

# Stagwatching with the Australian National University

## What is stagwatching?

Stagwatching involves quietly watching possums emerging from habitat trees with hollows ("stags") at dusk.

## What might I see?

In the spectacular tall Mountain Ash forests, possible possums include Greater Gliders, Sugar Gliders, Feathertail Gliders, Yellow Bellied Gliders, Leadbeater's Possum, Mountain Brushtail Possum, large forest owls, small forest bats and ground mammals.

## What is the possum data used for?

The data you collect on the night will become part of a 30 year long term monitoring program, used to understand possum biology and population trends which then informs government.



## What is involved and how does it work?

Volunteers will meet ANU field ecologists, Dave and Lachie (usually in Healesville or Yarra Junction). We will drive you out to one of our research sites, typically an hour drive. We will give you descriptions of the possums you may see, then take you into the forest (never more than 100m from a road, and some people can watch from the road) and give you a tree to watch. Each person has their own tree. You then observe what possums exit from your stag across the hour. After the stagwatch, we often do a short spotlight walk along the road.

## What do I bring?

You will be sitting in the forest, possibly on a log, possibly on the ground. There will be mosquitoes (cover up with clothing), it may get cold (some sites are above 1000m altitude). The more comfortable you are, the more enjoyable your stagwatching experience will be.

- Long pants/overpants\*
- Long sleeve shirt
- Boots or gumboots
- Warm jumper / coat\*
- Torch\*
- Beanie\*
- Gloves\*
- Insect repellent\*
- Mat to sit on\*
- Water/quiet snacks\*
- Binoculars\*

\* = Optional, but will make watch more comfy. Coat, gloves, overpants are more for mozzie protection than for warmth.

We will usually have insect repellent and snacks and tea/coffee kit with us for afterwards.

## Cancellation of stagwatches

It is critical we know you are coming and have your contact details. Stagwatches can be called off due to rain, fire danger, too windy or other reasons. If we don't know if you are coming, we cannot let you know if it's cancelled. We usually try to make the call at minimum 4 hours before scheduled meeting time.

## Site selection – where will we go?

We have sites in Marysville, Toolangi, Maroondah, O'Shannassy, Upper Yarra and Powelltown. Because we need one person for every tree, and our sites have various numbers of trees, it is often not possible to predict exactly which site we will be going to until everyone arrives and we get final numbers. We have a list of sites we need to get done each year, they will include a mix of burnt/unburnt, old/young, water catchments/State forest, far and near sites. We can accommodate volunteer needs (time constraints or 'pick us up along the way') to a limited extent.