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Annotated records of the Feathertail Glider *Acrobates pygmaeus* from *The Victorian Naturalist*

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Abstract

The Victorian Naturalist was surveyed for past records of the Feathertail Glider *Acrobates pygmaeus*. We document many important records of their occurrence, as well as accounts on their feeding and behaviour. This report should be useful to researchers seeking primary source observations of this species. (*The Victorian Naturalist* 123 (3), 2006, 157-165)

Introduction

The Feathertail Glider *Acrobates pygmaeus* (family Acrobatidae) is a small (10-14 g) cryptic marsupial, which has a wide distribution in eastern Australia from far northern Queensland (QLD), through New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria (VIC) to the south-east of South Australia (SA) (Strahan 1995; Lindenmayer 2002; Goldingay and Jackson 2004). In Victoria the species is currently considered 'Secure' (Henry 1995) and/or 'Common' (van der Ree *et al.* 2004). However, documenting historical and more recent records of their occurrence in Victoria and elsewhere will be important for assessment of their ecology and conservation. To this end, this paper presents an annotated chronology of Feathertail Glider records in *The Victorian Naturalist* (1884-2005).

Feathertail Glider records from *The Victorian Naturalist*

In Volume 1 of *The Victorian Naturalist*, the 'Opossum Mouse' *Petaurus pygmeus* (= *A. pygmaeus*) was noted as part of the Victorian mammalian fauna (Forbes Leith and Lucas 1884). Feathertail Glider specimens were subsequently exhibited at numerous early meetings of the Club, including 'a case with opossum mice' [= *A. pygmaeus*] by TA Forbes Leith on 29 April 1885 (see Cresswell 1885); a 'flying mouse from Langi Kal Kal, Victoria' by Mary Simson on 10 June 1885 (Anon 1885); a 'pair of flying mice' by FGA Barnard of Kew, Victoria on 28 April 1887, 28-29 May 1896, 22-23 September 1908, 8 September 1913 and 10 June 1918

(Anon 1887; Anon 1896a; Anon 1908; Anon 1913; Anon 1918); and 'specimens of the flying opossum mouse' by Mr C French on 9 July 1888 (Anon 1888). On 13 July 1896, JA Kershaw exhibited a Feathertail Glider 'with three young, taken from nest composed of gum leaves under the bark of large eucalypt, South Gippsland' (Anon 1896b). On 16 January 1905, EB Nicholls exhibited a specimen of the 'Pigmy Flying-Mouse' captured at 'Olinda Creek, South Wandin' (Anon 1905). On 11 August 1930, JA Kershaw, then Director of the National Museum of Victoria, exhibited a 'Pigmy Flying Phalanger' (Anon 1930) and this was possibly the same specimen earlier exhibited by him in 1896 (see above).

At Mount Disappointment, Barnard (1911) noted that a 'flying mouse' was captured at Jack's Creek aqueduct. This animal was caught as it ran into a 'grass tussock' and forwarded to the National Museum of Victoria (now Museum Victoria). The collection time was noted as 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and this was thought unusual on account of its nocturnal habits. When the report was read to a meeting of the Club on 13 March 1911, EB Nicholls said that it was 3 o'clock in the afternoon when he captured his specimen (Anon 1911).

Mathews and Iredale (1912) reviewed a rare book written by George Perry (1811) and mention was made that this work included information on the Feathertail Glider. A copy of this book we examined,

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revealed an interesting illustration of this species (Fig. 1), drawn from a specimen reportedly belonging to a Mr Bullock. It was stated that this species lives 'in the trees and forests of Botany Bay and its neighbourhood' (Perry 1811).

Dr Edmund Hobson (1814 to 1848) took field notes in the forests between Melbourne and Arthurs Seat, and in 1837 he noted that 'The *Petaurus pigmaeus* [= *A. pygmaeus*] lives upon the gum of the two kinds of mimosa, *mim. decurrens* and *viridis*' (Kenyon 1930). The first plant is synonymous with the Green Wattle (*Acacia decurrens*), the second plant species is unknown. Hobson also noted that 'The movements of this little creature are so rapid that they give the impression of a mere spectre. By means of the skin stretched betwixt the hind and fore legs, they are enabled to reach the lower branches of trees some 18 or 20 feet distant' (see Kenyon 1930).

In 1926, David Orchard of Kinglake East reported that his domestic cat brought home alive a 'pigmy flying squirrel or phalanger', that died soon afterwards (Orchard 1926). He stated that they can be 'found in central Victoria along mountain creeks' but are 'very rare'. He also stated that:

Tree fellers for saw mills are the people who mostly find them in bringing down some giant tree having a dry hollow somewhere on its side. Domestic cats also bring them to the country home occasionally, just as they bring in the ordinary mouse in the cities. I have received several specimens in that way. When the cats have kittens to feed they usually bring these flying mice home alive for the kittens to play with before killing and eating them.

David Fleay (1932) provided an article and photographs pertaining to the 'Pigmy Flying Possum'. A number of distribution records were detailed as well as some observations on the captive diet, behaviour and vocalisations of this species. A friend of Fleay's 'had seen large numbers' of Feathertail Gliders in an area of scrub in the Bendoc district (Fleay 1932). According to his (unnamed) friend 'there were hundreds' within a single area of bush, which led Fleay and a fellow-enthusiast to search the locality sometime afterwards. Clearing of the site was reportedly

well advanced when Fleay arrived. Several trees were felled in an effort to capture Feathertail Gliders, but none was found. Only some 'empty nests' were discovered. However, at this site a week later, a large rotten tree came down, three Feathertails were seen, one of which was captured (Fleay 1933). Another was seen while spotlighting at a locality 'some miles distant' and also after felling some nearby trees the next day. Here, one was captured (a female with two pouch young) and was possibly the same animal that was spotlighted the previous night. Unfortunately, the animals captured by Fleay at Bendoc did not survive long in captivity.

Feathertail Gliders seem 'to inhabit a variety of forest country, though it is most at home in the thick timber typified by Gippsland' (Fleay 1932). Also referred to were two juvenile male animals sent to Fleay from the 'red gum country near Mathoura', NSW. Only one of these survived, and was named 'Erastus' and lived for 'nearly three years', despite some lucky escapes from the jaws of Fleay's dog and the taloned-feet of a captive Boobook Owl. A female adult Feathertail Glider (with three young) captured near Warburton was also sent to Fleay and all were reported to be:

perfectly healthy, with the exception of one of the immature females, which had a wound on the head, due to the bite of a dog which discovered the [Feathertail Glider] when the home tree fell. However, the mother refused to settle down. She declined food, and within a week had passed away...The [Feathertail Glider] with the tooth-marked head became very sickly two months after its arrival...Finally, after a week of continued torpidity, without touching a morsel of food, it died.

Other records provided by Fleay (1932) included the finding of breeding animals in the 'Ballarat district' and a family of 'several immature specimens discovered at a spot near Arthur's Creek', in 1931. Fleay (1933) noted the 'Pigmy Phalanger (*Acrobates pygmaeus*)' as resident in the Otway region and described its vocalisations as a slow hissing cry. Fleay (1935) reported that the 'Pigmy Flying Phalanger' is represented in the native fauna section of the Melbourne Zoological Gardens.



Fig. 1. Feathertail Glider from Perry's *Arcana* (1811)

Miss CC Currie reported that the 'Pigmy Flying Mouse' has been found at Lardner (Anon 1933); and JM Bocking from the Blue Mountains, NSW, reported that her neighbour's cat brought in a 'Pigmy Feather-tail, which unfortunately, did not live long in captivity' (Bocking 1939).

Six specimens of the Feathertail Glider from the 1930s and 40s are in the Donald Thomson Collection (DTC) in Museum Victoria (Dixon and Huxley 1989). They include a male collected at Ferntree Gully on 25 July 1930 (DTC 14 204; skin). Thomson noted that this species is 'apparently rare or little known in [this] district, inquiries failed to bring any others and it was the first the finder, a local resident, had ever seen there. Head 25 mm, Tongue 23 mm, Wt. 13.0 g'. A spirit specimen (DTC 36 413; male) collected by E. Collins is recorded for 20 August 1943 from Romsey, Monument Creek, via Woodend. Three live specimens (one male and two females) from Erica, Gippsland were sent to Thomson by 'Dyer, a Forest Officer' after a forest fire. The male (DTC 35 409; spirit) was captured on 9 May 1945, died 24 May 1946. One female (DTC 33 398; spirit) died soon after arrival; the second female (DTC 34 399) thrived for some months and then died. A sixth specimen in the Thomson Collection at Museum Victoria (DTC 37 416; spirit; female with 4 young), also from Erica, was collected on 16 September 1947 by 'Mr Ryan'. Thomson's detailed notes on three

captive Feathertail Gliders (later to become DTC 35 409, 33 398, and 34 399) were published by Dixon and Huxley (1989). These contain a wealth of behavioural and feeding observations on captive specimens recorded between 12 May and 30 September 1945.

At a meeting of the Club, on 8 April 1946 a 'Pigmy Possum-Glider' was exhibited by Mrs EE Hill (Anon 1946). It was noted that this species is found in 'timbered country' in eastern Australia and was 'becoming rarer through the ravages of cats'.

In a note on the Feathertail Glider, Child (1948) wrote:

'When walking down a bush track at Kalorama one night in August [1948], I heard a rustle in the scrub and shone my torch light among the bushes. There was a little Pygmy Phalanger or "Feathertail" gliding from branch to branch (on a *Pultenaea* bush) [Bacon and Eggs plant]. In order to examine its feather-like tail, I was able to approach within a few feet of the tiny creature. I then stepped back as it glided from the bush to a gum tree about a yard away and so disappeared. After watching that beautiful little sprite for the first time, I felt happy to have seen one of Nature's most charming pictures'.

Another record from the 1940s is that of a Feathertail Glider from the north of Paddy's Ranges State Park (R. Bishop pers. comm. cited by Trainor 1992).

Norman Wakefield recorded Feathertail Gliders as sub-fossils from a number of

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cave deposits in far eastern Victoria including Pyramids Cave, Mabel Cave, M-27 and M-28 (Wakefield 1960a; 1960b; 1967a). These fossils were attributed to Quolls *Dasyurus* spp. and Owls which deposited remains of Feathertail Gliders and other species as prey remains in these caves. Sub-fossil Feathertail Gliders have also been reported from localities in western Victoria i.e. 'Natural Bridge', south-west of Mount Eccles (Wakefield 1964), Fern Cave, north-west of Portland (Wakefield 1963a), Victoria Range deposit in the Grampians (Wakefield 1963b) and McEachern's Cave, north of Nelson (Wakefield 1967b). The antiquity of the fossil deposits is Holocene to Late-Pleistocene (also see Harris and Goldingay 2005).

Wakefield (1960a) stated that the Feathertail Glider favours open forest and was plentiful in East Gippsland. In early December 1960, a Feathertail Glider was seen while spotlighting near Mount Tara at Buchan, and another was reportedly seen in a gully along the Gellibrand River (Anon 1961a, b). Wakefield (1962) stated that one of the special projects in hand at the National Museum of Victoria, under Mr J McNally, was 'the maintenance of a study colony of Feathertail Gliders'.

The front cover for March 1962 (Volume 78, Number 11) had a photograph, courtesy of the Victorian Fisheries and Wildlife Department, of two Feathertail Gliders displayed on the branches and inflorescence of a Heath Banksia *Banksia ericifolia* (Fig. 2). An accompanying caption explained that 'Feathertails are quite plentiful in most of the forested parts of Victoria but, because they hide away and sleep all day, they are rarely observed' (Anon 1962). The inside front covers of *The Victorian Naturalist* for May 1965 (Volume 82, Number 1) and April 1970 (Volume 87, Number 4) also featured photographs of a 'Pygmy Glider' by WH King. The caption, written by the Assistant Editor RHJ McQueen (1965), stated:

This animal is the smallest gliding possum and is immediately distinguished by its distinct gliding membranes and feather-like tail. The gliding habit really consists of a series of agile leaps which are prolonged by a parachute effect of the gliding membranes. Feathertails are usually found in

small colonies and their "nests" of shredded bark and gum leaves are built in knot-holes or small hollows up to sixty feet [=18 m] above the ground. There is only one mainland species of *Acrobates* and this is widely distributed through the eucalypt forests of Eastern Australia, and although apparently quite common, the animal is rarely observed because of its smallness and nocturnal habit.

Another record of a Feathertail Glider from the 1960s is that of a female collected from a felled tree on 2 June 1965 at Trawalla Forest Reserve by the Fauna Survey Group (FSG) (Anon 1965). The specimen was reported to have been lodged with Fisheries and Wildlife Department by Mr Hodge, Forest Officer at Beaufort. At Tanjil Bren on 15 January 1966, a Feathertail Glider was seen on the ground by Mr W King (Anon 1966). There is also an FSG record for around this time for Powelltown/Labertouche State Forest (Anon 1967).

In March 1967, a Feathertail Glider was collected at Fyans Creek (14 km north of Pomonal) and a photograph shown to John Seebeck (Seebeck 1976). Another specimen found in a house at the junction of Redmans Road and the Pomonal South Road was also reported to Seebeck in 1968 (Seebeck 1976).

In May 1967, three 'Feather-tail Gliders' were seen during a trip to Stockman's Reward, north-east of Marysville, 'all in one tree in the middle of the valley' (Fryer and Temby 1969). Another was seen in June 1968 'on a hill beside the Big River Valley Road' in a Narrow-leaved

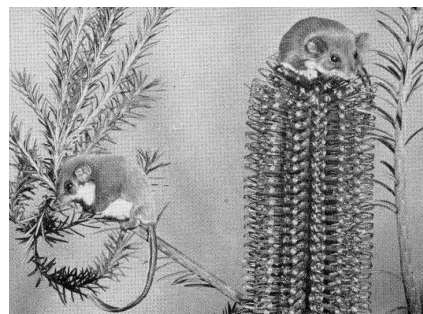


Fig. 2. A pair of Feathertail gliders *Acrobates pygmaeus* as pictured on the cover of the March 1962 issue of *The Victorian Naturalist*.

Peppermint *Eucalyptus radiata*. It was stated that compared with other possums and gliders, the Feathertail Glider was more difficult to find. 'Because [they] are so small...considerable patience and intense listening were necessary to locate them'.

In October 1967, Clyde O'Donnell and fellow naturalist Raymond Carlson, spotlit 'many' Feathertail Gliders on a single old eucalypt in the Porepunkah district (O'Donnell 1970). The gliders were observed leaping to another tree, a distance of 'about fifteen feet' [= 4.5 m]. When the location was visited a year later no living Feathertail Gliders were found, but 'sixteen lifeless bodies were discovered in their ancestral chamber'.

Seebeck *et al.* (1968) reported that in June 1966 and June 1967, the Mammal Survey Group examined a forest area south of Darlimurla:

Three specimens only were seen, but this species was probably much more common than results indicate. Sightings are generally fortuitous due to the very small size of the animals. Two individuals were seen on the first night of the survey, one on the trunk of an old Messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), the other in the branches of a young Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*). Both were approximately 20 feet [= 6 m] from the ground when first sighted. The third specimen was captured when it ran along the top suspending rope of a mist net. Specimen: Skin and skull: P. 630 [male], 25.vi.1966.

On 25 May 1972, the Feathertail Glider was selected as one of 10 native mammal species to be studied by members of the Field Survey Group/Mammal Survey Group (Anon 1972). Mr A Heislars (Forests Commission of Victoria) advised that in recent years Feathertail Gliders had been found during timber cutting in the Upper Lerderderg Valley, although none was found during the spotlighting trips in that area organised by the Mammal Survey Group in 1968-1970 (Deerson *et al.* 1975).

Between September 1974 and November 1978, two Feathertail Gliders were recorded during tree felling operations just outside the Wallaby Creek catchment (Callanan 1981). Zirkler (1974) stated that Pigmy Gliders are known to occur at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, NSW.

Brunner *et al.* (1977) recorded the 'Pigmy Glider' as present in one of 359 predator (mainly fox) scats collected from an area around Sumner Spur, near Powelltown. Gilmore (1977) reported that 'Mr R Austin of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division, Yarram, has a record of six animals obtained by FA Palmer from a dead stringybark tree that was felled on 30 July 1963, 6 km west of Giffard West'. Ambrose (1979) records Feathertail Glider as an uncommon resident in the Wallaby Creek Catchment, and as an obligate tree hollow user. Callanan and Menkhorst (1979) stated that the Feathertail Glider was not found during a mammal survey of the Werribee Gorge area, but thought that it was 'possibly present'. It was also noted that Feathertail Glider 'occurs in the Brisbane Ranges (F. Lobb, National Parks Service pers. comm.) and [as already mentioned] Lerderderg Valley (Deerson *et al.* 1975) and may well occur in the [Werribee Gorge] area'. Dixon (1979) listed the Feathertail Glider as present in the Alpine Area of Victoria and New South Wales.

In October 1980, the possible presence of the Feathertail Glider at the Mount Napier State Park was indicated 'when a large quantity of dried gum leaves were found coiled in 2 nest boxes' (Bird 1997). Boyce *et al.* (1981) stated that the Mammal Survey Group had recorded Feathertail Glider in the Cobaw State Forest.

Bennett (1982) cited Emison *et al.* (1975) in reporting that Feathertail Gliders have been 'described as occurring throughout all native woodland and forest communities in [the Woolsthorpe area] of western Victoria'. Bennett (1982) also reported that 'Mr H. Quinley, an amateur naturalist from Mortlake wrote, in a letter (November 1910) to the Director of the National Museum of Victoria regarding collection of marsupials' that he 'might by a fluke get some of the pygmy squirrels'. From literature reports, museum records and information gathered from local residents, Bennett (1982) was also able to state that Feathertail Gliders did occur in the Woolsthorpe area in 1840, but he believed they became locally 'extinct' in the early 1900s as a result of 'habitat destruction'.

Conole and Baverstock (1983) stated that one Feathertail Glider had been recorded

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in tall open-forest in the Mount Cawley area of the Otway Ranges in 1979 (see also Conole 1980). They also indicated that this species was widespread in the Angahook-Lorne Forest Park, but its status in this area was unknown. Nicholls and Meredith (1984) reported four sightings from Broad-leaved Peppermint *E. dives* open forest and Narrow-leaved Peppermint open forest made in the Mt. Timbertop region between 1971 and 1976. Loyn *et al.* (1986) recorded Feathertail Glider in one out of 14 pellets of the Sooty Owl *Tyto tenebricosa* examined from Thurra River, East Gippsland.

Conole (1987) reported on traditional Aboriginal names for a number of small marsupials from reading of the Victorian ethnographic literature. To the Krauatungalung tribe (Lake Tyers area), the Feathertail Glider is 'Toan' as recorded by Smyth (1878) or 'Tuan' as recorded by Howitt (1880). To the Bunurong and Woiworung tribes (Melbourne area) the Feathertail Glider is 'Tu-an-tu-an' (Smyth 1878). Conole (1987) also believed that 'Tirhatuan' from the Woiworung (Danendong area) was probably Feathertail Glider. Subsequently, Hercus (1988) and Scarlett (1988) discussed whether early English translations for this and other species were correct. Hercus (1988) thought that the name 'tuan-tuan' was not positively Feathertail Glider, and Scarlett (1988) stated that in Woiwurru, there could have been at least three names for Feathertail Glider, including 'Turnung', 'Tarrn-nin', and 'Teed'thung'. Scarlett (1988) also presented a mythical story of the Kulin tribes of central Victoria, in which the Feathertail Glider was featured.

Bennett (1988) did not record Feathertail Glider whilst trapping, spotlighting and hairtubing within roadside vegetation in the Naringal area during the period 1979-1982, and concluded that it was a rare species in this area. Dixon and Huxley (1989) commented that 'although this species is widely distributed in eastern Australia, few specimens are collected in surveys or seen by the public'. They also cited Russell (1980) and Fleming and Frey (1984) in stating that only limited behavioural studies have been undertaken on the Feathertail Glider.

Bennett (1992) noted that Feathertail Gliders were found by Suckling (1984) to be present in roadside vegetation in Gippsland. Conole and Baverstock (1992) reported the Feathertail Glider from the Bamgaine State Forest, about 45 km north-west of Geelong, and it was 'only observed in Swamp Gum [*E. ovata*] open-forest, where 5-6 individuals were seen in one flowering Swamp Gum on 29 January 1989'. The apparent absence of the species from the Messmate Stringybark *E. obliqua* open-forest, which was dominant at Bamgaine, was suggested to be 'more likely due to the larger leaves and denser canopy obscuring the diminutive mammal. Swamp Gums with their small leaves and open crown permit better visibility'. Lindenmayer (1992) recorded Feathertail Glider in the Mountain Ash forests in the Central Highlands. Trainor (1992) reported that Feathertail Gliders 'readily use nest boxes in the wetter forests of central Victoria (citing Calder *et al.* 1983; Orchard 1987), but have not been recorded in the drier forests of the [Paddy's Ranges] study area using this technique in a total of approximately 1800 nest box inspections'.

On 18 March 1995, a Feathertail Glider was observed on a clear full moon night while stagwatching in a Mountain Ash Forest in the Macedon-Woodend region of the Western Highlands (Larwill 2004). During the same survey, but at a different site, a Feathertail Glider was also captured during Elliott trapping. In this survey, the species was not detected by use of nest-boxes, spotlighting or predator scat analysis. Kutt and Yugovic (1996) mentioned that the Atlas of Victorian Wildlife Database has 'a historical record (pre-1900) of the Feathertail Glider', for the Grantville Gravel Reserve area, south-east of Melbourne. Although it was not found during their mammal survey (conducted in March 1994), they predicted that with more intensive survey, this species may be recorded here. Sometime between April 1985 and March 1995, a nocturnal observation of the Feathertail Glider was made in Tall Open Forest adjacent to the Parker River Inlet, Otway National Park (Westbrooke and Prevett 2002).

Menkhurst and Seebeck (1999) stated that the Feathertail Glider was 'uncom-

mon' at Wilsons Promontory National Park, and the most recent record known to them at that time was from 1986. During 25 h spotlighting in Rushworth State Forest, Myers and Dashper (1999) recorded only one Feathertail Glider (0.04 per hour). This animal was seen while foraging in a large flowering Yellow Gum *E. leucoxydon*. Myers and Dashper (1999) also noted that the Atlas of Victorian Wildlife Database had one record for this species from Rushworth State Forest in 1990.

In 1999, the Feathertail Glider was recorded in the River Red Gum *E. camaldulensis* vegetation in Barmah Forest by Lawrie Conole (Loyn *et al.* 2002), but 'it is likely to occur more widely in the forest than this one record would suggest'. Taggart and Shimmin (1999) did not provide any records of occurrence of the Feathertail Glider, but did comment as part of a review on marsupial sperm competition that this species has 'large testes relative to body mass' which supported a high likelihood of sperm competition occurring in this species.

Between April 2000 and March 2002, the Fauna Survey Group (FSG) carried out a study of the vertebrates in and adjacent to the Black Range, south of the township of Stawell in western Victoria (Homan 2005). One Feathertail Glider was captured opportunistically on the ground in an area of Granite Hills Woodland, which was a vegetation community dominated by Scent-bark *Eucalyptus aromaphloia*. The Feathertail Glider was not detected in 1487 Elliott trap-nights, 687 pitfall trap-nights, 60 h spotlighting, stagwatching at 12 stags or through use of five artificial nest-boxes. Homan (2005) noted that Feathertail Glider is 'rare' in this part of western Victoria, and that spotlighting in similar woodland areas by the FSG have recorded only very small numbers (ie. Myers and Dashper 1999).

Pierson (2004) contributed some observations of antagonistic behaviour between Little Ravens *Corvus mellori* and Common Ring-tailed Possums *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*. In an accompanying note and reference supplied by the Editors of *The Victorian Naturalist*, it was noted that the Forest Raven *C. tasmanicus* has been

recorded taking the Feathertail Glider (McCulloch and Thompson 1987). The most recent mention of Feathertail Glider in *The Victorian Naturalist* was made by Gibson and Thompson (2005) in reference to the late Robert Taylor showing beginners how to spotlight for the species in flowering banksia at Gembrook.

Conclusion

The Victorian Naturalist contains about 61 distribution records of the Feathertail Glider, excluding multiple records from the same locality and fossil records. These extend from before 1811 to about 2002, and document aspects of the life history, behaviour, and habitat requirements of this species. The large number of common names synonymous with the Feathertail Glider and survey methods applicable to this species have also been revealed. Despite the diminutive size, nocturnal habits, and generally secretive behaviour of the Feathertail Glider, knowledge of its natural history has been greatly augmented by naturalists' observations published in this journal.

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Seventy-four years ago

THE PIGMY FLYING POSSUM BY DAVID FLEAY, B.Sc.

It is very doubtful whether any animal, small or large, furred, feathered, or scaled, is more aptly fitted with generic and specific names than *Acrobates pygmaeus* - the "pigmy acrobat" - one of our smallest marsupials and the midget of the Possum family. Yet this little silver-brown creature is very difficult to domicile for observation, and is of such delicate structure that one must exercise every care to avoid causing injury when handling it. ...

One generally thinks of the Pigmy Flying Possums as an animal entirely lacking in powers of vocal accomplishment; and though it is mainly a silent species, soft little sounds are occasionally uttered, usually in daylight, when the "pigmys" are rolled up together in the nest. It is difficult to describe these low sobbing calls, but probably as good a description as any is to compare them with the quavering whistling notes of Dottrels [sic] flying over in the night skies. ...

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