

# Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

## PIG-FOOTED BANDICOOT

### *Chaeropus ecaudatus*

#### Conservation status

Australia: Extinct

Northern Territory: Extinct



(J Gould © Museum Victoria)

#### Description

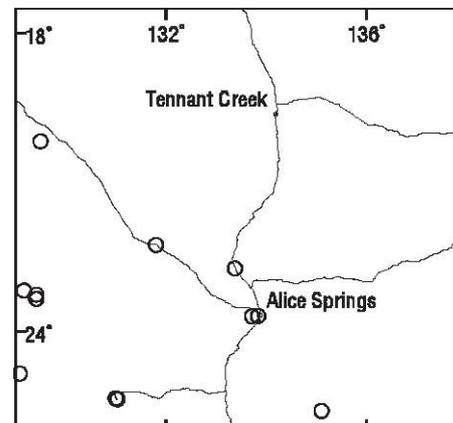
The pig-footed bandicoot was a small bandicoot (weight about 200 g), with delicate and graceful appearance. Its ungainly name refers to its forefoot, which had only two functional toes, with hoof-like claws. It had unusually long legs for a bandicoot, and moved distinctively (“like a broken-down hack”). Its fur was orange-brown above, and lighter fawn below. Its ears were relatively long (though shorter than those of bilbies).

#### Distribution

Museum records, fossil and sub-fossil evidence and information provided by elderly Aboriginal people suggest that it once occurred in a belt of country stretching from north western Victoria, across the Nullabor Plain and the inland of South Australia into the present Western Australian wheatbelt. To the north, a specimen from Ryans Well (1891), another north east of Charlotte Waters (1895) and one from Alice Springs (c.1916) extended its range into the southern Northern Territory. Elderly Aboriginal people recall hunting the pig-footed bandicoot in the Tanami Desert and in the country to the west of Uluru abutting and including the Gibson Desert (Johnson and Southgate 1990).

#### Conservation reserves where reported:

None (although it formerly occurred in areas that are now included within Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park and West MacDonnell National Park.)



Known locations of the pig-footed bandicoot  
o = pre 1970

#### Ecology

From the few-recorded observations of this species in the wild, the pig-footed bandicoot appears to have been a plains dweller with a preferred habitat of open woodlands with an understorey of shrubs and grasses. It excavated a squat in which it built a nest of dried grass, leaves and twigs lined with soft fibrous grasses (Burbidge *et al.* 1988).

## Conservation assessment

The pig-footed bandicoot is presumed to have become extinct in the NT in the 1950s, following a broad-scale decline extending over at least the previous 50 years (Finlayson 1961; Burbidge *et al.* 1988; Johnson and Southgate 1990).

## Threatening processes

The decline and extinction of the pig-footed bandicoot is attributed to a range of factors including predation by cats and foxes, and habitat alteration due to the impacts of exotic herbivores and to changed fire regimes.

## Conservation objectives and management

The species is presumed extinct. No conservation management plan can offer further help.

## Compiled by

Chris Pavey  
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## References

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- Finlayson, H.H. (1961). On central Australian mammals, Part IV. The distribution and status of central Australian species. *Records of the South Australian Museum* 41, 141-191.
- Johnson, K.A., and Southgate, R.I. (1990). Present and former status of bandicoots in the Northern Territory. In *Bandicoots and bilbies* (eds J.H. Seebeck, P.R. Brown, R.L. Wallis and C.M. Kemper.) pp. 85-92. (Surrey Beatty & Sons, Sydney.)
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