

# Southern Brown Bandicoot

'Banjo Frog's Concert Spectacular' is a children's storybook set in the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia, part of the Mt Lofty Ranges. This information sheet is one of a series on the heroes of the story.

## Introduction

The eastern sub-species of Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus obesulus*) can still be found in the Mt Lofty Ranges, Kangaroo Island and the South-East of South Australia, and also in Victoria and New South Wales.

It was once more widespread across south-eastern mainland Australia but has experienced severe range contractions and population declines since European settlement. It is estimated that the Southern Brown Bandicoot (eastern) has experienced a 50-90% decline in its range. Its distribution is now highly fragmented with many discontinuous sub-populations.

Significant work is being undertaken by a range of community and conservation groups, private land holders and government agencies to protect and enhance Southern Brown Bandicoot habitat. Managing rabbit impacts and reducing rabbit densities are important activities to help the Southern Brown Bandicoot.

## Description

Southern Brown Bandicoots are medium-sized nocturnal marsupials with long tapered snouts, naked noses, small and rounded ears, compact bodies and large rumps. They weigh between 440g and 1,600g (males are heavier than females).

Their tails are short and pointed. Their forelegs are short with curved claws on the digits (fingers) used for digging. The hind legs are longer with the second and third digits (toes) fused.

### Fun Fact

An isolated population of Southern Brown Bandicoot (*I. obesulus peninsulae*) exists in the north-eastern part of the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland. That's not very southern at all! All other sub-species are found in the southern half of the country.



Source: Atlas of Living Australia.

### Did you know?

South Australia is also home to a second sub-species of Southern Brown Bandicoot – found only on Nuyts Archipelago, off Eyre Peninsula.

The head and back of Southern Brown Bandicoots appear brown in colour at a distance but grizzled with golden-brown flecks at close range, due to the banded spiny guard hairs. The underside of their body and forefeet are creamy white or pale yellow, and their tail is brown above and creamy yellow below. Like many 'digging' marsupials, the female has a backward opening pouch.

They are solitary animals that live for two to three years.

## Distribution

The Southern Brown Bandicoot (eastern) is listed nationally as an endangered species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, and as Vulnerable under the *SA National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. It can occur from the southern side of the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales to Kangaroo Island in South Australia. Within this range it occurs mostly in coastal areas.

### Fun Fact

Southern Brown Bandicoot diggings are easy to identify. Their diggings are characteristically cone shaped – just like bandicoot noses – wide at the entrance and narrow at the bottom.

**Did you know?**  
*Bandicoots have the shortest pregnancy of any marsupial – 11-14 days!*

## Habitat & Habits

The Southern Brown Bandicoot lives in dense scrubby habitats or areas with dense, low ground cover. It has been seen in both native bushland and areas with shrubby weed species such as blackberry, broom and gorse.

Southern Brown Bandicoots are secretive and rarely venture far from cover, probably to avoid predation.

They are omnivores and 'super' gardeners (also called soil engineers), foraging for food mainly by digging in the leaf litter and soil to find insects (including centipedes, crickets, butterflies and earwigs), insect larvae, earthworms, spiders, fungi, plant root nodules and bulbs. This activity helps with plant distribution and soil health. They also eat fruit, seeds and other plant material found above ground.

Southern Brown Bandicoots sleep during the day in nests made of grass and other plant material that may be mixed with earth. Nests can be very well hidden in dense vegetation or among debris. They do not create their own burrow, but occasionally use the burrows of other species.

Breeding takes place from winter through to summer (peaking in spring) and females usually give birth to 2–4 young per litter. They can have several litters per breeding season, but less than half of their young survive to maturity. Young bandicoots are independent around two months of age.

## Rabbits

Threats to the Southern Brown Bandicoot include vegetation clearance and habitat damage, inappropriate fire regimes (too many fires are harmful to their habitat) and predation by foxes and cats. While wild European rabbit populations support feral predator populations (particularly European red fox and feral cats), thus indirectly impacting on Southern Brown Bandicoots, rabbits also directly impact through competition for feed and shelter and by reducing the amount of sheltering plant cover.

## Other information

For more information on the Southern Brown Bandicoot (eastern sub-species) and actions necessary to protect it and promote its recovery:

Threatened Species Profile and Threats Database [Southern Brown Bandicoots](#)

Threatened Species Conservation advice [Isoodon obesulus obesulus](#)

Government of SA fact sheets: [Southern Brown Bandicoots](#)

## Easter Bilby's Friends

Easter Bilby and friends are all affected by rabbits.

They want their homes, their food and their friends back. People are the key to environmental recovery.

More information on the people and organisations helping Easter Bilby's Friends can be found on the website

[www.easterbilbysfriends.com.au](http://www.easterbilbysfriends.com.au).



In 'Banjo Frog's Concert Spectacular' children plant trees and other habitat, and that is just what is happening on the Fleurieu Peninsula as people do their bit to safeguard Southern Brown Bandicoots. Rabbit control, revegetation and the establishment of corridors to connect remnant populations, will help the long-term survival of the Southern Brown Bandicoots .

### Southern Brown Bandicoot's names:

Scientific name – *Isoodon obesulus obesulus*

Kaurna name – marti

Ngarrindjerri name – wirapi

### Related species –

*Isoodon obesulus nauticus* – Southern Brown Bandicoot (Nuyts Archipelago sub-species)

*Isoodon obesulus peninsulae* – Southern Brown Bandicoot (Cape Yorke sub-species)

*Isoodon obesulus affinis* – Southern Brown Bandicoot (Tasmania and Bass Strait sub-species)

*Isoodon obesulus fusciventer* – Quenda, Southern Brown Bandicoot (south-west Western Australia sub-species)

## More information about Rabbit-Free Australia

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**Bilbies Not Bunnies**