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State of Australia's threatened macropods

WWF-Australia commissioned a report into the state of Australia's threatened macropods. The report summarises the status of threatened macropod species within Australia and identifies a priority list of species on which to focus further gap analysis. This information will inform and guide WWF in future threatened species conservation planning.

The threatened macropods of Australia have been identified by WWF as a group of threatened species of global significance. This is in recognition of the fact that kangaroos and wallabies are amongst the most recognisable species in the world, they have substantial cultural and economic significance and significant rates of species extinction and decline means the future for many of the remaining species is not certain.

Seventy-six macropod species are listed, or in the process of being listed, on the IUCN red-list. A total of forty-two of these species, or more than 50 per cent, are listed as threatened at some level.

Threatened macropod species were ranked according to three criteria:

- Conservation status, which was determined from four sources: IUCN Red List, Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999), State legislation, IUCN Global Mammal Assessment Project
- Occurrence within an identified WWF global priority ecoregion
- Genetic uniqueness

Summary of threatened macropods

Musky rat kangaroo

The musky rat kangaroo is a good example of how protected areas can aid in securing a species' future. It is generally common within its small range and the population is not declining. It inhabits rainforest in wet tropical forests of Far North Queensland, and large tracts of this habitat are protected in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area of Far North Queensland.

Bettongs

Of all 10 types of bettongs four are extinct, three are threatened and three are considered to be at low risk of extinction. Western Australia's woylie population has suffered more than a 90 per cent decline. The woylie was previously listed as endangered under the Australian Government's *EPBC Act* and Western Australian legislation but was de-listed in 1996 due to conservation efforts and successful recovery. However, as of January 2008 it has been re-listed as endangered at the state level, and *EPBC Act* re-listing is being sought due to a rapid decline in population numbers over the last few years. The distribution and abundance of all bettongs has been severely affected since European settlement.

Potoroos

Of all five types of potoroos, one species is extinct, three are threatened and one subspecies is considered low risk despite suffering a 10-50 per cent decline in population. With 80 per cent of potaroo species extinct or at risk of extinction, this group of macropods has been severely affected.

Desert rat kangaroo

There was one type of desert rat kangaroo, which is now extinct. Only known from the hottest and driest parts of Central Australia, has not been seen since 1935.

Tree kangaroos

Two species of tree kangaroo occur in Australia and neither is considered threatened. Large tracts of habitat for these species are protected within Wet Tropics World Heritage Area of Queensland and populations of both of these species are considered stable.

Hare wallabies

This group of macropods has severely declined with three of the eight or 38 per cent of the hare wallabies extinct and the remaining five all threatened or near threatened.

Wallabies & kangaroos

All large kangaroos - red, eastern grey, western grey and euro - are abundant and widespread. While this group is doing relatively well, the smaller species in this genus are still of concern, with 15 per cent of all wallabies and kangaroos extinct or threatened.

Nailtail wallabies

One species is extinct, one is endangered and one is considered low risk. This group has been severely affected with two of the three species extinct or close to extinction.

Rock wallabies

Of the 22 listed rock-wallabies, three are endangered, seven are vulnerable, four are near threatened and eight are low risk. While no rock-wallabies have become extinct, at least 45% are threatened.

Pademelon

Species of pademelon found within Australia appear relatively secure.

Setonix

The quokka is threatened, having suffered a significant decline in abundance and range on the mainland. It is now only relatively abundant on two islands off WA – Rottnest Island and Bald Island.

Banded hare wallaby

This species is particularly significant as it is the sole surviving member of a once-much larger family of browsing kangaroos that has become extinct, and it is threatened. The banded hare-wallaby is extinct on the mainland and is threatened where it persists on Western Australian islands.

Reference:

WWF Species Program - Threatened Macropods - Species Prioritisation Process. August 2008. Environmental Resources Management Australia.

Top five most threatened Australian macropods

1	<i>Onychogalea fraenata</i>	BRIDLED NAIL-TAILED WALLABY	Qld
2	<i>Potorous gilbertii</i>	GILBERT'S POTOROO	WA
3	<i>Bettongia tropica</i>	NORTHERN BETTONG	Qld
4	<i>Potorous longipes</i>	LONG-FOOTED POTOROO	Vic
5	<i>Petrogale concinna</i>	NABARLEK, PYGMY ROCK WALLABY	WA, NT