

Arid Zone Monitoring Species Profile

Agile wallaby

Notamacropus agilis

Language names

Parrjaniny

National status: Not listed

IUCN Red List: Least concern



Image: Simon Ferguson

Agile wallaby



Image: Gavin Emmons

Agile wallaby tracks (arrow shows which way it is moving).



Image: Gavin Emmons

Agile wallaby tracks (arrow shows which way it is moving).

Animal Description

The Agile Wallaby is a large wallaby with a sandy brown coat, with a white stripe on each side of the face and white stripes on each thigh. It has large ears with black edges. The body and tail length is up to 1.8 m. Males weigh up to 27 kg, while females are around 15 kg. The tip of the tail is black.

They can be active during the day or night. Agile wallabies often rest quietly in the shade during the day, and graze on grasses, legumes, fallen fruits and other herbs in the late afternoon. They are often seen in small groups.

Key threats

No major threats, but land clearing may threaten local populations in Queensland.

Habitat

Agile wallabies live in open forest, tropical woodlands and grasslands and on coastal sand dunes, especially near water. They are common in northern Australia and parts of the east coast of Queensland.

Agile wallaby scat

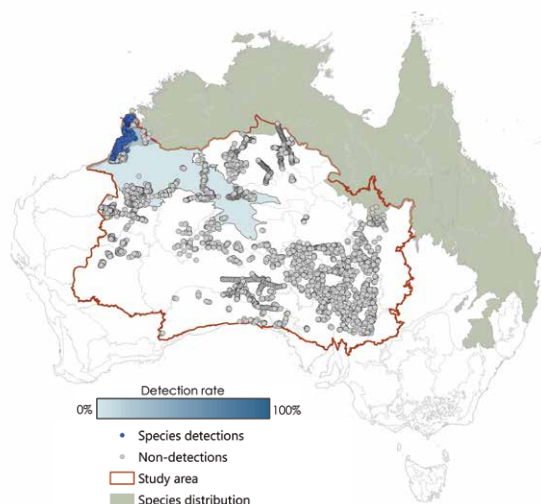
Scats of agile wallabies are usually seen in groups of four to eight around their feeding areas and sleeping places. Groups of scats from the same animal may vary in shape (oval, round, or slightly square shaped), and are 10-12 mm in width and filled with grass or plants.

Agile wallaby foot and tracks

The agile wallaby hops with its body held upright, its head held high and with forearms extended.

All wallabies in Australia have similar tracks. Wallabies have 5 clawed toes on the front foot, and these toes point forward. They have a long hind foot. The long fourth toe, with its large strong claw, and the shorter fifth toe, also with a strong claw, are the only ones that touch the ground when the wallaby moves. The second and third toes are joined up to their top joints, with claws used for grooming.

Agile wallaby detection rates

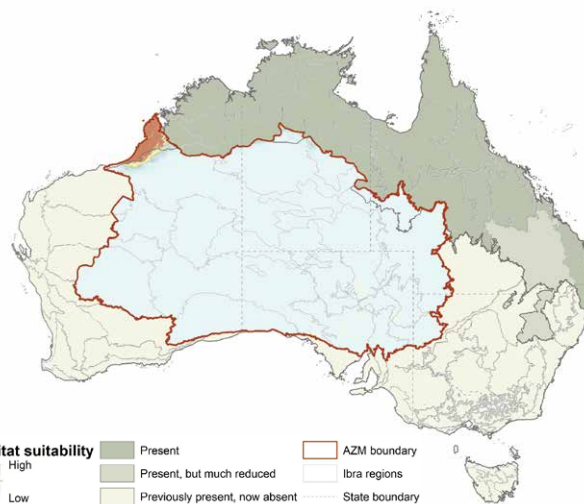


Agile wallabies were detected at 2% of all surveys from the AZM dataset. It was the 18th most recorded mammal species, and the 15th most recorded native mammal species. Agile wallabies are the most common kangaroo in tropical coastal Australia.

The map shows the detection rate for agile wallabies across all surveys carried out in the two AZM project bioregions in which it occurs. Note that the agile wallaby is only found in the coastal area of the Great Sandy Desert, even though the whole bioregion is shaded blue.

The maps above show data shared by data providers with the AZM project. The data are from track and sign surveys. This method is great for detecting species that live in sandy deserts, but not as good for species that prefer rocky habitats, or species with distributions that are mostly outside the central deserts. The method also works best for larger-bodied animals with tracks that are easily identified. It is possible that extra surveys have been carried out that have not yet been shared. If you see 'gaps' in the maps that you could fill by sharing your data, let us know.

Agile wallaby habitat suitability



The habitat suitability model can tell us about where agile wallabies are most likely to be found. The analysis considered climate factors like annual, seasonal and daily temperature and rainfall; landform factors like elevation and slope; soil factors; and habitat factors like the amount of vegetation (NDVI).

The model tells us that agile wallabies prefer areas of higher annual rainfall (over 500 mm) that are close to water (<1 km). The map shows us they the coastal areas of the north-western deserts are good places for agile wallabies. The map only shows habitat suitability inside the AZM project boundary, but agile wallabies are also found across northern Australia, in the darker-shaded part of the map, and are common there.

Things to think about when surveying for agile wallaby

- Survey during good conditions (in the early morning is best, not too windy or straight after rain).
- Organise to do surveys at regular times every year – for example, before the wet or hot season (October) and in the early dry season or early cool time (April).
- Follow advice of experienced trackers - know how to tell agile wallaby tracks apart from other species before you go to survey.
- If you want to see changes over time, you will need to go back to the same areas to sample over several years. If you want to see if management actions (feral animal culling or fire) are working, you need to sample many different sites, before and after the action. You might need help from a scientist to make the sampling design strong.

Further information

Arid Zone Monitoring project:

<https://www.nespthreatenedspecies.edu.au/projects/arid-zone-monitoring-surveys-for-vertebrates-across-arid-and-semi-arid-zones>

References

¹ Woinarski, J.C.Z & Burbidge, A.A. & Harrison, P.L. (2014). The Action Plan for Australian Mammals 2012. (CSIRO Publishing: Melbourne.)



National Environmental Science Programme

This project received support from the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program.

The Arid Zone Monitoring project is a collaboration between the NESP TSR Hub and over 30 Indigenous ranger groups and Indigenous organisations, 8 NGOs and NRM groups, 5 government agencies institutions, and many individual researchers and consultants. The project has gathered track and sign data from across Australia's deserts, using it to map the distributions of desert species and their threats. The national database includes almost 50,000 species presence records from over 5300 unique sites and almost 15,000 site visits, over the period from 1982 to 2020. The project area was defined by using IBRA subregional boundaries - the project boundary captures Australia's desert subregions where track and sign-based surveys are commonly used. The project showcases the collective work carried out by all groups working across the arid zone, and lays the groundwork for creating ongoing, national-scale monitoring for desert wildlife.

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