

## Short-eared Rock-wallaby (*Petrogale brachyotis*)

**National Status :** Not listed

**State Status :** Least Concern (NT)

### **Description :**

The head and body of the short-eared rock wallaby approaches 55 cm in length, with a tail extending a further 50 cm from the body. The back is light grey and there is a dark brown neck stripe from behind the ears to the shoulder. The undersides are white to greyish-white and the tail is darker at the end. The short fur is flecked with silver, imparting a glistening appearance. Their hind feet are thick and padded and resemble the radial tyres of cars, allowing them to move with remarkable agility among the precipitous, rocky slopes that they inhabit.



The ears are, indeed, short, being less than half the length of the head. The Kimberley population of short-eared rock wallabies probably constitutes a separate sub-species, *Petrogale brachyotis brachyotis*.

### **Distribution :**

This species is found from the Kimberley through Arnhem Land and eastward along the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Northern Territory - Queensland border. The southerly range corresponds roughly to the 700 mm median isohyet and thus to the monsoonal area of Australia.

### **Habitat :**

Short-eared rock-wallabies are found on low rocky hills, cliffs and gorges within savanna grasslands.

### **General :**

These wary, secretive rock-wallabies usually occur in groups. They are most active at night, but may feed late in the afternoon and bask during the early morning. Breeding is fairly continuous after the female reaches sexual maturity. Once they have left the pouch, the young are usually deposited in a sheltered position while the mother goes foraging. She regularly returns to suckle them until they are weaned. This animal is largely unstudied.

### **Threats :**

The key threat to this shy animal is frequent hot fires and intensive cattle grazing, which may change the grass assemblages within and around their habitat.