

BRUSH-TAILED BETTONG

HABITAT

The Brush-tailed Bettong (also known as the Woylie) lives in woodlands with dense grass and woody shrub undergrowth.^[1] They are native to South-West Australia. Additionally, they have introduced populations in Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales.^[2]

DIET

They feed on underground fungi, bulbs, rubber roots, seeds, plants, invertebrates,^[3] and resin.^[4] They forage at night for their food, do not drink water and eat little vegetation because they gain enough hydration from the foods they eat. They are aggressive in their feeding grounds and can get defensive when encountering other animals.^[5]

REPRODUCTION

They breed year-round, yielding up to 3 young per year with a single baby at a time. After birth, the underdeveloped newborns are moved to their mother's pouch for protection, feeding upon maternal milk for 3 months. After leaving the pouch, they travel with the mother until the next joey comes out.^[6]

THREATS

Land clearance for agriculture has destroyed their habitats. Introduced predators such as foxes and feral cats are also known threats.^[7]

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Their numbers are monitored by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) in 5 sanctuaries. AWC also contributes to the national Woylie Recovery Team, and assists Woylie research projects.^[8]



"*Bettongia penicillata*" by Miss Dilettante is licenced under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

DESCRIPTION

They are 30 to 35cm long (head-body).^[9] Their flexible and brush-like tails^[10] are 25 to 36cm long,^[11] with black crests.^[12] Their dense fur is grey-brown with a pale white-brown on the undersides. They have powerful hind legs and shorter front limbs.^[13]

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Bettongia penicillata^[14]

CONSERVATION STATUS

Critically Endangered^[15]

CLASS

Mammals^[16]

LIFESPAN

Up to 14 years in captivity/Up to 9 years in the wild^[17]

POPULATION SIZE

Less than 15,000 individuals^[18]

FUN FACT

"Woylie" is a Noongar word, pronounced as 'woy-lee'.^[19]

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- [2] Animalia Bio, 'Woylie', *Animalia Bio* (2024), Distribution, <https://animalia.bio/woylie>, accessed 5 Sep. 2024.
- [3] Taylor Comstock, 'What Does A Woylie Eat?', *A-Z Animals* (7 March 2022), What Do Woylies Eat?, <https://a-z-animals.com/blog/what-does-a-woylie-eat/>, accessed 28 Aug. 2024.
- [4] Shark Bay World Heritage, 'Woylie (brush-tailed bettong)', Diet and Habitat.
- [5] Taylor Comstock, 'What Does A Woylie Eat?', What Do Woylies Eat?.
- [6] Animalia Bio, 'Woylie', Mating Habits.
- [7] Government of Western Australia, 'Woylie', *Western Australian Museum* (14 March 2023), Threats to their survival, <https://visit.museum.wa.gov.au/boolabardip/woylie>, accessed 28 Aug. 2024.
- [8] Australian Wildlife Conservancy, 'Brush-tailed Bettong (Woylie)', *Australian Wildlife Conservancy* (21 Sep. 2022), What is AWC doing?, <https://www.australianwildlife.org/wildlife/woylie-brush-tailed-bettong/>, accessed 28 Aug. 2024.
- [9] Animalia Bio, 'Woylie', Length.
- [10] Animalia Bio, 'Woylie', Appearance.
- [11] Shark Bay World Heritage, 'Woylie (brush-tailed bettong)', Tail.
- [12] Shark Bay World Heritage, 'Woylie (brush-tailed bettong)', Description.
- [13] Animalia Bio, 'Woylie', Appearance.
- [14] Government of Western Australia, 'Woylie', Scientific Name.
- [15] Government of Western Australia, 'Woylie', Conservation status.
- [16] Animalia Bio, 'Woylie', Class.
- [17] Animalia Bio, 'Woylie', Appearance.
- [18] Australian Wildlife Conservancy, 'Brush-tailed Bettong (Woylie)', Surviving Population.
- [19] Animalia Bio, 'Woylie', Fun Facts for Kids.