

Woylie (brush-tailed bettong)

Bettongia penicillata



Description: Woylies are small macropods with black crests on their tails that help distinguish them from burrowing bettongs (boodies). The woylie also has a lighter build and longer face than the boodie.

Woylies perform important ecosystem services while foraging as they spread seeds and spores and turn over large quantities of soil, which improves water infiltration and nutrient recycling.

Diet and Habitat: Woylies now live mainly in woodlands with dense tussock grass and woody scrub understories, but their previous distribution included many other habitat types. They are nocturnal, resting during the day in grass or bark-lined nests. Woylies have prehensile tails that they use to carry nesting material. They are herbivores and feed at night, mainly on the underground fruiting bodies of fungi. They also eat bulbs, tubers, seeds, insects and resin.

Breeding: Woylies can breed all year round in good conditions. A female can produce a joey every 3 ½ months from the age of 6 months.

Woylies in the wild may live 4 to 6 years.

Distribution: Woylies were once widespread across southern and western Australia but by the 1970s were restricted to three small areas in southwest Western Australia.

To help ensure their survival, woylies have since been translocated to other areas including fenced mainland sanctuaries such as Karakamia and Mt Gibson. They will be reintroduced to Dirk Hartog Island National Park as part of the *Return to 1616* Ecological Restoration Project.

Current distribution (approximate)



Quick facts

Head-body:	280 - 365mm
Tail:	250 - 360mm
Average weight:	0.8 - 1.5kg
Gestation:	21 days
Number of young:	1
Weaned:	3 - 4 months

Conservation Status

Since 2001 woylie numbers have dropped by 70 to 90 percent. Causes of this recent dramatic decline remain unclear but include introduced predators and disease.



Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018



DID YOU KNOW?

They love to eat fungi and this helps to spread fungi around in their poo. Lots of fungi is important to the health of the environment.