



Quokka

Fast Facts



Scientific Name: *Setonix brachyurus*

Conservation Status: Vulnerable

Extinct Threatened Least Concern



Body Length: 40–54 cm

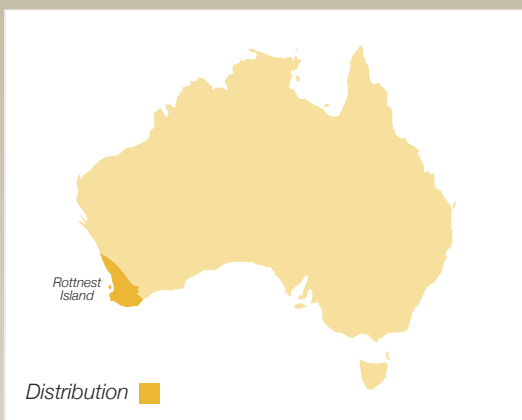
Weight: 2.7–4.2 kg

Gestation: 27 days

Number of young: 1

Habitat: Dense vegetation or dense semi-arid heath

Distribution: Rottnest Island, south-west Western Australian mainland



Description

Quokkas are one of the smallest wallaby species in Australia. They have thick, coarse, grey-brown fur; short, rounded fluffy ears, a tail 24–31 cm long and shorter hindlegs than other macropod species.

Diet

Quokkas are herbivores and eat native grasses and the leaves, stems and bark of a variety of plants. They prefer browsing on new, young growth.

In the wild

On Rottnest Island, Quokkas appear to live in territories with the areas defended by dominant males. In other areas, territories are not as evident and larger, overlapping groups of 25–150 adults have been known to form around water soaks. Sheltering in dense vegetation during the day, Quokkas create their own pathways for feeding or escaping predators.

Threats

Quokkas were once abundant on the Australian mainland but with the arrival of the dingo around 3,500 years ago and then foxes in the late 1800s (neither of which reached Rottnest) their numbers were drastically reduced. Today they are showing signs of recovery on the mainland thanks to the Department of Parks and Wildlife feral-proofing operations.

At Perth Zoo

Perth Zoo's Quokkas can be seen in the Australian Bushwalk.

DID YOU KNOW?

Quokkas are very unusual for a number of reasons. They are able to survive in an environment virtually devoid of freshwater and they can climb trees.

Quokkas have been used in medical research on muscular dystrophy as they suffer from the same disease.