

# ZOOS VICTORIA'S 20 PRIORITY SPECIES

## EASTERN BARRED BANDICOOT

*Perameles gunnii* mainland subspecies  
Endangered

The Eastern Barred Bandicoot wouldn't be here without us. The mainland subspecies of Eastern Barred Bandicoot was thought to be extinct until a small population was discovered sheltering among wrecked cars at the Hamilton tip in western Victoria. In 1991 Zoos Victoria embarked on its commitment to fight the extinction of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot and has bred nearly 600 bandicoots since. Zoos Victoria coordinates the captive breeding program, supplements wild populations with captive-bred animals and works closely with the recovery team to bring this species back from the brink.

# Zoos Victoria is committed to Fighting Extinction

We are working to ensure that no Victorian terrestrial vertebrate species goes extinct on our watch.



Eastern Barred Bandicoots were once widespread across the grasslands and grassy woodlands of western Victoria, however by the 1990's, the mainland subspecies was on the brink of extinction. Zoos Victoria has coordinated the Eastern Barred Bandicoot captive breeding program since 1991. Working closely with the Recovery Team, Zoos Victoria also works to control introduced predators and manage habitat for reintroduction. There are currently three small reintroduced populations of Eastern Barred Bandicoots.

## KEY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- + Establish at least three self-sustaining reintroduced populations
- + Maintain a captive population managed to minimise loss of genetic diversity
- + Maintain and enhance community support for the Eastern Barred Bandicoot
- + Undertake research to improve individual fitness in the captive breeding program through mate choice and genetic exchange.

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- + Zoos Victoria has bred nearly 600 Eastern Barred Bandicoots since the program began in 1991
- + Captive-bred animals are regularly released to supplement populations at Hamilton Community Parklands and Mt Rothwell. Additional reintroduction sites are being planned with habitat management and predator proof fencing underway
- + A research trial release on French Island has been approved.

## SPECIES AT RISK

The Eastern Barred Bandicoot is a nocturnal marsupial that feeds on insects, spiders and plant roots. This species is found in grassland habitat and relies heavily on native grasses for cover and nest building. Eastern Barred Bandicoots have one of the shortest gestation periods of any mammal, at just 12.5 days. Females give birth to 2-4 young who remain in the backwards-facing pouch for approximately sixty days. At just seventy-five days old they are independent, and at ninety days can begin breeding. Despite this ability to breed so prolifically, there have been widespread, sustained and catastrophic declines in Eastern Barred Bandicoot populations on the Australian mainland since European settlement. Major threats to the mainland subspecies of Eastern Barred Bandicoot are:

- + Introduced predators such as foxes and cats
- + Clearing of woodland habitat
- + Urban growth and expansion
- + Loss of native grasslands due to the introduction of exotic pasture grasses, rabbits and domestic stock
- + Altered fire regimes.

Because of the small population size, loss of genetic diversity is also a potential threat to the Eastern Barred Bandicoot. Zoos Victoria is committed to continuing the fight to save these little marsupials by engaging the community about its plight and concentrating on reproductive and reintroduction research.

## PROGRAM PARTNERS

Department of Sustainability and Environment  
[www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

Parks Victoria  
[www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)

National Trust of Australia  
[www.nationaltrust.org.au](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au)

Mt Rothwell Conservation and Research Centre  
[www.mtrothwell.com.au](http://www.mtrothwell.com.au)

Conservation Volunteers Australia  
[www.conservationvolunteers.com.au](http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au)

Hamilton Community Parklands Committee  
Friends of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot

Zoos Victoria is a not-for-profit, zoo based conservation organisation. We are Fighting Extinction through our local and global conservation programs, research projects and community conservation campaigns. For more information on this or any other Zoos Victoria project, visit [www.zoo.org.au/conservation](http://www.zoo.org.au/conservation)

## IMAGES

**Front:** Despite this little marsupial's extremely short gestation period, populations plummeted following European settlement.

**Below top:** A captive-bred bandicoot is released into grassland habitat at Mt Rothwell.

**Below bottom:** Zoos Victoria's captive breeding commitment is crucial for the Eastern Barred Bandicoot's survival on mainland Australia. These joeys are being hand reared and will be cared for in the education centre to raise awareness of this species. Photos: Zoos Victoria.



FIND OUT MORE

[www.zoo.org.au/conservation](http://www.zoo.org.au/conservation)

