

Rufous hare-wallaby

Lagorchestes hirsutus



Description: The rufous hare-wallabies have long, soft greyish-brown fur tinged with red.

They were once abundant and widespread throughout the arid and semi-arid zones of Australia.

Diet and Habitat: These relatively solitary animals live in low scrub and spinifex on sandy soils. During the day they shelter in scrapes, shallow trenches under dense low shrubs or spinifex hummocks.

When frightened, they burst out, often emitting a high-pitched nasal squeak, and zigzag away at speed. They emerge at dusk to feed, grazing mainly on grasses and forbs, but occasionally eating seeds, bulbs and insects as well.

Breeding: Females can breed from five months and can produce up to three young a year. Like other macropods, they can have more than one young at the same time.

Females can delay development of a fertilised egg when there is a joey in the pouch; reactivating the embryo when the joey leaves the pouch. This is known as embryonic diapause.

Distribution: Rufous hare-wallabies were once widespread in central and Western Australia (WA).

Today, natural populations only remain on Bernier and Dorre Islands.

They have been translocated to Trimouille Island (WA) and Dirk Hartog Island National Park as part of the *Return to 1616* Ecological Restoration Project. They also survive in fenced mainland sanctuaries.

Quick facts

Head-body:	310 - 390mm
Tail:	245 - 280mm
Average weight:	1.5 - 2.3kg
Gestation:	15 weeks
Number of young:	1
Maturity:	5 months

Conservation Status

Threats to these hare-wallabies include loss of habitat, introduced predators and wildfires.

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Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018



Current distribution (approximate)



DID YOU KNOW?

Rufous hare-wallabies were once widespread but the last mainland wild populations had died out by 1991.