



NSW National Parks
and Wildlife Service

What is DECC doing to help the wallabies?

DECC is conducting a statewide program to monitor brush-tailed rock-wallaby populations in conjunction with the Fox Threat Abatement Plan.

Under the program, brush-tailed rock-wallaby populations are being monitored at sites where foxes are being controlled (treatment sites) and at sites without fox control (non-treatment sites), to determine whether fox control benefits the wallabies.

As foxes are not controlled round brush-tailed rock-wallaby sites at Nattai National Park, DECC is measuring fox activity there twice a year and comparing the results with changes in fox activity at treatment sites. DECC is monitoring rock wallaby numbers by counting their faecal pellets (scats) for three months every year. DNA analysis of scats can also be used to identify individuals and the connections between colonies. DECC is also removing goats, which compete with the wallabies for food and habitat, from Nattai National Park.

The results of the program will eventually be recorded on DECC's website and in the media.



M. Jones

Brush-tailed rock-wallaby scats.

What can you do?

You can help the brush-tailed rock-wallaby bounce back by:

- reporting all brush-tailed rock-wallaby sightings or scats to your local DECC/national parks office – see the questionnaire in this brochure
- working with your local DECC/national parks office to identify and survey suitable rocky habitat
- joining a 'Friends of the brush-tailed rock-wallaby' volunteer group like the one established in Kangaroo Valley by DECC, landowners and community volunteers – this group works with DECC staff to help the brush-tailed rock-wallaby to survive, and you can visit www.rockwallaby.org.au for more information
- leaving pets at home when visiting national parks
- immediately reporting illegal activities in national parks to the local DECC/national parks office.

More information

For more information, contact Department of Environment and Climate Change, Sydney South Region, Nattai Area Office, 99 Menangle Road, Picton

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Saving the brush-tailed rock-wallaby



Department of Environment & Climate Change NSW



The Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) is working with other stakeholders to save the brush-tailed rock-wallaby, which is endangered in NSW. You can help by telling us if you have seen one of these animals. A questionnaire is included in this brochure.

About brush-tailed rock-wallabies

Brush-tailed rock-wallabies (*Petrogale penicillata*) are small, muscular wallabies about 50 cm tall, and weigh around 7.5 kg.

Their fur is dull brown above with a rufous rump and grey shoulders. They have a light coloured cheek-stripe and a black stripe down the middle of their face.

The wallaby is named for its distinctive brushy brown-black tail which is about 70 cm long. This tail is carried over its back for balance as it hops between boulders and up and down rocky slopes.

Habitat includes a mixture of grasses, low scrub and trees such as figs and kurrajongs, which usually surround the wallabies' rocky refuges on steep slopes.

The wallabies live in caves and fissures, and often sun themselves on north-facing rock ledges in the afternoon. At night, they forage for food in the surrounding area. Their diet consists mainly of grasses and herbs, but they will also eat leaves and fruit.



Swamp wallabies (*Wallabia bicolor*) are often confused with brush-tailed rock-wallabies as they occasionally use the same rocky habitat. The swamp wallaby is slightly larger than the brush-tailed rock-wallaby, as it is about 70 cm tall and weighs around 15 kg.

The swamp wallaby has rufous-coloured fur around the base of its ears and lacks the brush-tailed rock-wallaby's long brushy tail.



Brush-tailed rock-wallaby



Swamp wallaby

Swamp wallabies move with their head held low and their tail held out straight behind them when jumping, whereas brush-tailed rock-wallabies hold their head and tail up high.

Brush-tailed rock-wallabies in Nattai National Park

A small colony of around 15–30 brush-tailed rock-wallabies lives in Nattai National Park, which is located 90 km south-west of Sydney in the Warragamba East Catchment Area. This important colony is one of the few remaining in south-eastern Australia.

In the nearby Shoalhaven area, there are estimated to be only 60–100 brush-tailed rock-wallabies. These animals are dispersed over seven colonies in Kangaroo Valley, Touga, Ettrema Wilderness Area and Taralga. There is also a small colony of around 15–20 animals at Jenolan Caves.

Why are they threatened?

Before European settlement, brush-tailed rock-wallabies were widespread throughout southern Queensland, NSW and Victoria. At the beginning of the twentieth century, over half a million animals were killed for the fur trade and as agricultural pests.

In 2008, the wallabies continue to be threatened due to predation by foxes, dogs and cats; competition for food and shelter with rabbits and feral goats; and fragmentation of habitat. As a result, they are listed as endangered in NSW under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

Where are they found?

The brush-tailed rock-wallaby lives in small, isolated colonies along the coast and ranges of eastern Australia, and is particularly rare in the south.

It is estimated that there are between 15,000–30,000 brush-tailed rock-wallabies left in Australia. Of these, fewer than 2% are found south of the Hunter River in NSW.

