

Wallabies and kangaroos



Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of TOURISM, PARKS
HERITAGE and the ARTS

Tasmania has two species of wallaby — the Tasmanian pademelon (or rufous wallaby) and Bennetts (or red-necked) wallaby, and one species of kangaroo — the Forester kangaroo. The pademelon is a stocky animal, with a relatively short tail and legs, that reaches

10 kg in weight and a standing height of 1 m.

Bennetts wallaby, often referred to as a kangaroo in Tasmania, can weigh more than

20 kg and stand up to 1.5 m tall. They are

distinguished from the pademelon and kangaroo by their black nose and paws, and white stripe on the upper lip. The Forester kangaroo is the largest marsupial in Tasmania —

males can reach 70 kg and stand 2 m tall! They

have relatively large ears and differ from the other

two species in having hair between the nostrils and upper lip. They often make clucking sounds between themselves and give a guttural cough when alarmed.

The Forester kangaroo and Bennetts wallaby are found in Tasmania and on the mainland; the pademelon is extinct on the mainland. Bennetts wallabies and pademelons are found throughout the state while the Forester kangaroo is restricted to central and northeastern Tasmania. During the day they usually shelter in thick bush or shady forested areas. Pademelons are strictly nocturnal feeders rarely seen during the day. Foresters often feed during the day, but mostly in the early morning and evening, and Bennetts wallabies feed at afternoon and dusk. They generally graze on grass and herbs, although the pademelon also eats fungi. Forester kangaroos are social animals that are usually seen in family groups of 3 - 4 but may occur in groups of more than 10. The other two species are solitary animals but do come together when sharing feeding areas.

Roles and values

Wallabies and Kangaroos:

- are a source of food for Tasmanian devils, quolls and eagles, who take the young, sick or injured, or scavenge carcasses.
- are an important tourism asset providing enjoyment for many people, particularly overseas visitors who have nothing like the wallaby or kangaroo in their home country.

- provide recreational shooters with sustainable hunting opportunities.
- have high quality meat and fur which is sold both locally and interstate.

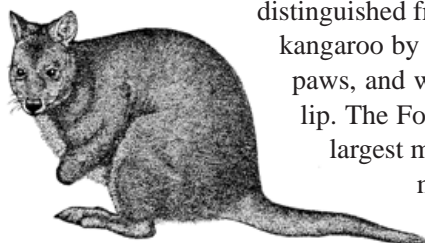
Problems and solutions

Wallabies and kangaroos damage crops and pastures in many parts of Tasmania. Damage in local areas where numbers are high, or where crops are especially valuable, can be significant. Due to the large numbers and wide distribution of pademelons and Bennetts wallabies it is these that are most often the problem, although Forester kangaroos can be a nuisance in very limited parts of Tasmania. Wallabies and kangaroos may become especially problematic during droughts when a lack of natural food can push them into crop or pasture areas to feed.

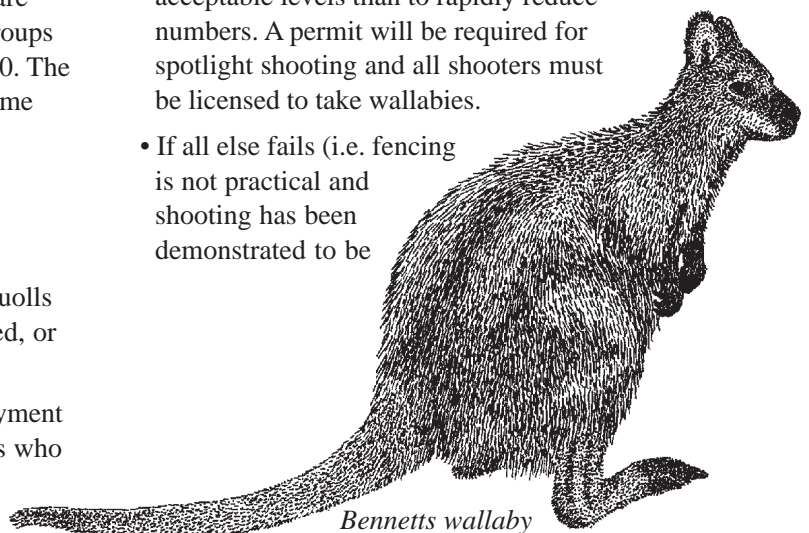
A less common problem caused mainly by the larger Forester kangaroo is damage to fencing.

To prevent these problems:

- Plan ahead! Consider likely grazing problems before planting a crop or developing an area of pasture. Avoid small areas surrounded by bush.
- Consider fencing where long-term protection is required or where a very valuable crop is planted. Designs are available from the Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries. New fence designs are constantly being tried.
- If population reduction is necessary on your property then a shooting program may need to be implemented. It is far better to control wallabies at acceptable levels than to rapidly reduce numbers. A permit will be required for spotlight shooting and all shooters must be licensed to take wallabies.
- If all else fails (i.e. fencing is not practical and shooting has been demonstrated to be



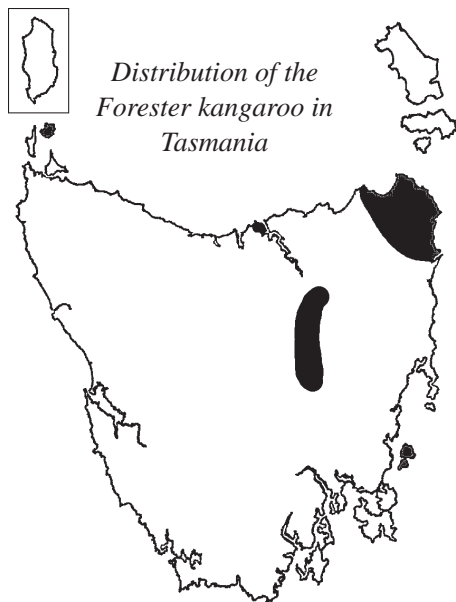
Pademelon



Bennetts wallaby

ineffective) and further culling is needed, the Parks and Wildlife Service may issue a permit to lay 1080 poison. Before considering poison the PWS will insist that every effort has been taken to control by other means. Often local shooting organisations will co-operate.

Population regulation



In natural areas populations are controlled by predation, mostly by Tasmanian devils and eagles, and by food supply. In poor years fewer young are produced therefore minimising population growth. Unfortunately, the clearing of bushland and the creation of *improved* pasture has tipped the natural balance in favour of increased macropod numbers.

Conservation

The pademelon and Bennetts wallaby are both abundant in Tasmania as their numbers and distribution have expanded over the past 30 years. This is due to a reduction in hunting pressure and the clearing of forest by man. This resulted in a mosaic of pastures where wallabies can feed at night, alongside bushland where they can shelter by day. Although both species are partly protected in Tasmania, they may be killed under permits to control problem populations or during annual open seasons.

Although the Forester kangaroo is common on the mainland (where it is known as the eastern grey

kangaroo), the Tasmanian population has been severely depleted by hunting and habitat loss; at one time it was reduced to 15% of its former numbers. It is restricted to the midlands and the northeast of the state and although relatively common in local areas, it is still at risk and is therefore wholly protected. To overcome local problems, some shooting permits are issued.

When, where and how to see wild wallabies and kangaroos

Good places to see all three species are Mt. William National Park and Asbestos Range National Park. Most other parks have good populations of wallabies. In fact, wallabies can be seen in all Tasmanian bush areas while driving at night.

Further information

Green, R. H. (1993). *The Mammals of Tasmania*. Potoroo Publishing, Launceston.

Strahan, R. (ed). (1995). *The Mammals of Australia*. Reed Books, NSW.

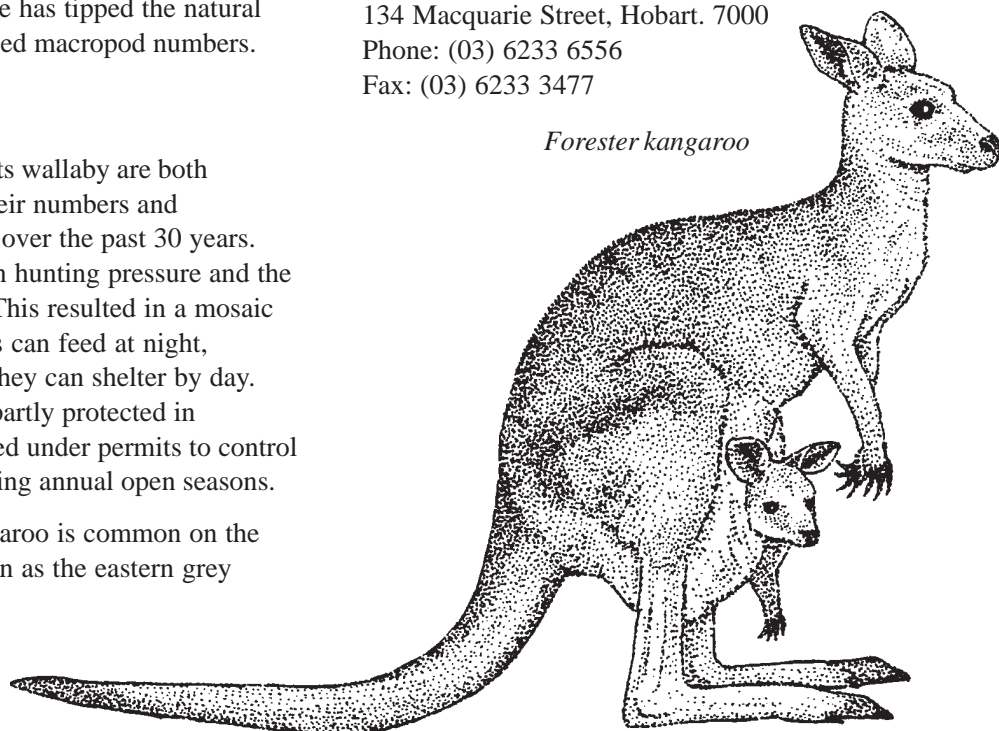
Temby, I. (1992). *Living with wildlife*. Department of Conservation & Environment, Victoria.

Watts, D. (1993) *Tasmanian Mammals — A field guide*. Peregrine Press, Tasmania.

Contact

Biodiversity Conservation Branch: DPIWE
134 Macquarie Street, Hobart. 7000
Phone: (03) 6233 6556
Fax: (03) 6233 3477

Forester kangaroo



FURTHER INFORMATION

Head Office: 134 Macquarie Street Hobart TAS 7000
Phone: 1300 135 513

Internet: www.parks.tas.gov.au
January 2006 © State of Tasmania