

# CONTENTS

Foreword . . . . .	.iii
Acknowledgements . . . . .	vii
1 The carnivorous marsupials . . . . .	1
What are marsupials? . . . . .	1
What makes a marsupial ‘carnivorous’? . . . . .	3
Diversity: how many carnivorous marsupials are there? . . . . .	4
2 Guide to carnivorous marsupials . . . . .	7
Australian fauna (two orders, three families, 15 genera, 61 endemic species) . . . . .	7
New Guinean fauna (1 order, 1 family, 6 genera, 15 endemic species) . . . . .	26
American fauna (3 orders, 3 families, 13 genera, 58 endemic species) . . . . .	31
‘Nearly’ carnivorous marsupials . . . . .	45
3 Biogeography . . . . .	47
Where are carnivorous marsupials found and how did they get there? . . . . .	47
4 Relationships . . . . .	57
General morphology: body plans of carnivorous mammals . . . . .	57
What is a ‘species’, and how do you tell one from another? . . . . .	60
Systematics . . . . .	62
5 Extinct fauna . . . . .	75
Fossil carnivorous marsupials and their ecology . . . . .	75
Evolutionary patterns: I. From ancestral forms to the Pleistocene . . . . .	84
Evolutionary patterns: II. From Pleistocene megafauna extinctions to the present day . . . . .	85
6 The mammal hunters: discovery of carnivorous marsupials . . . . .	89
Early European discoveries of carnivorous marsupials . . . . .	89
Taxonomy of carnivorous marsupials: the pre-eminence of Oldfield Thomas . . . . .	93
Strangers in strange lands: other hunter–collectors of carnivorous marsupials . . . . .	103
Indigenous relationships with carnivorous marsupials . . . . .	115
7 Habitats and distributions . . . . .	121
Species’ distributions and habitat preferences . . . . .	121
Specialists . . . . .	122
Generalists . . . . .	124
Detective work: how can we deduce habitat preferences? . . . . .	130

	Big picture patterns: above the species level . . . . .	138
8	Habits: secret lives . . . . .	147
	Specialists. . . . .	147
	Generalists . . . . .	149
9	Diets and eating habits . . . . .	169
	Diets: moving feasts. . . . .	169
	Foraging behaviour: ambush versus search and destroy . . . . .	177
	Processing the prey: teeth and other morphological adaptations . . . . .	182
	Population- and community-level effects of carnivorous marsupials . . . . .	183
10	Reproduction and life histories . . . . .	189
	Reproduction: the basics . . . . .	189
	Life histories. . . . .	193
	Big-bang theories. . . . .	208
11	Conservation . . . . .	213
	Conservation in the Anthropocene. . . . .	213
	Assessing conservation status . . . . .	215
	Improving conservation status. . . . .	226
	What can you do? . . . . .	234
	Appendix: List of carnivorous marsupial species . . . . .	239
	References . . . . .	243
	Index . . . . .	301