



Bilby

Fast Facts



Scientific Name: *Macrotis lagotis*

Conservation Status: **Vulnerable**



Body Length: 29–55 cm

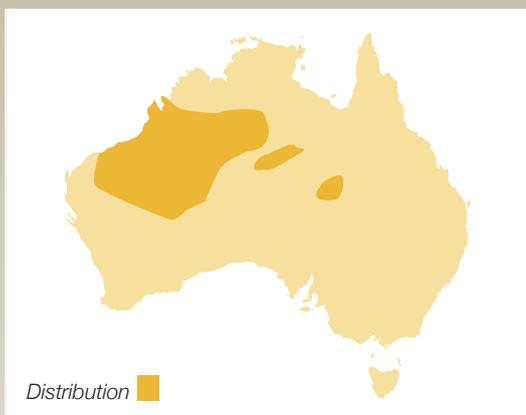
Weight: 800–2,500 g

Gestation: 14–16 days

Number of young: 2

Habitat: Desert, grasslands and mulga scrub

Distribution: Pilbara and southern Kimberley areas of Western Australia, Northern Territory and south-west Queensland



Description

Bilbies have long, soft, blue-grey fur; large rabbit-like ears that help dispel heat, and a long, pointed muzzle. The tail, which is 20–29 cm long, is mostly black except for the white tip.

Diet

Bilbies are omnivores and eat insects, seeds, bulbs, fruit and fungi. Most food is found by digging in the soil. Big ears quickly detect insect prey, which they catch with their long tongue. Bilbies do not need to drink water, as they get all the moisture they need from their food.

In the wild

Bilbies build burrows that spiral down to depths of two metres. The burrows usually house only a single Bilby. Like wombats, female Bilbies have a backward-facing pouch so it doesn't fill with dirt while digging. A Bilby remains in its burrow throughout the day and only ventures out after dark.

Threats

Loss of habitat and introduced predators – such as cats and foxes – are the Bilby's main threats. Competition with introduced animals is another major threat as domestic stock like cattle and sheep eat the same plants. Rabbits also compete with Bilbies for their food and burrows.

At Perth Zoo

Bilbies can be seen inside the Nocturnal House.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bilbies have very powerful forelimbs and strong claws, which are used for digging for food and burrows. If an attempt is made to dig a Bilby out of its burrow, the Bilby frantically extends the burrow in the other direction to avoid capture.