

Quenda Q&A



Department of **Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions**

The Spring Quenda Count is on again!

Want to learn more? We've prepared this easy Quenda Q&A.

First of all, what is a quenda?

Quendas are native mammals about the size of a rabbit with brown to grey-brown fur, a long, pointed nose, very short ears and a short tail. Occasionally mistaken for large rats, they're really quite distinct if you look just a little bit closer – their large hindquarters, pointed face and short tail are a good giveaway!

Until recently, quendas were thought to be a subspecies of the southern brown bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus*), which is found across southern Australia. Recent genetic studies have found the quenda to be a species in its own right, and it is now known as *Isoodon fusciventer*.



Photos courtesy of Narelle Dybing

Where do they live?

Quendas live in south-west Australia where they inhabit a range of forest, woodland, shrub, and heath communities. They prefer to live near waterways where dense low vegetation grows. Although their eastern cousins have all but disappeared from cities in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, quendas are still living in and around Perth. They are often found in residential gardens where dense cover is provided by established plants.

Why are we counting them?

The Spring Quenda Count has been running since 2013, coordinated by WWF-Australia. From 2025 onwards, WWF-Australia have handed the reigns to the WA Gould League, who will now be overseeing the project across Perth. We want to know where quendas are currently living and compare this with previous surveys to work out if their distribution and populations are changing.

We are particularly keen to get past participants to repeat a survey and new participants to start filling gaps where we haven't had previous surveys conducted. It is important to get replication of surveys over time as this is what helps our understanding of how the urban quenda population is responding to the threats they face. So far, the Spring Quenda Count has provided valuable information about quenda distribution and their population trends in the Greater Perth region. This can help guide land managers on how best to conserve the remaining quenda populations in the South West.

If you have participated in the Spring Quenda Count in the past and still have access to the survey site, we would love you to take part in the 2025 survey.

What time of day and where is the best place to look?

Quenda can be active at any time of day or night, though they're best seen at dawn or dusk. Let us know about the quendas in your garden, near your work or in your favourite bushland reserve. Your best chance of seeing quendas is in low, dense vegetation, particularly near water, although people are also finding them in log piles or even under sheds.

If you don't see a quenda you may still be able to identify their distinct, cone-shaped diggings. Quendas will occasionally dig in lawns and garden beds in the search of beetles, grubs, spiders and fungi. Rabbits will also dig in lawns, but their diggings are generally larger and blunter (square-ended) and are usually surrounded by tell-tale small, round rabbit droppings.

How can I take part in the Spring Quenda Count?

There are just three simple steps to be a Quenda Counter. If you've taken part before, please note that there have been some slight changes this year so please read the instructions:

Step 1) Choose your survey site (it may be your own garden, a local park or patch of bush) and your survey days during any week in the month of October.

Step 2) Count how many quendas you see each survey, for up to 3 surveys during your chosen week.

Step 3) Fill out a data sheet and return it to quenda@wagouldleague.com.au by 8 November 2025.

We just need to know where you did your survey, how much time you spent looking for quendas, and how many you saw. There are some additional questions on the datasheet to further help us understand how quendas use residential areas and what threats they face. And remember, if you don't see any quendas during any of your surveys, this is very important – please report these 'zero' records on your data sheet.

How long do I have left to take part?

Surveys can be done any time during the month of October. You can do up to three surveys in any week in October that suits you. If you do multiple surveys, please leave a day or two between each one. Remember to return your survey data sheet by 8 November 2025.

If you spot a quenda after spring, or outside of your regular survey area, you can report your sighting to fauna@dbca.wa.gov.au (give the date, location and number seen).

Why should we care about quendas?

It's not easy to see native mammals in urban areas in WA, particularly in Perth. Kangaroos aside, quendas are one of our better chances of encountering furry natives. Once plentiful, quenda numbers have fallen significantly since the 1960s due to habitat loss, vehicle strikes and predators such as foxes, cats and dogs.

Quendas in WA also fall victim to drowning in swimming pools and garden ponds and poisoning from snail and rat baits.

The quenda is listed as a Priority 4 species in WA, which means their ongoing survival is dependent on conservation and their numbers need monitoring through programs such as the Spring Quenda Count. In fact, the Spring Quenda Count may even provide the data we need to decide whether the species warrants listing as threatened, providing we get enough people joining in the Count!

What are some cool facts about quendas?

Quenda mums have a backward-facing pouch (upside-down to a kangaroo's). This allows them to dig without getting dirt all over their babies!

Quendas are ecosystem engineers; they dig and turnover soil when looking for food, and this digging helps keep the ecosystem healthy!