

RED KANGAROO



Macropus rufus

STATUS

- Lower Risk – Least Concern. Abundant and protected. Licences are issued for hunters to cull populations in times of high population.
- Threats - Humans and dingos, especially in drought periods when rabbits are scarce.

ORIGIN

- Australia, west of the Great Dividing Range

HABITAT

- Red kangaroos live in scrubby open plains and semi desert, but are seldom found in areas that have no trees. They mainly inhabit areas of less than 500mm annual rainfall.
- They are well adapted to arid areas. They drink water if available, but are able to live without it for some time, surviving on water found in the plants they eat. To breed successfully they need to feed on green plants and herbs .

DESCRIPTION

- The Red kangaroo is the largest living marsupial. Joeys weigh less than a gram when born; they are about the size of a jelly bean.
- Females have four teats in the pouch and can produce different types of milk from different teats to feed joeys of different ages.
- Males grow to about 1.8 metres in height with a tail of about 90 cm.
- Males, also known as 'boomers', can vary from brick red to reddish grey in colour. The females usually have blue grey fur and are know as 'blue flyers'.
- Males spread oil from a scent gland over their front.



SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- Red kangaroos live in mobs and range over a large territory.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- On mild days they will bask in the sun, but on hot days they seek shade.
- Females are mature at 15–20 months and males at 24 months.
- Red kangaroos have a life span of up to 16 years.
- Males can reach speeds of up to 56 km/hour for short bursts, but females can reach 65 km/hour. Normally cruising speed is 13 -20 km/hour.
- In the wild Red kangaroos mainly eat grass. In captivity they eat grass, carrots, hay, apples and kangaroo cubes.
- They can make a clicking and hissing sound.