



FACTSHEET

# Quokka



## FACTSHEET

# Quokka

**Common Name:** Quokka

**Scientific Name:** *Setonix brachyurus*

**Noongar Name:** Quak-a  
(Augusta and King Sound region),  
Bungeup (Perth region)

**Conservation Status:** Listed as  
Vulnerable under ICUN (2014), all  
Rottnest Island's fauna is protected under  
the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987*.

**Habitat:** Settlement Area, Heath,  
Woodland, Wetlands.

**Body length:** 40-54 cm

**Weight:** 2.7-4.2 kg

**Gestation period:** 27 days

**Number of young:** 1

### **Description:**

The Quokka is a type of small wallaby. It has thick greyish brown fur with lighter brown under surfaces. It has a brown face, short rounded ears, black eyes and a black nose. Its feet, paws and short tail are brown. The males are bigger than the females.

### **Diet:**

The Quokka is a browsing herbivore (an animal that only eats plants). Tree and shrub buds, leaves, grasses, succulents, seeds, roots are its main diet.

### **In the Wild:**

The Quokka is the only mammal which is native to Rottnest Island and can be found almost everywhere on the Island. It is mainly nocturnal. This means that it is mostly active at night, preferring to rest or sleep in the shade during the day.

The Quokka bounds and hops along the ground although it can climb trees if it needs to. It will sit on its hind legs to look around and will also use its front paws to search for and pick up food.

The Island habitat supports the largest known Quokka population and is essential for the survival of species.

In the winter, Quokkas live all over the Island because there is enough freshwater for them to drink. This water comes from dew and rainfall. As days begin to heat up in November, the fresh water becomes limited. By mid-summer, Quokkas can only get fresh water from a few soaks around the salt lakes and Barker Swamp and so move into these areas.

At all times of the year, there is a high number of Quokkas in the Settlement area because there is lots of water and food available. They have become one of the main tourist attractions of Rottnest Island because they have a cute appearance and are easy to see.

Quokkas don't tend to move far. They live in groups and these groups can be territorial although not much is known about how they maintain the borders of their territory. These borders can be marked by ridges or dunes or even simple runways in the vegetation.

On Rottnest, Quokkas have a short breeding season which happens in late summer. One joey is born around February to April. It remains in the pouch until August or September. The joey suckles from its mother for another two months afterwards. The Quokkas on Rottnest

do not breed again in the spring. This is because Rottnest has low levels of copper and the amount of copper in Quokkas' bodies affects their breeding pattern. Quokkas may mate twice in the breeding season and the mother Quokka carries her non-growing embryo for up to six months until she is ready to give birth. This is useful if the first joey dies, then a second one can be born quickly to replace it. Wild Quokkas can live up to 10 years.

### Threats:

- Human activity changing diet and behaviour – artificial food
- Roadkill from buses and bicycles
- Uncontrolled fire
- Altered hydrological regimes (changes to the normal water cycle)
- Climate change
- Disease (threatens individual Quokkas but not the whole population)

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Quokka was first animal to be recorded by Europeans.

It is very important that visitors do not feed Quokkas. Eating 'human food' can be very bad for the Quokkas' health.