

## **Spectacled Hare-wallaby** **(*Lagorchestes conspicillatus*)**

**Family: Macropodidae (Kangaroos and Wallabies)**

**Class: Mammalia**

### **Description**

Slightly bigger than a European Hare and with a bright orange patch of fur surrounding each eye, the distinctive Spectacled Hare-wallaby is aptly named. Spectacled Hare-wallabies have such efficient kidneys that they do not need to drink. They rely on water metabolized from their food, supplemented by the odd dew drop on early morning foliage.

### **Distribution**

Spectacled Hare-wallabies were once widely distributed across the lower latitudes of northern Australia from eastern Queensland, through the Northern Territory to the Pilbara and Kimberley in Western Australia, with a subspecies on Barrow Island off the northwest coast. However, populations have declined sharply in the past 20 years or so, especially in the southern part of their range, and they are now only patchily distributed.

### **Habitat**

They live in open woodlands, shrublands and hummock grasslands, sheltering under vegetation or in burrows during the day and searching for herbs, grass and fruits at night.

### **Threats**

Spectacled Hare-wallabies are one of a group of small native wallabies that have fared poorly since European settlement. The Central Hare-wallaby and the Eastern Hare-wallaby are both extinct and the Rufous Hare-wallaby or Mala is highly endangered, surviving only on islands and in two fenced feral-free enclosures on the mainland (including one at Scotia Wildlife Sanctuary). They are threatened by hot, extensive and frequent fires that destroy big old grass hummocks and rob the wallabies of shelter. Heavy grazing exacerbates the impact of these fires and predation by feral cats is another serious threat.

