



Get to know Western Australia's fauna



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



Photo: Babs & Bert Wells/DEC

### Size

Bernier and Dorre Islands

Head and body length

179-226 (201) mm (males)

173-222 (202) mm (females)

Tail length

81-100 (91) mm (males)

84-106 (93) mm (females)

Mainland (Nullarbor)

Head and body length

205-280 (236) mm

Tail length

75-98 (84) mm

### Weight

168-280 (212) g (males)

165-379 (244) g (females)

### 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.

- *Perameles bougainville fasciata* (extinct, mainland Australia)
- *Perameles bougainville bougainville* (extant, 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

Populations were once distributed from the west coast of Western Australia across the lower southern parts of Australia into NSW and north-western Victoria. Sub fossil records have identified that it once occurred on Dirk Hartog Island (Western Australia). It was last recorded on mainland Western Australia in 1943 on the Canning Stock Route.

It is now restricted to Bernier and Dorre Islands in Shark Bay (Western Australia). Reintroductions have occurred to Heirisson Prong (Shark Bay, Western Australia), Roxby Downs (South Australia) and Faure Island (Shark Bay, Western Australia).

For further information regarding the distribution of this species please refer to [www.naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://www.naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au)

### 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.

## 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 (2.5-14.2 ha) than females (1.4-6.2 ha), 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

*Perameles bougainville*

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species  
Endangered (Version 3.1)

*Perameles bougainville fasciata*

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999  
Extinct

*Perameles bougainville bougainville*

Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act 1950

Schedule 1 – Fauna that is rare or is likely to become extinct  
(Threatened ranked as Endangered)

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999  
Endangered

## Management in Western Australia

The Western Barred Bandicoot is a taxa included in the Shark Bay Mammals Draft Recovery Plan. Management actions proposed, currently underway or have been undertaken include:

- Protect wild populations and their habitat.
- Maintain captive populations
- Undertake reintroduction to suitable mainland and islands sites.
- Use population viability analysis (PVA) to compare the viability of wild as well as current and potential reintroduced populations.
- Investigate the disease status of captive and wild Western Barred Bandicoot populations and develop a strategy for disease control

## 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. (2008). Western Barred Bandicoot. In Van Dyck, S. and R. Strahan (Eds.) *The Mammals of Australia*. Reed New Holland, Sydney.

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

Richards, J.D. and Short, J. (2003). Reintroduction and establishment of the western barred bandicoot *Perameles bougainville* (Marsupialia: Peramelidae) at Shark Bay, Western Australia. *Biological Conservation* 109: 181-195.

Short, J., Richards, J.D. and Turner, B. (1998). Ecology of the western barred bandicoot (*Perameles bougainville*) (Marsupialia: Peramelidae) on Dorre and Bernier Islands, Western Australia. *Wildlife Research* 25: 567-586.

Last updated 8 February 2012, for further enquiries please contact [fauna@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:fauna@dpaw.wa.gov.au)

## Further information

Contact your local office of the Department of Environment and Conservation.

See the department's website for the latest information: [www.dec.wa.gov.au](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au).

*Disclaimer: This publication may be of assistance to you but the Government of Western Australia and its officers do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.*



Department of  
Environment and Conservation

