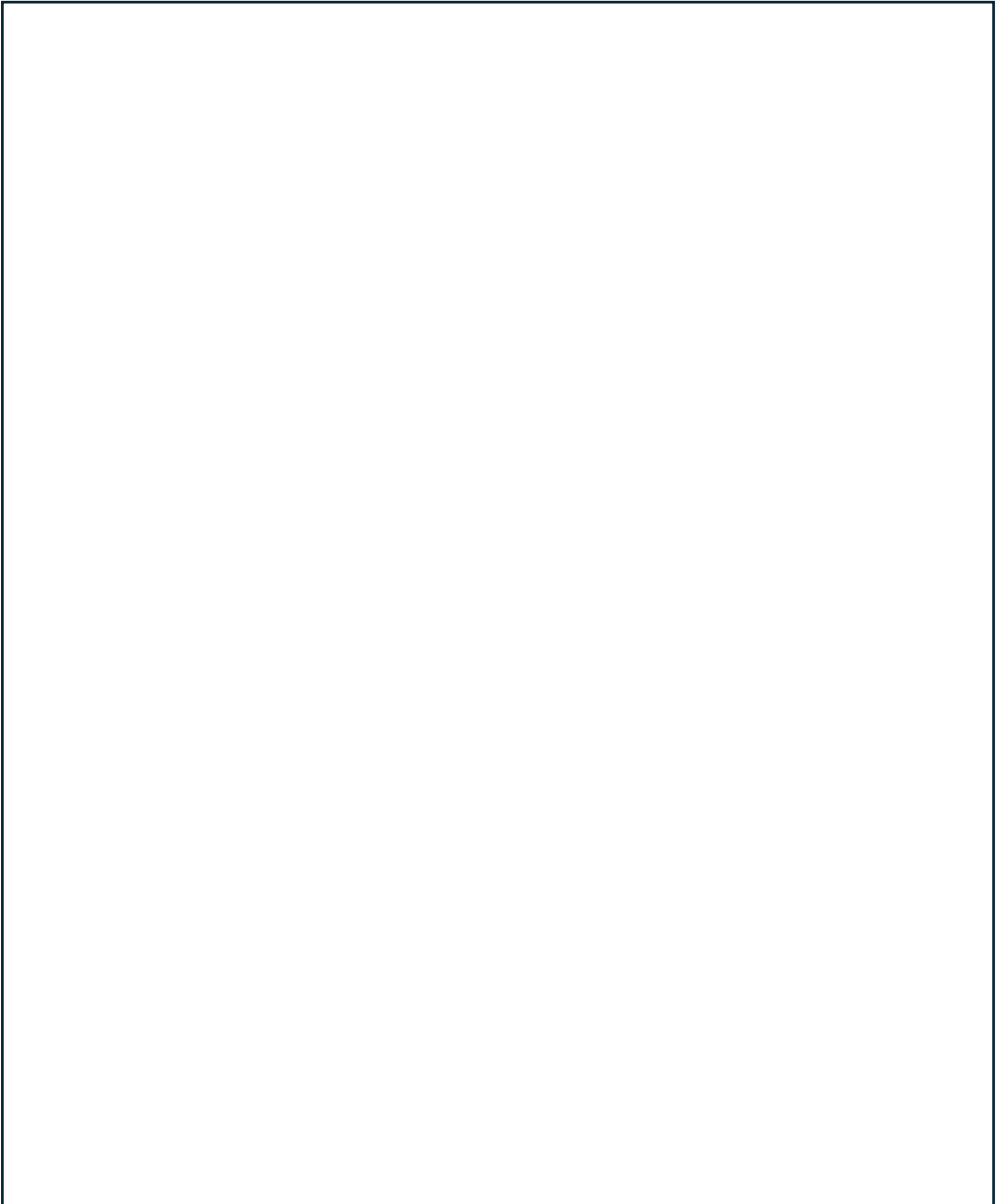


Can you help this western ringtail possum and her joey get safely home to their nest box?
Which path will get them there?



DRAW A POSSUM

Try drawing your own western ringtail possum in the box below. Think about what habitat features (food, shelter) it might need.



MAKE A DREY

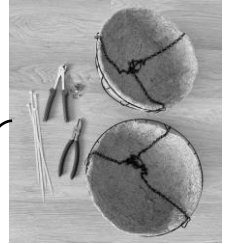
Western ringtail possums sometimes sleep in 'dreys' during the day - a type of nest that the possums build. You can help them by building a drey to put in your garden. Ask an adult to help you.

Materials:

- 2x hanging wire baskets with coconut fibre insert
- Cable ties (at least 2)
- Wire clips or more cable ties
- Wire cutters
- Pliers (if using wire clips)
- Sharp scissors

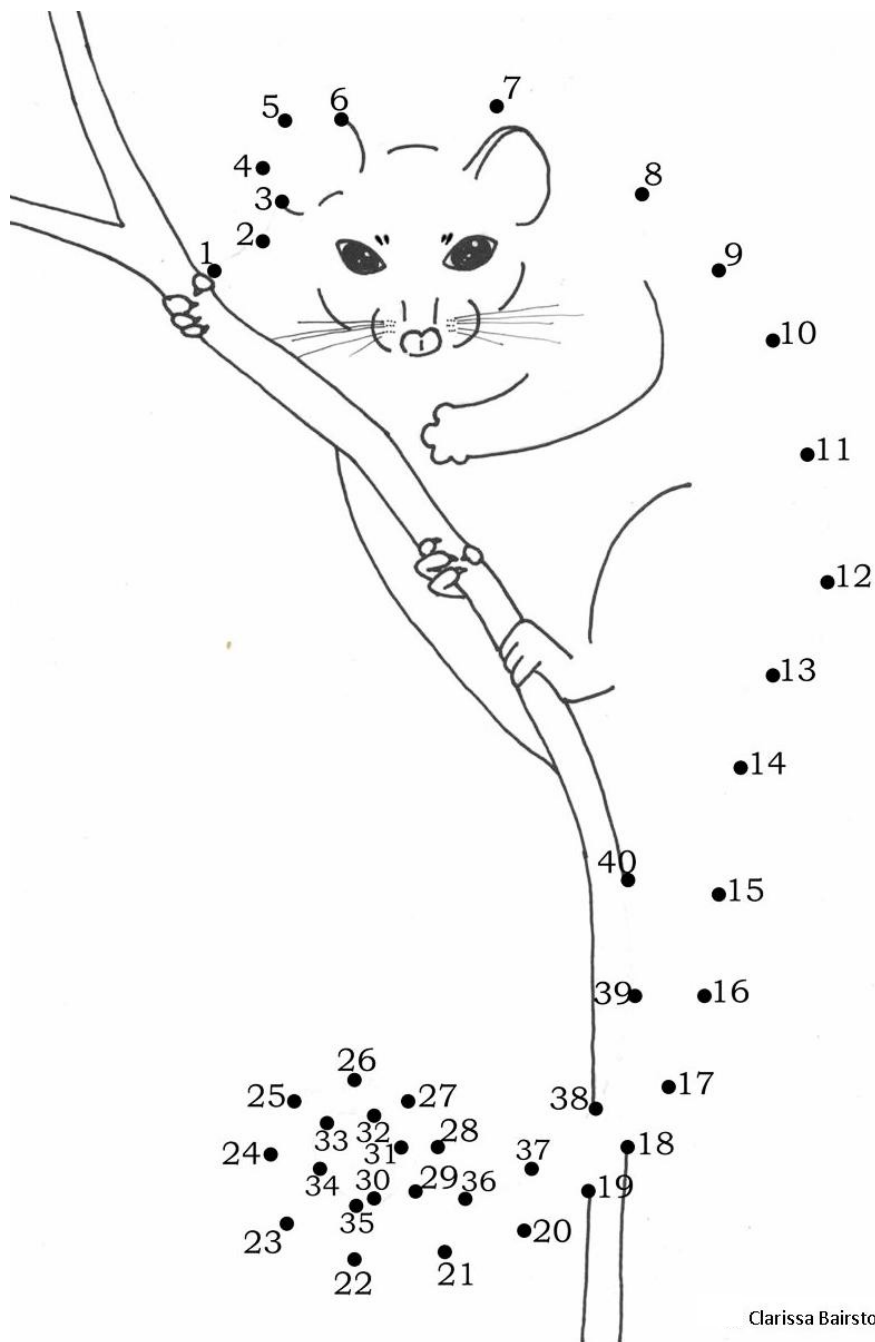
Method:

- 1) Remove the wire chain from both baskets.
- 2) Remove a section of wire to create an entry point in one basket. Then, cut a small entry flap in the coconut fibre. Flip the flap upwards and secure it with cable ties. This makes the entry more stable if a possum decides to climb on top!
- 3) Join the two baskets together to make a sphere. Use wire clips or cable ties to secure them. Clip the ends off any cable ties.
- 4) Re-attach a wire chain to the sphere so that can hang.
- 5) All done! Hang your drey in a shady spot. Choose a tree that is surrounded by other trees.



JOIN THE DOTS

Join the dots in order (1-40) to reveal a western ringtail possum.



GO ON A POSSUM SEARCH

Ask an adult to take you on an adventure, looking for signs that possums have visited.

Find an area with some trees - this could be your backyard, or a nearby patch of bush.

Remember to wear sun-smart and bush safe clothes - long pants, long sleeves, closed in shoes, a hat and sunscreen. Take some water with you.

As you walk through the bush, look for signs that possums have visited:

- Possum scats (that's what ecologists call poo!)
- Scratches on the bark of a tree, where a possum might have climbed up
- A drey in the canopy of a tree

If you think you've found somewhere that possums have visited, ask an adult if you can return there at night time to try and spot a possum. Take a torch and shine it in the canopy. Possums are easy to spot because their eyes shine brightly in the torch light. If you spot one, watch them for a few moments before leaving them to continue their night.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

You might need to do some research to find some of the answers (hint—some can be found elsewhere in this book!).

1. Do western ringtail possums live mainly in trees (arboreal) or on the ground (terrestrial)?

2. What is the name for a nest made by a western ringtail possum?

3. What are some of the reasons that western ringtail possums have become Critically Endangered?

4. What is the Noongar name for the western ringtail possum?

5. When a western ringtail possum joey (baby) is born, where does it go?

6. Are possums active during the day (diurnal) or at night (nocturnal)?

The western ringtail possum is a Critically Endangered marsupial, weighing around 0.8–1.3kg. They are predominantly arboreal, meaning they live in trees. Albany represents one of their last remaining strongholds. Their main threats are predation by foxes and feral cats, habitat loss and fragmentation, altered fire regimes and climate change. Their local Noongar name is 'ngwayir' (pronounced n-wa-yer).



An answer booklet can be found on the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group website: ohcg.org.au

*Spot the Difference and Join the Dots drawings by Clarissa Bairstow.
All other drawings by Eve Young (Eve Young Art).
Western ringtail possum photo by James Lamb.
Brushtail possum photo by Hannah Bannister.
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Parental guidance is required for the practical activities suggested in this booklet.

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The Climate Resilient Conservation of Urban Western Ringtail Possums project is a collaboration between a number of organisations:

