



MEET YOUR NOCTURNAL NEIGHBOUR: THE NORTHERN BRUSHTAIL POSSUM



Meet the northern brushtail possum

You may have noticed more possums around lately, in your backyard, crossing the road at night, or even in your roof.

This isn't a coincidence.

The northern brushtail possum, a threatened Top End species, is being pushed closer to people and urban areas as its natural habitat shrinks and becomes fragmented.

Living with possums

As our landscapes change, possums and people are increasingly sharing the same spaces.

Possums sometimes enter roofs and sheds because these places offer shelter.

By making small changes around our homes and backyards, we can help ensure this important neighbour remains part of Greater Darwin's wildlife.



SMALL ACTIONS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

- Plant native trees and shrubs to provide food and shelter and increase connectivity between trees
- Keep dogs and cats indoors at night to protect wildlife
- Do not feed possums human food - it can make them sick
- Cover fruit and vegetables in your garden to prevent possums from eating them
- Report sick or injured possums to a wildlife care group
- Install a possum bridge between trees

THERE'S A POSSUM IN MY ROOF!

- **Do not trap or relocate it** - it's illegal, and relocated possums rarely survive
- Wait until the possum leaves at night, then **seal the entry point**
- **Install a nest box** nearby to provide an alternative shelter
- **Trim overhanging branches** that allow access to the roof
- **Contact a professional** wildlife handler if needed

Working together to protect
the northern brushtail possum



Australian Government

This project is funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and is delivered by Territory Natural Resource Management, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.





Why possums are at risk?

Northern brushtail possums rely on woodlands with connected tree canopies and tree hollows for shelter and food.

When the tree canopy is reduced, possums are forced to spend more time on the ground, where they are more vulnerable to predators and vehicles.

Smaller and more crowded habitat patches also mean less food, shelter and nesting sites, which affects their health and survival.

Key threats to possums include:

- Clearing and fragmentation of woodlands
- Fires that destroy hollow trees and food sources
- Invasive grasses, such as gamba grass, that make fires hotter and more destructive
- Habitat damage caused by feral pigs, cattle and buffalo
- Predation by cats and dogs
- Road traffic and disease

Protecting possums means protecting the woodlands that many species depend on.

GET IN TOUCH

For more information, contact:

Abby Johnson

abby.johnson@territorynrm.org.au

08 8942 8300

DID YOU KNOW?

The northern brushtail possum is a threatened Top End species, protected by law as its population is declining.

- **Scientific name:**
Trichosurus vulpecula arnhemensis
- **Found only** in the **Top End** of the **Northern Territory** and parts of **Western Australia**
- Unique subspecies adapted to tropical conditions—with **shorter fur and a less bushy tail** than its southern relatives.
- **Omnivorous** (eats plants and small animals)
- Mostly **solitary and territorial**
- Females **raise one joey at a time** (in pouch for 4–5 months)

WHY POSSUMS MATTER

Northern brushtail possums play a vital role in healthy ecosystems:

- Pollinate native plants
- Disperse seeds and support forest regeneration
- Provide food for native predators like owls and snakes
- Culturally important to many Top End communities



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