

## The legacy of David Fleay, a pioneering Gold Coast conservationist

B. McDougall

David Fleay is known today as an Australian pioneer of conservation. His life work was to educate the public about Australia's unique fauna and the importance of preservation of endangered species and their habitat. As mentioned in Chapter 10, Fleay showed early signs of his passion for wildlife. From a young age he began a personal collection of Australian native fauna, starting with snakes and lizards and gradually acquiring large marsupials and birds such as wombats and owls (see Fig. 11.1). The unique collection grew over several years through trips to the bush for particular species, as well as the rehabilitation of injured wildlife. This stage of Fleay's life was the beginning of a fascinating journey that would inspire many and continue long after his passing.

Below is a list of animals that Fleay recorded as part of his personal collection of fauna, all of which were kept in his backyard in Melbourne in the 1930s (Fleay-Thomson 2007, p. 41):

### **F Phalangeridae**

- 1 Mountain Possum
- 5 Silvergrey Possums (one in pouch)
- 5 Ringtailed Possums
- 1 Dormouse Possum
- 5 Greater Flying Phalangers
- 1 Yellow-bellied Phalanger
- 6 Lesser Flying Phalangers
- 1 Pygmy Flying Phalanger

### **Dasyuridae**

- 1 Tiger Cat
- 6 Native Cats (one black)
- 4 Brush-tailed Phascogales
- 2 Yellow-footed Phascogales
- Swinsons Phascogales

### **F Peramelidae**

- 2 Short-nosed Bandicoots
- 2 Water Rats