



COMMON WALLAROO

MARSUPIALIA

Family: Macropodidae

Genus: *Macropus*

Species: *robustus*



Range: throughout Australia

Habitat: coastal mountains and rocky inland ranges, preferring grass covered stony ridges

Niche: Terrestrial, nocturnal and crepuscular, herbivorous

Wild diet: grazer low grade grasses and bush browser

Zoo diet: alfalfa, vegetables, fruits, bread and horse chow

Life Span: (Wild) 18 years

(Captivity) 19 years

Sexual dimorphism: Male is about twice the weight of female and darker colored

Location in SF Zoo: Australian Walkabout

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The Common Wallaroo or Hill Wallaroo is a heavily-built kangaroo with coarse, shaggy fur, a hairless muzzle, a relatively short, thick tail, and a distinctive upright hopping style. Their coat color varies from light grey through to black with paler chests and blackish digits with males usually darker than females. They have powerfully muscled hindquarters with a tapered tail that acts as a balance and rudder when leaping and a third leg when sitting. These wallaroos have shorter limbs than other kangaroos, which may be an adaptation for leaping around on rocks of their habitat. Their short, broad hind feet have roughened soles to give extra grip on rocks.

When moving slowly (grazing / browsing) they exhibit an unusual “five-footed” gait, balancing on their tails and forearms while swinging their hindlimbs forward they are able to leap (saltatorial motion) up to 13 feet and may reach speeds of 30 mph when pressed in open country.

The dental formula is $I3/1 - C0/0 - P3/3 - M3/3 \times 2 = 32$.

Weight: M 60 - 90 lbs F 40 - 53 lbs
HBL: M 3.3 - 4.5 ft F 2 - 3.3 ft
TL: F 1.7-1.8 ft / M 2.3 - 3 ft

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Although the Common Wallaroo is abundant, it remains a protected species. Permits may be granted by State wildlife authorities to reduce numbers in prescribed areas. In Victoria, euros are in urgent need of protection. Due to their isolation, they are vulnerable to factors such as predation and human land development. In Victoria they are classified as rare. In all other areas that are known to contain euros, however, the populations are abundant.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

If threatened or disturbed they utter a loud hissing sound, followed with exhalation. It also makes a distinct 'cch-cch' sound. An alarm is also communicated by a foot stamp.

One of the most unusual characteristics of wallaroos is that their behavior is very well adapted for survival in arid environments where temperatures may reach as high as 120 F. To regulate their body temperature they pant to induce evaporative cooling and also excavate holes near or under rocks and stunted trees. In the hole, they lie in an upright position minimizing their exposure to solar radiation. To minimize water loss, they venture from their shelters and forage in the evening usually within 200 m from their shelter. They lead sedentary and essentially solitary lives. The density of populations is governed both by the amount of available shelter and by proximity to food and water.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

The largest most dominant male is able to monopolize females in heat. Breeding may occur throughout the year but reproduction is reduced in times of drought and may cease if drought is prolonged. In processes known as post-partum estrus and embryonic diapause, the female is able to suspend the development of an embryo until better climatic conditions or until an earlier joey has left the pouch. Under good breeding conditions, nearly all females have one running offspring and one attached to a teat in the pouch. The young vacates the pouch at about 9 months and is independent at 16 months.

Estrous polyestrous 32.8 d

Gestation: 36 d / 235 d in pouch

of Mammae: 2 pair

of Young: 1

Sexual Maturity: F 18 months / M 22 months

Weaning Age: 12 months

Weight at birth:

MISCELLANEOUS

The Common Wallaroo is also known by the names: Euro, Eastern Grey Wallaroo, Red Wallaroo, Roan Wallaroo, Barrow Island Wallaroo, Hill Kangaroo and Biggada. There are four sub-species of the wallaroo: *M. r. robustus*, *M. r. erubescens*, *M. r. woodwardi*, and *M. r. isabellinus*. The Barrow Island species (*M. r. isabellinus*) is classified as vulnerable.

Common Wallaroo are distinguished from Eastern Grey Kangaroo by their shaggy coat, stocky build, lower legs and feet uniformly blackish not pale. They are distinguished from the Red Kangaroo by lacking obvious facial markings except for clear pale eyelids, having a shorter muzzle, less pointed ears, proportionally shorter hindlimbs and a larger area of bare black rhinarium.

Sources:

updated: 1/17

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