



## No.36 Wildlife trade operation for the euro

### Description

The euro or common wallaroo (*Macropus robustus*) is 110-198 centimetres from head to tail and 6.3-46.5 kilograms in weight (females rarely exceed half this maximum weight). They have a shaggy coat and are more heavily built than other kangaroos (Figure 1). The paws, tips of the muzzle and tail are black. The muzzle is naked. Male euros can be distinguished from females by their well-muscled shoulders and forearms.

In Western Australia, male euros are a rusty red or chestnut colour, whereas females are lighter. Euros have a stance distinct from that of red kangaroos as they stand with their shoulders back, elbows tucked into their sides and wrists raised.



Figure 1 Euro (*Macropus robustus*)  
(Photo: Babs and Bert Wells/DEC).

### Distribution and habitat

The euro occurs across the arid inland areas of mainland Australia. In Western Australia, they are found north of the south-west land division and south of most of the Kimberley Region (Figure 2). Isolated populations also occur in the Wheatbelt region and near Perth. Euros occupy a variety of habitats including open shrubland, mulla woodland, mallee scrub, grassland and desert.

Euro populations have increased in some areas since European settlement. This is due to the provision of water for stock and the

control of dingoes, allowing them to access the water in relative safety from predators.

### Diet

Like ruminants, euros have micro-organisms in their gut that break down fibrous plant material by fermentation. They survive better than sheep on vegetation that is high in fibre and low in nitrogen. They eat mostly grass but will also eat broad-leaved plants when grasses are scarce. The abundance of green food determines the proportion of females that breed and the survival of their young. Euros are also able to survive on a poor quality diet of spinifex (*Triodia* spp.) and are common on the poorer pastures of the Pilbara Region, where spinifex is abundant. They often congregate on areas of green feed produced by localised rain or along drainage lines where remnants of green feed persist.

### Breeding

Euros are capable of breeding throughout the year, if seasonal conditions are favourable. Young (joeys) are born while still at a very early stage of their development. At birth, they climb from the birth canal to their mother's pouch and attach themselves to a teat. They become independent of the pouch at about eight months of age but continue to suckle from outside the pouch for up to six months.

During good seasons, a female may have a joey suckling at foot, another in the pouch and a dormant embryo in the uterus. The female comes into oestrous and mates again soon after the previous joey has been born and may retain an embryo in a dormant state in the uterus for up to seven months. This complex reproductive system may be an adaptation to periodic drought when dormant embryos recommence development to take the place of joeys that die. Prolonged drought may cause the reproductive cycle to cease altogether until the drought breaks.

### Behaviour

Euros can survive temperatures over 40 degrees by using shade and avoiding activity during the day. They regulate their body temperature largely by panting and licking their forearms as a form of evaporative cooling. They also concentrate their urine to conserve water and can tolerate severe dehydration if they have access to refuges out of the sun and to food plants of sufficient water content.

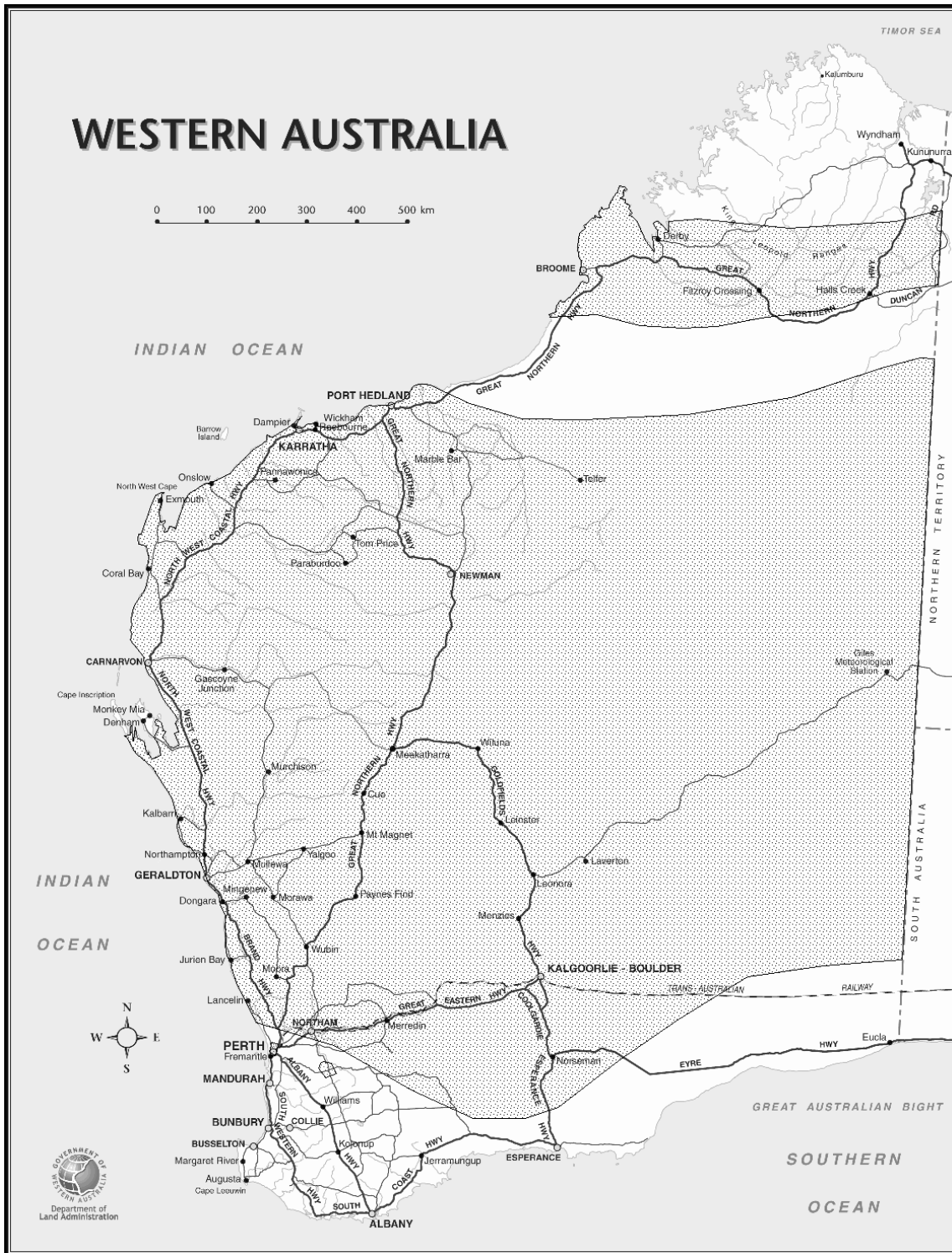


Figure 2 Distribution of the euro (*Macropus robustus*) in Western Australia (adapted from Long (1990)).

## Damage

Euros primarily impact station management and pastoral production during periods of drought. The degree to which they compete with stock for protein influences survival, reproduction and wool growth in sheep.

## Status and damage reduction

Euros are declared pests of agriculture under the provisions of the *Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act 1976*, administered by the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food. This declaration allows for the approval and

implementation of a management program in various areas of the state.

As native species, euros are protected under provisions of the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, administered by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). Under this Act, euros can be shot on private land in some parts of the State in accordance with open season notices without the need to obtain a damage licence from DEC.

## Open season shires

The current open season permits the shooting of euros on private property in specified municipal districts (see table below) without a damage licence. The populations in these shires are secure and damage to agriculture is likely to be an ongoing problem.

In all shires outside the open season shires, a *Regulation 5 - Damage Licence* must be obtained from DEC prior to shooting.

## Open season shires for the euro

Boulder	Mullewa
Broome	Murchison
Carnarvon	Northampton
Cue	Port Hedland
Derby-West Kimberley	Roebourne
East Pilbara	Sandstone
Halls Creek	Shark Bay
Laverton	Upper Gascoyne
Leonora	West Pilbara
Meekatharra	Wiluna
Menzies	Wyndham-East Kimberley
Mount Magnet	Yalgoo
Mount Marshall	

## Open season restrictions for euros

1. The open season applies only on private land in the districts listed, including freehold land, conditional purchase leasehold land or any other leasehold land which is granted for the purpose of agricultural production under the *Land Administration Act 1997*.
2. Euros may be taken only when they are, or can be reasonably expected to, cause damage to primary production.
3. A DEC wildlife officer may, after inspecting a property in the open season shire, prohibit the shooting of euros on that property until the landholder or leaseholder obtains a damage licence.
4. Euros may be destroyed only by the landholder or leaseholder on land they own or occupy in the open season shire. If the landholder does not wish to, or is unable to carry out the shooting himself or herself, they may nominate an agent or a licensed kangaroo shooter to shoot on their behalf. The landholder or leaseholder must fill out a proforma letter for private property owners/lessees to authorise persons to enter their land and destroy kangaroos when they are causing damage to primary production. The licenced professional shooter must carry

this permit with them at all times when shooting. If the landholder or leaseholder does not have anyone to do the shooting for them, the local DEC office can provide the names of licensed shooters in the district who may be able to assist.

5. Whether they are in an open season shire or not, a property owner may not shoot, then sell or move Euros, their carcasses or skins for commercial purposes unless they hold the appropriate royalty tags and a professional shooter's licence.
6. All shooting must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the code of practice for the humane shooting of kangaroos.

## Wildlife trade operation for the euro

The wildlife trade operation for the euro in Western Australia is administered by DEC. This wildlife trade operation meets the requirements of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and regulations, as well as State legislation.

Its aim is to prevent unacceptable damage to agriculture, while ensuring the long-term viability of euro populations, including those at the local community level. Where possible, it also aims to manage euros as a renewable resource without compromising the conservation of the species. It also aims to gather sufficient data on population estimate methods and correction factors to support a full wildlife management plan.

Commercial harvest quotas for euros are determined annually by reviewing current population trends, past seasonal conditions and trends in land use. During the life of the wildlife trade operation, annual aerial and targeted ground surveys of euros are undertaken to determine animal abundance and distribution.

## Commercial use of euros

The total number of euros that may be taken commercially is controlled by DEC through the issue of royalty tags. The tags are colour-coded for each kangaroo species. A tag must be attached to the each carcass or skin taken for commercial purposes in the prescribed manner.

If euro carcasses or skins are to be utilised for commercial purposes, damage licences and royalty tags must be obtained from DEC.

Blue royalty tags for euros can only be allocated to licenced professional shooters who hold a *Regulation 6 - Licence to Take Kangaroos for Sale*. All shooting must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the code of practice for the humane shooting of kangaroos.

For other management options see the table below or contact DEC.

## Further reading

Fauna note no. 30. Western grey kangaroo management plan. DEC, Western Australia.

Fauna note no. 31. Red kangaroo management plan. DEC, Western Australia..

## Options for reducing damage caused by euros.

Option	Application	Benefits	Costs
Shooting	Only legal method of destruction.	Humane if properly carried out. Effective in managing populations.	May not be suitable in built-up areas.
Fences and gates	Sloping, plain wire electrified fences are most effective. Fauna note no. 32. Fencing and gates to reduce damage by kangaroos. DEC, Western Australia.	Safer in built-up areas and non-lethal. Suitable designs can alleviate damage. Can be less expensive than other fences.	If there are high numbers of resident euros, limited shooting may initially be required to reduce numbers.
Poisoning, snaring, dog baiting	Illegal under the <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> .		Poisons can affect other animals including farm dogs. Snaring and dogging are cruel, ineffective and can result in more damage to fences and crops.

## References

DEC (2006) Wildlife Trade Operation for the Euro in Western Australia 2007-2009. Department of Environment and Conservation, Perth.

Pople, T. and Grigg, G. (1999) Commercial harvesting of Kangaroos in Australia. Prepared for Environment Australia. Department of Zoology, the University of Queensland.

Anonymous (1998) Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos. Environment Australia, Canberra.

Poole, W.E. (1995) Common Wallaroo. In: The Mammals of Australia. (Ed. R. Strahan.). Reed Books, Chatswood.

Long, J.L. (ed.) (1990) Declared Animal Control Handbook. Agriculture Protection Board, Perth.

## Further information

Contact your local DEC office.

See the department's website for the latest information:

[www.dec.wa.gov.au](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au).

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### 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).



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