

Mulgara

(*Dasycercus* sp.)



The mulgara was recently divided into two species – the crest-tailed mulgara, (*Dasycercus cristicauda*) and the brush-tailed mulgara, (*Dasycercus blythi*). These muscular carnivorous marsupials are found in Australia's arid centre. They hunt large invertebrates and small animals and can survive on the water they obtain from their food.



Photo: Babs & Bert Wells/Department of Environment and Conservation

Description:

Larger than a mouse with a maximum head and body length of 220 millimetres, mulgaras are a light reddish-brown or tan above and whitish below. The tail on crest-tailed mulgaras is short, reddish-brown and flattened at the base and has a distinctive crest of black hairs while brush-tailed mulgaras have much of the tail covered in black hair without a crest and short rounded ears. The ears on crest-tailed mulgaras are larger. Males are generally larger than females in both species.



Key to map:
Black = present distribution

Status and distribution:

Mulgaras are known from small, scattered populations in the deserts, including near the Kennedy Range and the Collier Range. They do not reach the Kimberley region. In WA crest-tailed mulgaras are regarded as a threatened species.

Preferred habitat:

These marsupials inhabit arid sandy regions that support spinifex grasslands.

Life history:

Mulgaras dig complex burrows on the flats between sand dunes. They are thought to be quite long-lived, and may survive for six or more years, continuing to grow throughout their life. The females give birth to up to eight young once each year.

Where to see them:

They are not completely nocturnal and are sometimes seen sunbathing near the entrances of their burrows. Visitors to arid areas may have a chance encounter, especially after good rains.