

## Quenda

### *Isoodon obesulus* (Shaw, 1797)

#### Size

Head and body length  
300–360 (330) mm in males  
280–330 (300) mm in females

#### Tail length

90–140 (120) mm in males  
90–140 (110) mm in females

#### Weight

0.5–1.6 (0.9) kg in males  
0.4–1.1 (0.7) kg in females



#### Subspecies

- *I. o. fusciventer* (south-west Western Australia)
- *I. o. obesulus* (south-eastern mainland Australia)
- *I. o. peninsulae* (Cape York)
- *I. o. affinus* (Tasmania)
- *I. o. nauticus* (Nuyts Archipelago, SA; Daw Island, Recherche Archipelago, Western Australia)

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

#### Description

Coarse dark greyish or yellowish brown fur above and creamy-white below and a tapered, dark brown tail. The ears are short and rounded. The tail is often shortened or missing altogether, probably as a result of fighting, and lightly furred.

#### Other common names

Southern brown bandicoot, southern short-nosed bandicoot

#### Distribution



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

Widely distributed near the south west coast from Guilderton north of Perth to east of Esperance, patchy distribution through the Jarrah and Karri forest and on the Swan Coastal Plain, and inland as far as Hyden. Has been translocated to Julimar State Forest, Hills Forest Mundaring, Tutanning Nature Reserve, Boyagin Nature Reserve, Dongolocking Nature Reserve, Leschenault Conservation Park, and Karakamia and Paruna Sanctuaries.

#### Habitat

Dense scrubby, often swampy, vegetation with dense cover up to one metre high, often feeds in adjacent forest and woodland that is burnt on a regular basis and in areas of pasture and cropland lying close to dense cover. Populations inhabiting Jarrah and Wandoo forests are usually associated with watercourses. Quendas will thrive in more open habitat subject to exotic predator control. For example, quenda have become abundant in Lake Magenta Nature Reserve (Western Australia) in Mallee scrub and woodland following fox control. On the Swan Coastal Plain, quendas are often associated with wetlands.

### Behaviour

Nest consists of a heap of ground litter over a shallow depression providing an internal chamber with loose regions at both ends for entry and exit. It is usually concealed next to or under logs, shrubs or piles of debris. Quenda can also use old rabbit burrows. Quenda are generally nocturnal but can be active during the day. A large adult male has a home range of two to seven hectares compared with one to three hectares for females. The size of the home range depends upon the density of individuals in an area, and the locality. Individuals are usually solitary though overlap in home ranges has been recorded for some individuals. Captive animals often attack each other if put in the same enclosure. When searching for underground foods, quendas dig into the soil with their strong fore-claws to produce a characteristic conical hole and, with their eyes shut, use their nose as a probe.

### Diet

The quenda is omnivorous. The diet includes invertebrates (including earthworms, adult beetles and their larvae), underground fungi, subterranean plant material, and very occasionally, small vertebrates. The species changes its diet seasonally as different foods become available.

### Breeding

Quenda breed throughout the year with a peak in Spring. The backward opening pouch contains eight teats arranged in an incomplete circle, and accommodates one to six (usually two to four) young in a litter. Two or three litters may be reared in a year, though this is dependent upon food availability. It has been found that older females produce more litters. In eastern Australia, gestation period is short (between 12 and 15 days). The young are weaned when about 60 or 70 days old. As oestrous during lactation can occur, a new litter can be born immediately after the pouch is vacated. The mortality rate of juveniles is usually high.

### Threatening processes

Major threats to the quenda include fragmentation and loss of habitat on the coastal plain and Wheatbelt, fire in fragmented habitat, predation by foxes (particularly in more open habitat), predation of young by cats and predation around residential areas by dogs.

### Conservation status

- *I. o. fusciventer*

2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Lower Risk (near threatened)
Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act	Not listed (Priority 4)
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Not listed

- *I. o. obesulus*

2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Lower Risk (near threatened)
Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act	N/A
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Threatened (Endangered)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I. o. peninsulae</i></li> </ul>	
2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Lower Risk (near threatened)
Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act	N/A
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Not listed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I. o. nauticus</i></li> </ul>	
2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Vulnerable
Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act	Not listed
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Threatened (Vulnerable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I. o. affinus</i></li> </ul>	
2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Not listed
Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act	N/A
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Not listed

### **Management in Western Australia**

- Exotic predator control.
- Protection of remnant bush on Swan Coastal Plain.
- Protection of swamps from fire.
- Re-introduction of quenda to suitable sites in the Perth area and supplementation of populations in the Wheatbelt and forest areas.

### **Other interesting facts**

- The name bandicoot is Indonesian for rat.
- Bandicoots in general are believed to live for approximately three years if an individual can secure a home range.

### **Selected references**

Friend, T. (1991). Endangered: Quenda. *LANDSCOPE* 7(1): 15.

Braithwaite, R.W. (1995). Southern Brown 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.

Anon (1998). Bush Telegraph: Two More Mammals off the Threatened List. *LANDSCOPE* 13(4): 5.

### **Website links**

[http://www.naturebase.net/projects/west\\_shield.html](http://www.naturebase.net/projects/west_shield.html)

<http://www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/action/marsupials/25.html>

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