



QUENDA

Isodon fusciventer

A Southwest bandicoot

The quenda – pronounced “kwen-dah” – was originally thought to be a subspecies of the Southern brown bandicoot but has been raised to species level in recent years thanks to genetic testing! This species are only found in southwest Western Australia, unlike the Southern brown bandicoot whose range extends across southern Australia.

Urban mammal

Quendas can still be found in remnant bushland across suburban Perth. Their population has fallen since colonisation due to habitat clearing, increasing bushfires and introduced predators including foxes and cats. Luckily, healthy populations can be found across the metropolitan area in bushland pockets both large and small, including within Whiteman Park.

Not a rat

Unfortunately, quenda are often mistaken for rats. When you take a moment to look closer you can see obvious differences though! Quenda have short tapered tails, a loping gait and short whiskers. And unlike the rodents they are often mistaken for, quendas can't climb (but they have been known to jump small obstacles in search of food!).

A tale for a tail

Male quenda are typically larger than females and often have much shorter, stumpier tails. This is because quenda are territorial, and the males in particular will fight with each other for feeding and breeding rights.

Foraging in safety

Both sexes are usually solitary, but their ranges can overlap when food is available.

The quenda is considered 'nocturnal' although are most active at dusk. However, if weather conditions are mild and the risk of predation low (like here in Whiteman Park), they can often be seen out and about during the day!

Nosey nibbler

The quenda is a small, solid mammal. It has petite round ears and a pointed snout that is used for nosing about in leaf litter and soil in search of food. They have coarse, shiny hair that is dark grey-brown to yellow-brown in colour, with creamy white hair on their bellies.



Pouch engineering

Quendas often breed all year round if there is plenty of rain. They can give birth to a litter of five or six young at a time, with two or three joeys weaning at two months old. Like all bandicoots, quenda have a clever, backwards-facing pouch that prevents it being filled with sand when the mother quenda is digging!



Mmm... worms for tea!

Bugs, worms and other invertebrates are an important part of the very diverse diet of the quenda. Their short arms are strong with well-developed claws which help them to dig up food items from the hardest of ground. Distinctive cone-shaped diggings can be found wherever quenda are searching for insects and the fungi and tubers that round out their diet.

Licensed to dig

Quendas are 'eco-engineers', as their nightly diggings help to churn up the soil and leaf-litter. This increases the health of the area because diggings helps break down organic matter, improves nutrient cycling and aerates the soil.

