



Quenda *Isoodon obesulus* (Shaw, 1797)



Photo: Christine Groom/ DEC

Size

Head and body length

300-360 (330) mm in males

280-330 (300) mm in females

Tail length

96-140 (124) mm in males

90-128 (113) mm in females

Weight

500-1850 (890) g in males

400-1200 (620) g in females

Subspecies

- *Isoodon obesulus fusciventer* (south-west Western Australia)
- *Isoodon obesulus obesulus* (south-eastern mainland Australia)
- *Isoodon obesulus. peninsulae* (far north Queensland including Cape York)
- *Isoodon obesulus affinus* (Tasmania)
- *Isoodon obesulus nauticus* (Nuyts Archipelago, South Australia)

Description

Coarse dark grey or yellow brown fur above and creamy-white below and a short, tapered, dark brown tail. The ears are short and rounded. The tail is lightly furred and often shortened or missing altogether, probably as a result of fighting.

Other Common Names

Southern Brown Bandicoot, Southern Short-nosed Bandicoot

Isoodon obesulus fusciventer is known by the noongar name Quenda

Distribution

Widely distributed near the south west coast from Guilderton north of Perth to east of Esperance. Quenda have a patchy distribution through the Jarrah and Karri forest, the Swan Coastal Plain, and inland as far as Hyden. Quenda have been translocated to Julimar State Forest, Hills Forest near Mundaring, Tutanning Nature Reserve, Boyagin Nature Reserve, Dongolocking Nature Reserve, Leschenault Conservation Park, Karakamia Sanctuary, Paruna Sanctuary, Yalgorup National Park, Creery Wetlands, Avon Valley National Park, Nambung National Park, Francois Peron National Park and Thomson's Lake Nature Reserve.

For further information regarding the distribution of this species please refer to www.naturemap.dec.wa.gov.au

Habitat

Scrubby, often swampy, vegetation with dense cover up to 1 m high, often feeds in adjacent forest and woodland that is burnt on a regular basis and in areas of pasture and cropland lying close to dense cover. Populations inhabiting Jarrah and Wandoo forests are usually associated with watercourses. Quenda will thrive in more open habitat subject to introduced predator control. On the Swan Coastal Plain, Quenda are often associated with wetlands.

Behaviour

Nest consists of a heap of ground litter over a shallow depression providing an internal chamber with loose regions at both ends for entry and exit. It is usually concealed next to or under logs, shrubs or piles of debris. Quenda can also use old rabbit burrows. Quenda are generally nocturnal but can be active during the day, especially

during winter. A large adult male has a home range of 2-7 ha compared to 1-3 ha for females. The size of the home range depends upon the density of individuals in an area, and the locality. Individuals are usually solitary though overlap in home ranges has been recorded for some individuals. Captive animals often attack each other if put in the same enclosure. When searching for underground foods, Quenda dig into the soil with their strong fore-claws to produce a characteristic conical hole and, with their eyes shut, use their nose as a probe.

Diet

The Quenda is omnivorous. The diet includes invertebrates (including earthworms, adult beetles and their larvae), underground fungi, subterranean plant material, and very occasionally, small vertebrates. The species changes its diet seasonally as different foods become available.

Breeding

Quenda breed throughout the year with a peak in spring. The backward opening pouch contains eight teats arranged in an incomplete circle, and accommodates one to six (usually two to four) young in a litter. Two or three litters may be reared in a year, though this is dependent upon food availability. It has been found that older females produce more litters. In eastern Australia, gestation period is short (12-15 days). The young are weaned when about 60-70 days old. Oestrous can occur during lactation, a new litter can be born immediately after the pouch is vacated. The mortality rate of juveniles is usually high.

Threatening processes

Major threats to the Quenda include fragmentation and loss of habitat on the coastal plain and in the Wheat belt, fire in fragmented habitat, predation by foxes (particularly in more open habitat), predation of young by cats and predation around residential areas by dogs.

Conservation status

Isodon obesulus

2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

Least concern (Version 3.1)

Isodon obesulus fusciventer

Not Listed

Isodon obesulus obesulus

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
Endangered

Isodon obesulus nauticus

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
Endangered

Isodon obesulus affinis and *Isodon obesulus peninsulæ*

Not listed

Management in Western Australia

Management actions being implemented to conserve Quenda include:

- Introduced predator control.
- Protection of remnant bush on Swan Coastal Plain.
- Protection of swamps from fire.
- Re-introduction of Quenda to suitable sites in the Perth area and supplementation of populations in the Wheat belt and forest areas.

Other Interesting Facts

- The name bandicoot is Indonesian for Rat.
- Bandicoots in general are believed to live for approximately three years if an individual can secure a home range.

Selected references

Anon (1998). Bush Telegraph: Two More Mammals off the Threatened List. *Landscape* 13(4): 5.

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Maxwell S., Burbidge A.A, Morris K. (1996). The 1996 Action Plan for Australian Marsupials and Monotremes. Wildlife Australia, Canberra.

Paull, D.J. (2008). Southern Brown Bandicoot. In Van Dyck, S. and R. Strahan (Eds.) *The Mammals of Australia*. Reed New Holland. Sydney.

Last updated 8 February 2012, for further enquiries please contact fauna@dec.wa.gov.au

Further information

Contact your local office of the Department of Environment and Conservation.

See the department's website for the latest information: www.dec.wa.gov.au.

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