

# Bilby

*Macrotis lagotis*

(meaning 'hare-eared big-ear')

Bilbies once inhabited approximately 70% of the Australian mainland, but are now restricted to a much smaller range. They are classed as **vulnerable**.



Like other digging marsupials, they play a valuable role in native plant seed distribution and germination.

Unlike bandicoots, they are excellent burrowers and build extensive tunnel systems with their strong forelimbs and well-developed claws.

## Facts

- 'Bilby' is a Yuwaalaraay Aboriginal word meaning long-nosed rat
- Are light and delicate but can put on surprising bursts of speed
- Have poor eyesight but make up for this with acute hearing and a well-developed sense of smell
- Sleep sitting back upon their tails with their heads tucked down between their forepaws and ears folded forward along their face
- The female bilby's pouch faces backwards, which prevents her pouch from getting filled with dirt while she is digging

## At Kanyana

Kanyana runs **one of only 5 bilby breeding programs in Australia**. We normally have 10-15 bilbies in the endangered species breeding program, ranging in age from juveniles recently emerged from the pouch to mature adults.



The majority of Kanyana's bilbies are captive bred, born either at Kanyana or other breeding facilities. Wild bilbies are rarely captured, but when they are, they introduce valuable new genes into the captive breeding population.

Many of the Kanyana bilbies have been released into a predator-proof compound in the Dryandra Woodland. The bilbies released at Dryandra are surviving and successfully breeding.

We need 35 kg of fruit and vegetables, nearly 1 kg of live mealworms and 700 grams of pellets to feed our bilbies each week. It costs over **\$600 per year** to feed and care for each Bilby.

You can **meet our bilbies** on our **nocturnal tours** and on Kanyana's annual open day in early May, **Discover Kanyana**.



Photo by Houndstooth Studio