

## Banded Hare-wallaby

### *Lagostrophus fasciatus* (Péron and Lesueur, 1807)

#### Size

Head and body length  
400–450 (430) mm

#### Tail length

350–400 (370) mm

#### Weight

1.3–2.1 kg  
Occasional males up to 2.5 kg,  
occasional females up to 3.0 kg

#### Subspecies

Two subspecies are recognised:

- *L. f. fasciatus* (extant on Bernier and Dorre Islands, WA)
- *L. f. albipilis* (extinct, south-western WA)



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

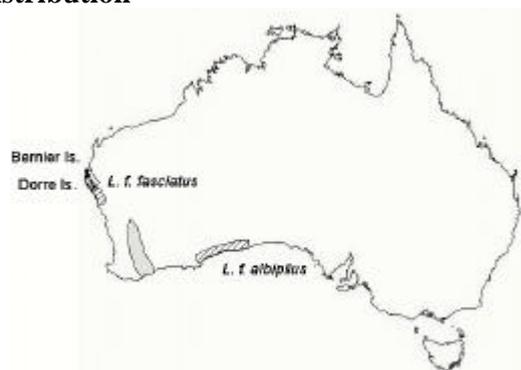
#### Description

Dark grizzled grey above with transverse dark bands across lower back and rump, greyish-white below.

#### Other common names

Indigenous names like Merrnine, Marnine, Munning.

#### Distribution



Key To Map: Pale-grey = historic (> 30 years);  
Hatched = Late-Holocene sub-fossil

Fossil records show that the range of the banded hare-wallaby extended across the southern Nullarbor Plain into the lower Murray River region of South Australia within the past 3000 to 5000 years. Although it is believed to have been recorded on Dirk Hartog Island, Shark Bay, there are doubts about the early records. The last records from south-western Australia are 1906.

The only remaining populations of banded hare-wallaby now occur on Bernier and Dorre Islands in Shark Bay.

#### Habitat

On the islands, they shelter among dense shrubs. Several individuals are often found within one patch of scrub.

#### Behaviour

The banded hare-wallaby forms runs beneath dense scrub where it shelters during the day. Although adults of each sex appear to live within well-defined home ranges or territories, relations between adult females and between juveniles and adults do not appear to be antagonistic. Interactions between males, on the other hand, are characterised by a high level

of aggression — the intensity of fighting apparently being related to competition for food. Feeding takes place at night in open areas with scattered shelter.

### **Diet**

Grasses normally make up less than half the dietary intake, the remainder being made up by malvaceous and leguminous shrubs. Free water is seldom available but heavy dews are frequent on the islands and moisture from this source, along with water in the food appears to meet the animals' needs.

### **Breeding**

A peak of births occurs in the latter half of summer, but females that are unsuccessful in January or February may give birth later in the first half of the year. Some females also mate shortly after giving birth and the embryo becomes dormant (embryonic diapause), but will continue to develop if the pouch-young dies, or after the young vacates the pouch. This variability leads to births of some young from December to September, but females are usually reproductively inactive in October and November. Severe summer drought can disrupt this reproductive pattern with breeding resumed after the drought has broken. Young spend about six months in the pouch and are weaned about three months later. Both males and females are capable of breeding in the first year of life, but usually do not do so until the second year. Although females are capable of producing two young per year, they normally manage to rear only one.

### **Threatening processes**

Decline of the banded hare-wallaby on the mainland has largely been attributed to the combined effects of predation by cats and habitat destruction.

### **Conservation status**

- *L. f. fasciatus*

2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Vulnerable
Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act	Threatened
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Threatened (Vulnerable)

- *L. f. albipilis*

2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Extinct
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Extinct

### **Management**

An attempt to reintroduce the species to Dirk Hartog Island failed, probably because of predation by feral cats. A recovery plan is being prepared, however other management actions required include:

- Population survey every three years of Bernier and Dorre Islands.
- Determine genetic status of the Bernier and Dorre Island populations.
- Determine ecology of island populations.
- Translocate to mainland sites in south-west Western Australia.

### **Other interesting facts**

- The banded hare-wallaby was one of the earliest macropods to be described. Specimens were first collected by Lesueur at Shark Bay in 1801.
- The banded hare-wallaby is the sole survivor of what was once a large group of macropods and is placed in a separate sub-family.

### **Selected references**

Prince, R.I.T. (1995). Banded Hare-wallaby. 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.naturebase.net/projects/west_shield.html)

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