

Parma Wallaby

Scientific Name: *Macropus parma*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Marsupialia

Family: Macropodidae



Head and body length range from 17 to 21 inches, tail length from 16 to 21 inches, and weight from 7 to 13 pounds. Males are larger than females, and have a more robust chest and arms. Coloration is a uniform grayish brown on the back and shoulders, and a white throat and chest. There is a dark stripe along the spine ending at mid-back, and a white stripe on the upper cheek. Some individuals have a white tip on the tail. The tail is approximately the same length as the head and body.

Range

East New South Wales, Australia.

Habitat

Wet sclerophyll forest with a thick shrubby understory associated with grassy patches.

Gestation

Approximately 35 days.

Litter

One.

Behavior

The Parma Wallaby is normally solitary under natural conditions, although feeding aggregations of 2, and rarely 3 are sometimes observed. Primarily nocturnal, they take cover among the shrubs during the day and emerge at dusk, or shortly before, to feed on grasses and herbs. When hopping, they remain close to the ground in an almost horizontal position with the forearms tucked tightly against the body. At a medium pace the tail is curved upward in a shallow U-shape. It was thought to have become extinct during the nineteenth century, when foresters were doing their best to eliminate it because of damage to pine plantations. A stay of execution was granted while some were exported to zoos and research institutions to establish breeding colonies from which the species might be returned to the wet forests of New South Wales. This enthusiasm was found to be mis-directed, however, as surveys demonstrated that it still occurred in New South Wales.

Reproduction

Most births occur between February and June. Females become sexually mature at one year of age. Males reach sexual maturity at 20 to 24 months. The single young is born after a gestation period of about 35 days. The first excursion from the pouch is made at about 23 to 25 weeks, and the young leaves the pouch permanently at about 30 weeks. Weaning is not completed for another 10 to 14 weeks, during which time the female may give birth to a second young.

Wild Diet

Grasses and herbs.