

Western Barred Bandicoot *Perameles bougainville* (Quoy and Gaimard, 1834)

Size

Head and body length
171–236 (203) mm

Tail length

60–102 (87) mm

Weight

0.17–0.29 (0.23) kg

Subspecies

Several subspecies were described from specimens collected in the 1800s, but as the species is now extinct on the mainland, the relationships between them remains unresolved and all mainland animals have been grouped as one subspecies.

- *P. b. fasciata* (extinct, mainland Australia)
- *P. b. bougainville* (extinct, Shark Bay islands)

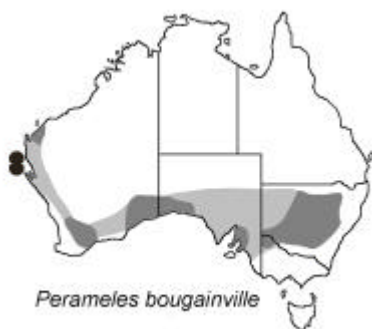
Description

A small delicate-looking bandicoot. Light brownish-grey above with two or three alternating paler and darker bars across the hindquarters, and white below. It has large erect and pointed ears, white feet and a short tapered tail.

Other common names

Shark Bay striped bandicoot, West Australian striped bandicoot, zebra rat (Nullarbor), marl (indigenous name).

Distribution



Key To Map: Black = present distribution;
Mid-grey = historic (> 30 years); Pale-grey =
Fossil

Habitat

An inhabitant of semi-arid and arid areas, mainland habitats included dense scrub, particularly thickets of *Allocasuarina* seedlings in south-western Western Australia, and saltbush and bluebush plains. On Bernier and Dorre Islands, it is especially common in the scrub associated with the stabilised dunes behind the beaches.



Photo: Babs & Bert Wells/Department of Conservation and Land Management

Behaviour

The western barred bandicoot is nocturnal. During the day it shelters either in a concealed nest made from plant material, in a hollow scrape beneath a low shrub, or other suitable cover. They emerge at dusk to feed.

Males occupy larger home ranges (2.5 to 14.2 hectares) than females (1.4 to 6.2 hectares), and home ranges decline as population densities increase. Although their home ranges may overlap, their core areas of use are generally separate.

Diet

Invertebrates, seeds, roots and herbs.

Breeding

On Bernier and Dorre Islands, the western barred bandicoot breeds continually during the cooler months from April through to October. Two young are carried in the pouch but litters of one to three have been recorded.

Threatening processes

Predation by cats and foxes, modification of vegetation by rabbits and stock, land clearing and agriculture, changed fire regimes, and possibly the introduction and spread of disease from exotic animals are believed to all have contributed to the extinction of the western barred bandicoot from the mainland.

Conservation status

- *P. b. fasciata*

2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

Extinct

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act

Extinct

- *P. b. bougainville*

2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

Endangered

Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act

Threatened

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act

Threatened (Endangered)

Management

- Exotic predator (fox and cat) control.
- Translocations to other mainland sites.

Other interesting facts

- Predation by the introduced fox and feral cat is considered the major factor in the decline and extinction of this species.

Selected references

Friend, J.A. and Burbidge, A.A. (1995). Western Barred Bandicoot. In R. Strahan (Ed.) The Mammals of Australia. Australian Museum and Reed Books. Chatswood, NSW.

Maxwell S., Burbidge A.A, Morris K. (1996). The 1996 Action plan for Australian Marsupials and Monotremes. Wildlife Australia, Canberra.

Website links

http://www.naturebase.net/projects/west_shield.html

<http://www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/action/marsupials/16.html>

http://www.cse.csiro.au/research/Program2/SL/threatened_species/bandicoo.htm

<http://www.westernwildlife.com.au/western/mammals/peramele.htm>