

Quenda

Isoodon obesulus fusciventer



WHITEMAN PARK
CONSERVATION • RECREATION • EDUCATION

Southwest bandicoot

The quenda (*Isoodon obesulus fusciventer*) is a subspecies of southern brown bandicoot that is only found in southwest Western Australia. Unique to the region, their common name is southern brown bandicoot, but they are more often referred to by their Noongar name of quenda (pronounced “kwen-dah”).



Urban mammal

Remarkably, quendas can still be found in remnant bushland across suburban Perth. However, numbers have fallen since European settlement due to loss of habitat, changes to fire regimes and the effects of introduced predators, primarily foxes and cats. Healthy populations can be found in bushland pockets, including within Whiteman Park.

Foraging in safety

Male quenda are typically larger than females and while both are typically solitary, their ranges may overlap when food is available. The quenda is active at dusk, although can be seen day or night if weather conditions are mild and predation risk low.

Not a rat

The quenda is a small, solid animal with petite round ears and a prominent pointed snout that is used for nosing about in leaf litter and soil in search of food. Their backs are covered in coarse dark grey-brown to yellow-brown hair, tending to creamy white underneath. Often mistaken at a distance for rats, their short tapered tails and slight whiskers differentiate these native mammals upon closer inspection. They also have a very different gait to rats, and, unlike the rodents they are often mistaken for, can't climb.

Mmm... worms for tea!

Bugs, worms, and other invertebrates and also fungi make up the very diverse diet of the quenda. Whilst short, their arms are strong with well-developed claws on all feet, which help them to dig up food items from the hardest of ground. Distinctive cone-shaped diggings can be found where quenda are found.



Pouch engineering

Quenda reproduction is closely linked to local rainfall patterns, with many breeding all year around. Litters of up to five or six young are born after an 11-day gestation period and the joeys (usually only two or three) are weaned at two months. Like all bandicoots, quenda have a backwards pointing pouch that prevents it being filled with sand when digging.



Photos courtesy of Houndstooth Studio