



WARRU

Black Flanked Rock Wallaby ~ *Petrogale lateralis*

What do they look like?

The Warru is a small grey-brown wallaby with a distinctive black patch on its flank, a black stripe on its cheek and also down its back. A long black tail helps with balance and its black feet have strong grip for hopping up rocks. Kanyula (Euros) live in the same country but are shaggier without the black markings and are generally larger and stockier.



Photos: T. Partridge

Where do they live?

Warru used to be found on rocky hills throughout the APY lands and are now found near New Well and Alalka, (north of Pukatja) and on the hill between Kalka and Pipalyatjara. They prefer hills with deep caves and crevices. Warru are also found in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

What do they eat?

Warru eat a range of grasses and the leaves and flowers of shrubs.

Elders from the APY lands report that Warru eat ili (rock fig), kulata (spear) bush and kulypurpa (*Solanum ellipticum*) (Robin Kankanpakantja), and ilintji (native grass), purar-purarpa flower (*Ptilotus* spp.), and the roots of the creeper puunpa (*Boerhavia* spp.) (Billy Wara).

Warru obtain most of their water requirements from their food and live in some areas where there is no permanent water.

Why are they threatened?

Warru are classed as vulnerable in South Australia due to substantial decline throughout their range. Predation from foxes and feral cats, that are good at hunting within the rocky crevices, has contributed to the decline of Warru. Native predators (Dingoes and Wedge-tailed Eagles) may affect an already restricted population. Competition from Kanyula and Rabbita may be increasing and along with a decline in traditional land management practices (patch burning, rock hole cleaning) could be affecting Warru habitat.

What is APY Land Management doing?

- Kuna is counted three times per year to assess the number of Warru at each colony

- A fox baiting program is being conducted around the Warru colonies and expert Anangu trackers are monitoring the changes in fox tjina (tracks) following the baiting.
- Approximately 15 Warru from New Well have been fitted with radio collars. These send out a signal which tells us if the Warru is alive and allows us to track it to the hill it is sitting on. 'Radio-tracking' helps us find out how much country a Warru needs to survive and whether our baiting program is extensive enough.
- As part of the Warru Recovery Team, APY Land Management has been involved in a major 'cross-fostering' project where iti (baby) Warru have been taken from their mothers and sent to Monarto Zoo. They are transferred into the pouches of Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies who are 'growing them up'. This process speeds up the breeding rate and in a few years time we hope to be able to bring some Warru back to the APY lands. All Warru and their children that have gone to the zoo remain the property of Anangu and the zoo will provide a 'behind-the-scenes' tour to any Anangu wishing to visit.



Photos: T. Partridge



Looking for tjina around the Warru colony at New Well (left), the Warru Recovery Team (right).

How you can help?

Look after and de-sex your pet cats and dogs so that they don't escape into the wild and kill native animals. Listen to stories about Warru from your community elders. Learn how to identify different tjina and kuna from your community elders. Work hard at school and get a job with APY Land Management to help look after Warru.

More information:

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