

Wildlife Fact Sheet # 4

Red-necked Pademelon *Thylogale thetis*

A short, stocky wallaby standing only 40-50cm tall, the Red-necked Pademelon is a light brown animal with a rounded face and red-tinged neck. They are different from other wallabies by their 'hunched-over' stature. This physical adaptation helps them move through the thick undergrowth of their forest habitat.

Red-necked Pademelons can weigh up to 7kg and usually live to 10 -12 years of age.

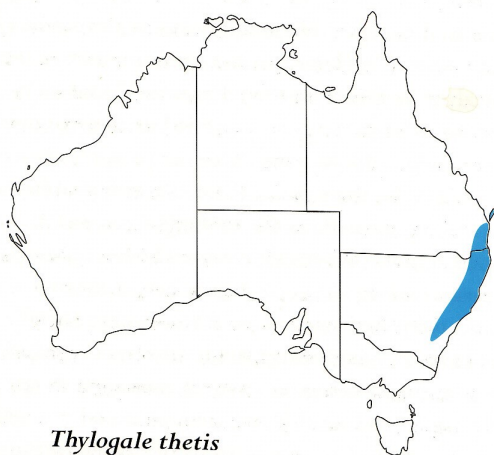


Conservation Status:

The Red-necked Pademelon has disappeared from much of its range though populations are still stable in some areas. Adults can usually escape from foxes and cats, but with the clearing of their preferred habitat for farming, young Pademelons quickly fall prey to feral predators resulting in local extinctions. Today some of their habitat is protected but much is found on the verge of the urban environment where they still fall prey to domestic dogs and cats.

Habitat, Diet & Breeding:

Red-necked Pademelons inhabit dense forest and rainforest of eastern Australia. Preferring areas with thick understorey, they will develop trails leading to and from their favourite feeding areas. Being crepuscular (emerging before sunset), Pademelons may travel up to 1km from their resting site before coming out to graze on grassy areas at sunset. They predominantly eat grass though will occasionally eat young leaves on trees and shrubs. Within their forest habitat, they rarely move more than 100m from shelter but can occupy home ranges of up to 30 hectares (73 acres). When threatened, Pademelons will strike the ground hard with their hind feet producing a loud thump, warning others of danger which encourages them to scatter in all directions.



Thylogale thetis

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These robust animals give birth to one young at a time which are raised in the pouch before they follow their mother 'at foot' until about 15 months of age. Males are generally territorial and will chase younger subordinate animals away, protecting their own feeding sites and females. Typical of most kangaroo and wallaby species, Red-necked Pademelons use their hind feet when fighting. However, their tail cannot support their weight so much of the aggression is enforced using their front paws, and grappling with each other and kicking when lying on the ground.

Interesting Facts:

The Pademelon species were once quite common across south eastern Australia and inhabited land used by early settlers. One theory for the origin of their name is from the dark round shapes that can be seen on paddocks at dusk, similar shapes to the Pademelon fruit. Pademelons were once considered pests due to their taste for green pastures and were once hunted extensively. Though many people today do not believe that our native animals should be harvested, it is said that the Pademelon is the best commercial kangaroo due to its high quality meat, fur and leather.



The future:

AEFI is maintaining a population of Red-necked Pademelons at Secret Creek Sanctuary with the intention of releasing surplus animals into larger protected environments in the near future. It is hoped that this beautiful little animal can again be common through its bushland environment.

How you can help:

You can support the Red-bellied Pademelon conservation programs of the Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc through animal sponsorship, donations, or visiting our reserves. Visit our website for more details.