



A Fragile Balance: The Extraordinary Story of Australian Marsupials

By Christopher Dickman

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Marsupials are nearly synonymous with Australia. Although one of these enigmatic pouched mammals—the opossum—inhabits the United States and another 80 or so thrive in South America, some 220 species are confined to the Australasian region. In Australia, marsupials are the most diverse and dominant indigenous species, from the wallaby and the wombat to the kangaroo and koala.

The extraordinary story of these fascinating animals, *A Fragile Balance* provides the most up-to-date information on marsupials without losing sight of the unique set of circumstances that led them to prevalence Down Under. Covering all marsupial species in Australia, the book uses an evolutionary framework to interpret the marsupial's biological traits. Each species account includes a basic biological description, a range map, and a measure of conservation status. The accounts are bounded by general chapters on biology, natural history, cultural history, and conservation. *A Fragile Balance* is the first book to emphasize interactions between and among marsupials, as well as between humans and marsupials.

Combining the expertise of renowned biologist Christopher Dickman with the artistic talents of illustrator Rosemary Woodford Ganf, *A Fragile Balance* will be a much celebrated reference for mammalogists worldwide, as well as for readers interested in Australian natural and cultural history.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Many drawings and far more words have been devoted to Australian mammals; this book surpasses them all. The drawings, nay the art, of Ganf, is breathtaking. Every hair, every spot of mold on a leaf, every piece of bark, is drawn in exquisite detail. The text . . . is authoritative and engaging. . . . Don't miss the opportunity to bound to a bookstore, glide to the Internet, or jump on the opportunity to spend hours with this book."

(*Choice*)

"The author is one of the world's leading marsupilogists, and he draws deeply on his own three decades of research experience as he leads us through the evolution, systematics, ecology, ethology, natural history, and conservation of Australian marsupials. . . . A superb all-round introduction for any researcher who wants to know more about marsupials. . . . Ganf's breathtaking portraits of marsupials have a kind of transcendent quality that almost suggests an inherent vulnerability, in corroboration of the book's title."

(Marcel Cardillo *Quarterly Review of Biology*)

About the Author

Christopher Dickens is professor in the school of biological sciences at the University of Sydney.

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