

EASTERN GREY KANGAROO

Macropus giganteus

Eastern Grey Kangaroos are marsupial mammals, one of the many species of macropods. They are one of the largest kangaroo species & have soft, thick, grey-brown fur, paler on the underparts, with a finely haired muzzle & dark tips to the paws, feet & tail. They have a small head with big ears. The male is much larger than the female. They are able to travel at great speed (over 50 kph) using the powerful, enlarged hindquarters for leaping, aided by the long tail (over 1m in length) which acts as a balance & rudder. They are also good swimmers.

DISTRIBUTION & HABITAT

They are found across eastern mainland Australia, from northeast Queensland to southeast South Australia & southern Victoria & Tasmania. They like to live in dense scrubs & forests. Being nocturnal, large 'mobs' of 20 or more will gather at dusk to feed where food is most abundant.

DIET

They are herbivorous, favouring grasses preferring to eat young green shoots high in protein, but will also eat a range of plants.

LIFE EXPECTANCY & BREEDING

They usually give birth in summer to a single young (although twins are sometimes recorded). Weighing just over 0.8 grams at birth the 'joey' is born at an early stage of development, after a gestation period of just 36 days. Tiny,



naked & blind, the newborn climbs through the female's fur & into the forward-facing pouch, where it attaches to a teat to undergo the rest of its development emerging after about 9 months. The young is weaned at around 18 months. Females reach sexual maturity between 20 to 22 months & males at 43 months. Lifespan: 15-20 years of age in the wild (up to 25 years in captivity).

