

Gondwana Link groups have developed a plan for the section of Gondwana Link between the Fitzgerald River and Stirling Range National Parks, or what we call the Fitz-Stirling section. This identifies several targets for protection and restoration, each of which is described in a separate leaflet in this series. A short summary of the plan is also available.

These targets are not the only systems or species that are important in this landscape, but by concentrating on the chosen targets we believe we can most effectively improve the ecological health of the Fitz-Stirling area.

Our 6 targets are:

- creeks
- proteaceous rich communities
- **tammar & black-gloved wallabies**
- mallet and moort woodlands
- flat-topped yate woodlands
- freshwater systems



ABOVE, TOP: Black-gloved wallaby.  
Photo: Anne Storrie  
ABOVE: Tammar wallabies.  
Photo: Anne Storrie

### TAMMAR & BLACK-GLOVED (BRUSH) WALLABIES

These two wallabies were once abundant across the south west but predation by foxes and loss of their habitat has reduced their numbers and, in the case of the tammars particularly, their distribution.

The Western Australian tammar (*Macropus eugenii derbianus*) is a sub-species distinct from those which occur in South Australia. It is a medium sized wallaby, about a third to half the size of a western grey kangaroo, with dark, grizzled greyish-brown fur with reddish (rufous) tinges. Tammars have a white cheek stripe of variable intensity beneath the eye, accentuated above by a blackish area between the nostril and eye, and a dark midline of the forehead. The tail is thickish and a similar colour to the body.



Black-gloved wallaby. Photo: N.Rabe

Very few West Australians would have ever seen a tammar, and this species is listed in WA as "conservation dependent", requiring continued management to ensure its survival. The two wallabies are the only two macropod species left in the area which substantially browse on foliage, and as medium to large herbivores they play a role in the recycling of nutrients.

The black-gloved wallaby (also known as the brush wallaby or western brush wallaby *Macropus irma*) is unique to south western Australia. It is gunmetal grey in colour with a brownish tinge to the neck and back; the chest is grey and the belly buff. It has a distinct white facial stripe; the ears are blackish outside and whitish within and have a clear black tip. Animals have distinct black gloves and toes, hence the name. The tail is long and has a brush at its extremity. Males and females are the same size, with a head and body length of about 1.2 m.

### WHY ARE THE WALLABIES A TARGET?

The tammar wallaby was chosen as a conservation target as it was abundant and widespread in the area as recently as the 1960s, and is dependent on both suitable habitat (including thickets that are long unburnt) and relative freedom from introduced predators. The black-gloved wallaby, which is still relatively common in some areas, was chosen as it appears to be in decline throughout its range, possibly also due to fox predation. Successful control of foxes and the provision of sufficient suitable habitat should, in the long term lead, to an increase in the abundance and distribution of these wallabies within the Fitz-Stirling area. Successful predator control will also assist in the protection of other species, such as western brush-tailed possums and a number of small to medium sized mammals, birds and reptiles.

## THREATS



Control of feral animals will benefit tamar and black-gloved wallabies and a number of other native mammals such as the grey-bellied dunnart. Photo: P Deegan.

Both wallaby species are threatened by:

- Predation by foxes and (probably) cats
- Loss of suitable habitat, including dense long unburnt thickets that provide shelter for tammars
- Fragmentation of their remaining habitat, that exposes them to predators, leading to the smaller isolated populations eventually dying out
- Possibly other factors we have not yet identified

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

We need to know more about the location, number and behaviour of these species in the area. Protecting remnant bushland, ensuring dense understorey plantings as part of revegetation efforts, and controlling fox numbers in association with other neighbours and land managers will help to maintain the wallabies.

## WHAT IS HAPPENING THROUGH GONDWANA LINK



Through the generosity of a private donation for Gondwana Link, work is being done to improve the understanding of the habitats occupied by both wallaby species within the Fitz-Stirling area. The current focus is on determining where the two wallabies occur so we can use this information to monitor changes in their occupancy over time. No research has previously been done in this area on aspects of their behaviour, such as their diet, breeding behaviour and territorial needs. Learning more about the two species will help us include specific habitats and foods within our restoration plantings.

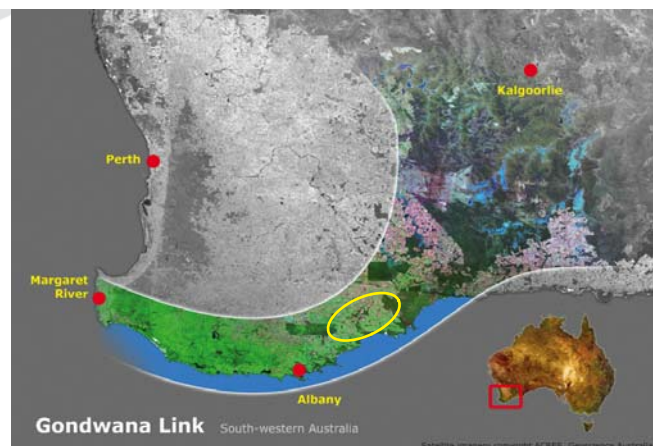
You can help with this work by letting us know about any populations of tamar or black-gloved wallabies you know of within the Fitz-Stirling area. Information on numbers, the types of habitat the animals are seen in and any aspect of behaviour is valuable in building up a picture of the two species. Recent road kills can also provide valuable information, so notification of the location of these would also be appreciated.

*Tamar wallabies captured on an infra-red remote sensing camera. The camera senses movement and takes a photo. This gives us a convenient alternative to spotlighting to gather data on presence of wallabies in an area.*

*Note 'Thanks to Diversicon Environmental Foundation for funding this work, and to Lynda Hutchinson for funding infra-red remote sensing cameras'.*

**Gondwana Link** is one of the most ambitious ecological programs in Australia. A wide range of groups are collaborating to protect, manage and restore bushland in a 1000 kilometre-long pathway, from the wet forests of Australia's south west corner to the woodlands and mallee bordering the Nullarbor plain.

**Fitz-Stirling** section of Gondwana Link sits between the Stirling Range and Fitzgerald River National Parks.



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