

The Greater Stick-nest Rat (*Leporillus conditor*)

Morphology

The Greater stick-nest rat, commonly known as the Wopilkara, is a native Australian rodent belonging to the Muridae family. The name 'Wopilkara' comes from the Indigenous Wangkangurru language from the people of Kata Thanda-Lake Eyre and parts of the Simpson Desert.

Ranging from 17-26 centimetres in body length, it is known as one of the larger rodents of the Australian bush. They have fluffy yellow/brown to grey fur on their back and cream fur below, with a blunt snout, large, dark eyes, and large rounded ears. These small mammals have a long, thin tail, and a hunched posture like a rabbit.

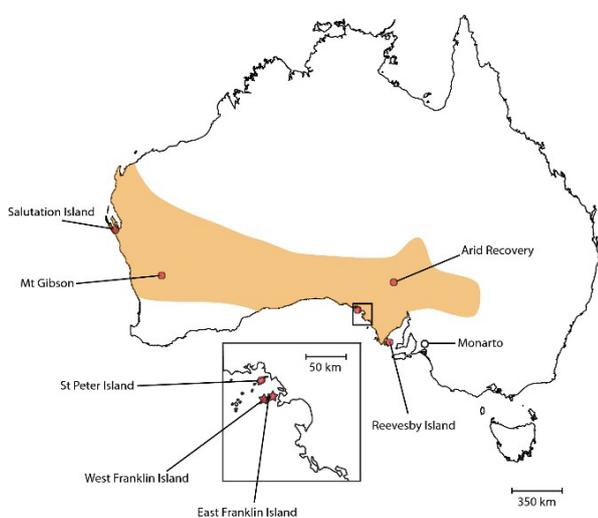
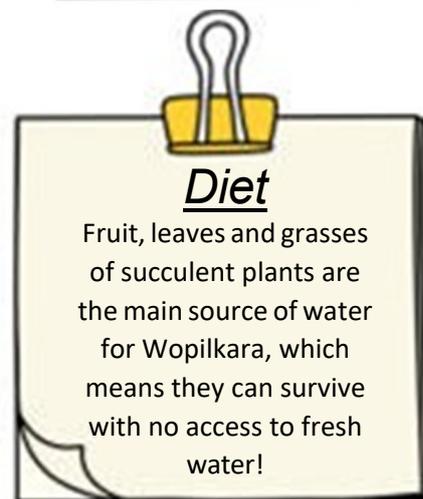


Figure 1: Current translocation sites of the Wopilkara.

Habitat

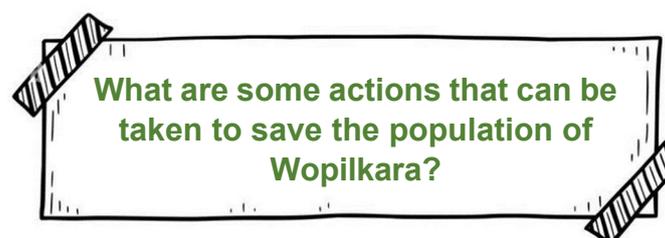
The Wopilkara prefer to live in semi-arid regions of South Australia, Western Australia, and New South Wales. These rodents are the architects of the bush, working in teams of 10 to construct large nests out of sticks, branches and stones which are built on top of native grass. These nests have a central space and tunnels that lead to the outside, and can reach as tall as 1 metre high and 1.5 metres wide. Nests are ruled over by a female matriarch, where females remain, and young males leave their home nests to join other nests.

A ground dwelling animal, the Wopilkara is exposed to many animals that are a threat to their survival. Foxes, feral cats, dingoes, and large birds such as eagle and owl species prey on the Wopilkara. So, often they find shelter in rock crevices and dense shrubland for survival. Living up to 5 years in the wild, females reproduce during autumn and winter months, giving birth to 1-3 young.



Conservation

The species population went extinct on the mainland after the European settlement, where a population of 1,000 remain on the Franklin Islands in South Australia. Wopilkara are now classified as vulnerable to extinction. The Australian Wildlife Conservancy has been attempting to boost Wopilkara numbers to relocate them to mainland Australia. Figure 1 shows the previous distribution of the Wopilkara in orange, and the current relocation sites as red circles.



**COMMON
NAME:**

WOPILKARA



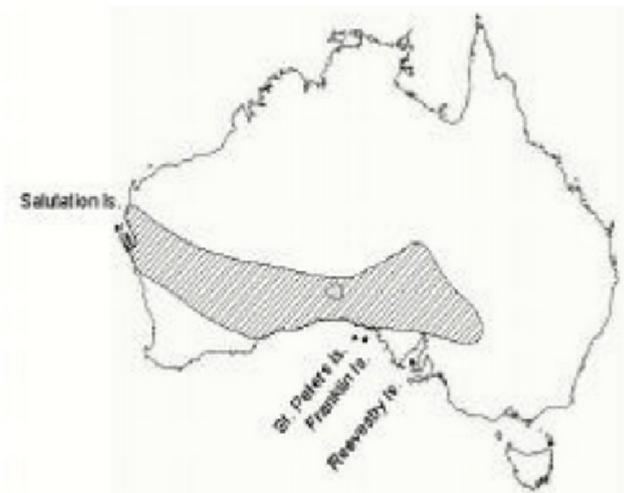
**SCIENTIFIC
NAME:**

DESCRIBE A WOPILKARA NEST:

DIET:

WHAT THREATS DO WOPILKARA FACE?

DISTRIBUTION



POPULATION:

CONSERVATION STATUS: