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# Easter Bilbies

NOT  BUNNIES

FACT SHEET

TEACHER RESOURCE

## Bilbies



## Bunnies



Greater Bilby



Rabbit

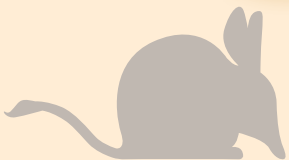
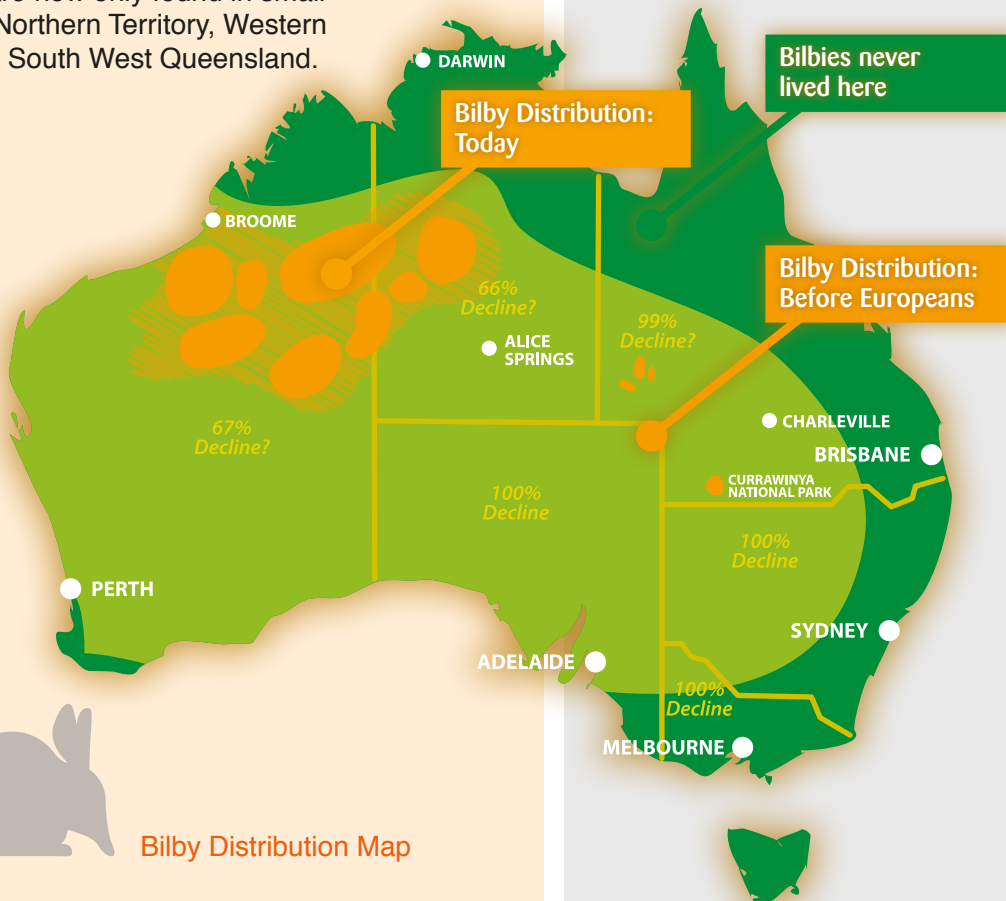
### Bilbies

The Greater Bilby was once found on 70% of Australia. Since European settlement 90% of the previous population has been lost. Bilbies are now only found in small areas of the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South West Queensland.

### Distribution

### Bunnies

The European rabbit is not native to Australia. In 1859, 24 rabbits were introduced to Australia and have since multiplied to form a population of over 600 million in just over a century.



Bilby Distribution Map

# Bilbies

vs

# Bunnies



Bilby Burrows



Feral Rabbit Pests

## Bilbies

Bilbies live in grasslands and mulga scrublands in the hot, dry arid and semi-arid areas of Australia where temperatures can get to over 45°C in summer.

Bilbies live in spiralling burrows which they dig up to 2 metres deep and 3 metres long. This depth helps to keep them safe from predators and also to keep them at a constant temperature of 23°C.

## Bilbies

### Omnivores:

Bilbies eat bulbs, fruit, seeds, fungi, insects, worms, termites, small lizards and spiders.

### Water:

Bilbies don't need to drink water regularly because, like the koala, they get most of their moisture from their food.

## Bilbies

The Greater Bilby is a nocturnal marsupial which has a silky light grey and white coat and a long black and white crested tail with a naked spur-like tip. Bilbies have a long snout and well-developed sense of smell to aid in finding food. Their large, hairless ears are extremely useful for listening for predators as well as prey.



## Habitat

## Bunnies

Rabbits live anywhere they can find food and burrows.

Rabbits take over bilbies burrows.

Rabbits are social animals, living in medium-sized colonies known as warrens.

## Diet

## Bunnies

### Herbivores:

Rabbits are essentially mixed-feeders, both grazing and browsing, but grass is their primary food source. They nevertheless have a diverse diet of grasses, leaves, buds, tree bark, and roots. They ringbark young trees and do not allow for vegetation to grow back.

### Water:

Similar to bilbies, rabbits can get their water needs from their diet.

## Description

## Bunnies

The European rabbit is a smallish, grey-brown (or sometimes black) medium sized mammal. It ranges from 34 to 50 cm in length; weight can range from approximately 1.1 to 2.5 kg.



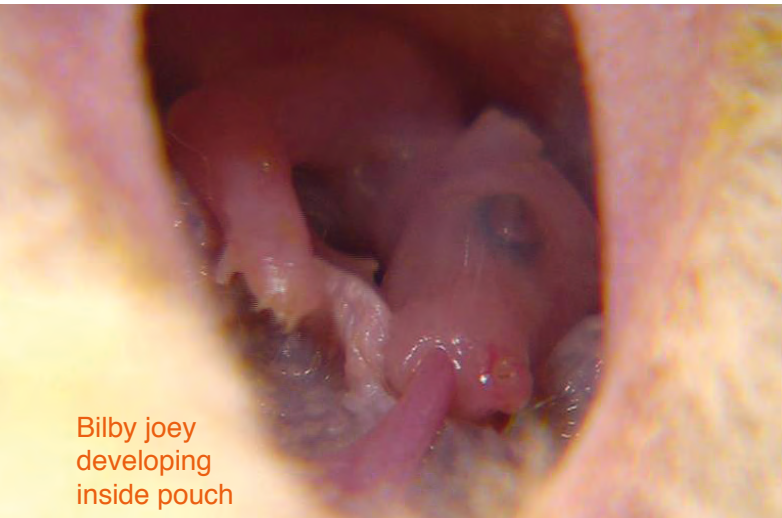
# Bilbies



vs



# Bunnies



Bilby joey developing inside pouch



Rabbit litter

## Bilbies

### Reproduction

## Bunnies

#### Marsupials (pouched young):

For an Australian marsupial, the Bilby is a fast breeder, with a gestation period of 12 to 14 days. They stay in the mother's pouch between 75 and 80 days and are independent 2 weeks later.

Female Bilbies are ready to breed at 6 months.

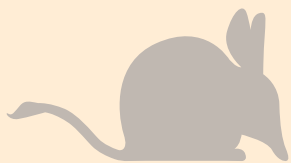
#### Number of Babies per Litter:

Bilbies usually have 1 or 2 babies per litter, and can have triplets which is rare.

#### Litters per Year:

During a good season (boom times), a pair of bilbies can have up to 4 litters per year.

The maximum number of babies for one female bilby per year is 14.



14

Baby Bilbies per Year



#### Mammals:

Rabbits are very, very, very fast breeders. Their gestation period is 31 days.

A female rabbit is ready to reproduce from 3 to 4 months of age. A mature female rabbit can be pregnant continuously for up to 8 months a year.

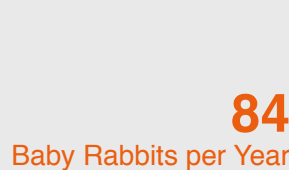
#### Number of Babies per Litter:

Rabbits can have up to 12 babies per litter.

#### Litters per Year:

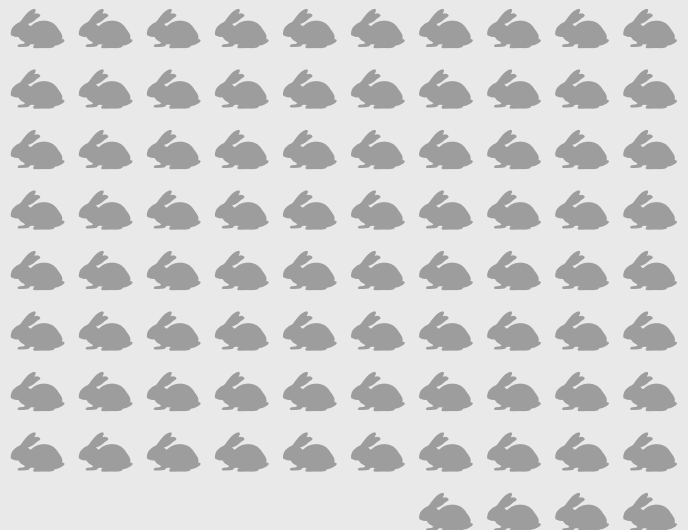
Rabbits can have from 4 to 7 litters per year.

The maximum number of babies for one female rabbit per year is 84.



84

Baby Rabbits per Year



# Bilbies



vs



# Bunnies



Bilbies are only active at night



Rabbits most active at dawn and dusk

## Bilbies

### Nocturnal:

Bilbies are truly nocturnal and are only active in the darkness of night. They don't emerge from their burrows until after dusk and retreat at least an hour before dawn.

A full moon, strong winds and and heavy rain can keep a bilby in its burrow all night.

### Omnivores:

Bilbies are well adapted to the harsh arid and semi-arid environment by eating most of what they can find and do not require water.

### Ears:

Bilbies have excellent hearing and also use their ears to cool themselves off by pumping blood into the tiny veins of their ears.

### Pouch:

The backward opening pouch of the female bilby prevents the pouch from getting dirty when they are digging burrows or scratching for food.

## Adaptation

## Bunnies

### Crepuscular:

Rabbits are most active around dawn and dusk.

At night they move into open ground to feed.

## Words to Learn

Nocturnal  
Predators  
Competitors

Introduced animals  
Offspring  
Litter

Backward  
Opening  
Pouch

Marsupial  
Native animals  
Gestation

Herbivores  
Omnivores



## How you can help

**1** get your school involved in great fundraising ideas

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**4** be a responsible cat lover desex and microchip your pets and keep them enclosed to protect our native wildlife

**5** visit charleville bilby experience

**6** purchase bilby merchandise

For more information please contact: Peggy Mucci - Projects Officer

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