

How are the animals faring?

Animal populations on the islands fluctuate dramatically in response to rainfall. Surveys completed in 2007 as part of the state government's *Saving our Species* biodiversity conservation initiative identified that the islands and their unique wildlife were suffering due to extended drought conditions (the worst in 100 years).

Lack of rainfall during this time reduced vegetation cover by up to 50 per cent and greatly increased the risk of wildfires. The adverse environmental factors caused by the drought meant the animals were low in number, breeding little and in poor condition.

Of particular concern is a recent outbreak of a fatal wart disease and cancer among the western barred bandicoots on Bernier Island.

This disease has not reached Dorre Island so it is vitally important the prohibition of landing on Dorre Island is adhered to so the disease is not spread.

What are the risks to the rare mammals of Bernier and Dorre islands?

INTRODUCED PREDATORS were responsible for many extinctions on the mainland. The native mammals that inhabit these islands are defenceless against predation by dogs and cats.

DISEASE can be carried in food, on footwear or through faeces (human or animal). The isolated populations of mammals on the islands can be extremely susceptible to alien bacteria and viruses.

WILDFIRE can easily be started by a spark from a camp fire or cigarette. The highly flammable vegetation and strong prevailing winds mean fires can quickly spread. A fire can burn the length of an island, removing the rare mammals' entire habitat.

COMPETITORS AND WEEDS: Introduced animals (for example mice and insects) and seeds (for example double G and buffel grass) can travel in sunshades, swags or on boots and be carried onto the islands, destroying natural habitats.

Any of these impacts can endanger the islands' rare mammals.

How you can help protect the rare wildlife of Bernier and Dorre islands

Please do your part to protect these natural havens:

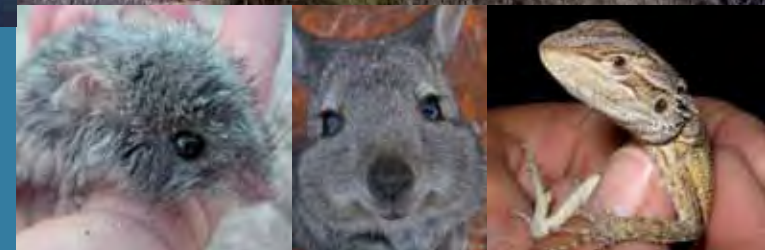
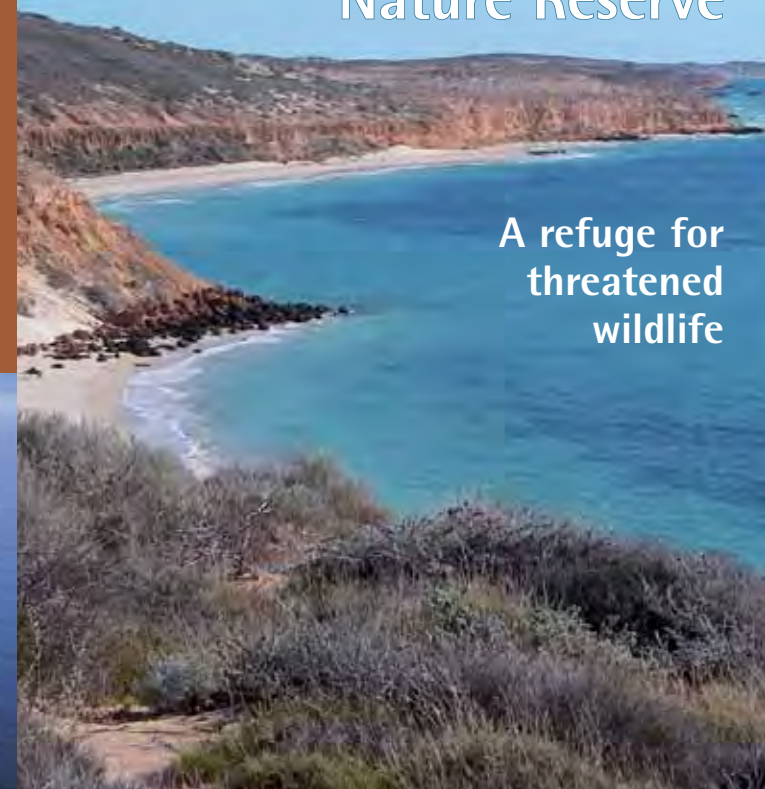
- no camping
- day visits only permitted on Bernier Island
- landing on Dorre Island is prohibited
- no fires
- no pets
- no firearms.

Please respect the registered Aboriginal sites on the islands. Artefacts and other remains must not be disturbed or removed.



Bernier and Dorre Islands Nature Reserve

A refuge for threatened wildlife



For more information contact:

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Department of Environment and Conservation



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How you can help protect them



Department of Environment and Conservation



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What rare animals live on the islands?

Banded hare-wallaby (*Lagostrophus fasciatus*)

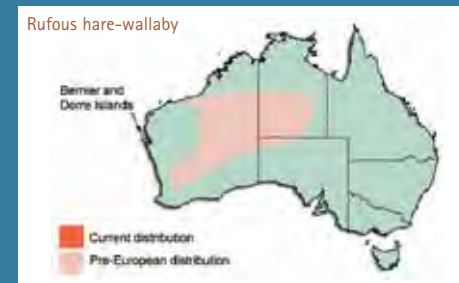
Banded hare-wallabies became extinct on the mainland due to vegetation clearing and predation by foxes and cats. This gentle little cousin of the extinct giant browsing kangaroos has not been found on the mainland since 1906.



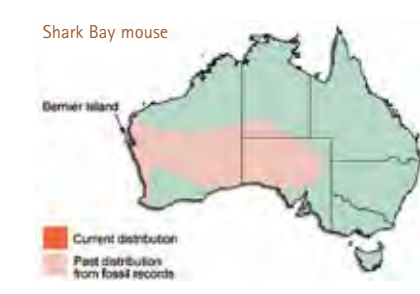
Rufous hare-wallaby

Rufous hare-wallaby (*Lagorchestes hirsutus*)

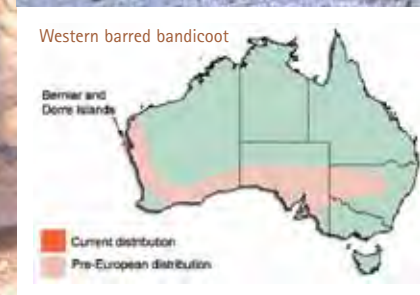
Rufous hare-wallabies were once common throughout the spinifex deserts of Australia. The last wild mainland populations were wiped out by fire, cats and foxes in the 1990s. Bernier and Dorre islands support the last naturally occurring population.



Rufous hare-wallaby



Shark Bay mouse



Western barred bandicoot



Western barred bandicoot

Western barred bandicoot (*Paramelops bougainville*)

The last record of this small bandicoot on the mainland was from the Canning Stock Route in 1943. Bernier and Dorre islands support the last naturally occurring population.

Boodie or burrowing bettong (*Bettongia lesueur*)

The boodie was once widespread on the mainland but is now restricted to just three islands off the coast of Western Australia—Bernier, Dorre and Barrow.



Boodie or burrowing bettong

Bernier and Dorre islands are home to some of the world's rarest mammals and are two of the world's most important places for mammal conservation. Visitor behaviour plays an important role in ensuring the survival of these animals. This brochure outlines why the islands are so significant and how you can help protect them.

Why are these islands so important?

Bernier and Dorre islands are free of feral predators. The absence of foxes or cats has created a vital refuge for five mammal species that were once widespread on the Australian mainland but are now on the brink of extinction. Situated off the coast of Carnarvon, within the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, the islands are both 'A' class nature reserves.

