

Dama wallaby

Macropus eugenii

Dama wallaby are also known as; Tammar, silver-grey or Kangaroo Island wallaby.

Description

One of the smallest wallaby species, dama wallaby stand up to half a metre tall. Adult females weigh around 5 kilograms, while males can weigh up to 7 kilograms. They are grey-brown in colour with a paler grey underbelly. A thin white-silver stripe runs from under the eye to the nose. Mature animals may have a patch of reddish brown colouring at the shoulder.

Field sign

In areas of sand or soft soil, the long narrow hind feet and tail of wallaby leave a characteristic track. The footprint of a wallaby is a two-pronged print with a large central toe extending further than the outer toe. Their faecal pellets are also comparatively distinctive, slightly larger than an individual deer pellet and often a tear-drop shape.

Origin

Formerly widespread in southern mainland Australia, dama wallaby are now restricted to south-western Western Australia and southern South Australia. Wallaby were first introduced to New Zealand around 1870 by Sir George Grey, when they were released onto Kawau Island. Dama wallaby, sourced from Kawau Island, were subsequently liberated near Lake Ōkāreka in 1912.

Where are they found?

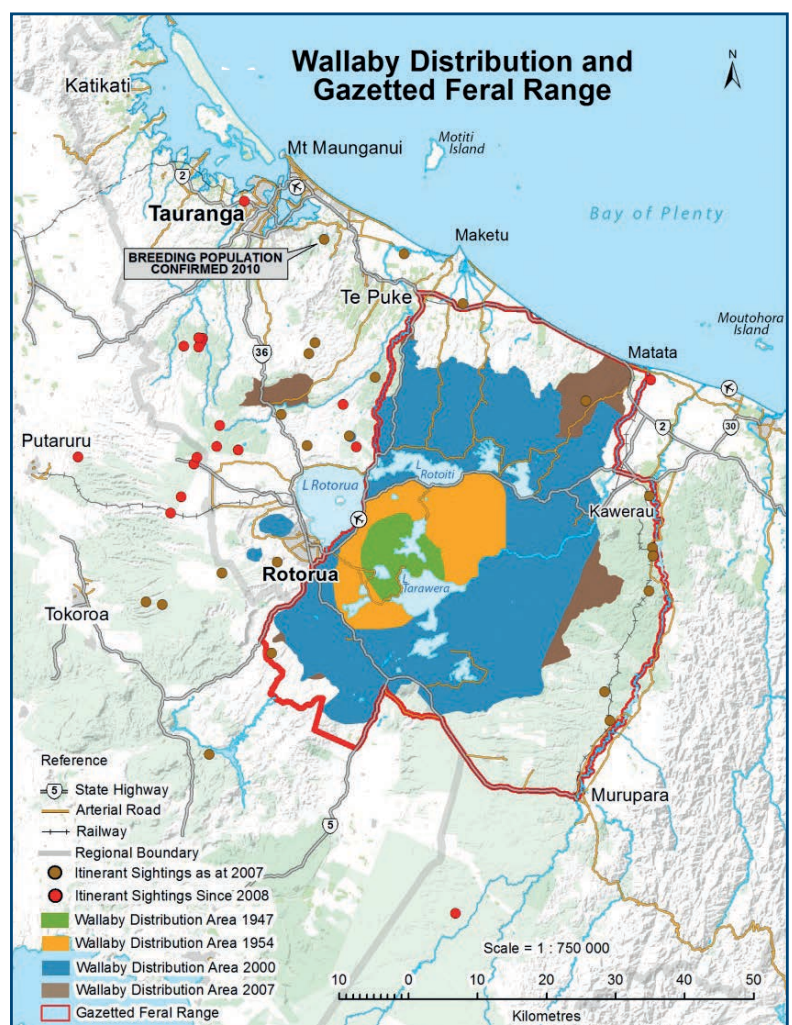
Dama wallaby have become established in both exotic and native forest or scrub. Since 1912, they have spread west to Rotorua, east to Kawerau and south to about Rainbow Mountain; an area of approximately 200,000 ha. To the right is a map of the known distribution of wallabies, as at January 2012.



Dama wallaby prints in soft mud



Wallaby droppings



How have they spread?

As wallabies breed and disperse they can become established in new areas. Wallaby spread has been slowed by physical barriers such as the lakes and rivers. In some cases dispersal beyond these barriers has been aided by people. Although it may be tempting to keep wallabies as pets, it is an offence under the Biosecurity Act (1993) to move or release live wallabies.

Why are they a problem?

Wallaby feed on native tree seedlings, grasses and ferns to such an extent that over time they will limit the regeneration of some species, potentially altering the structure and composition of our native forests. In exotic plantations they can damage pine and eucalyptus seedlings. On farmland they compete with stock for pasture.

Status as a pest animal in the Bay of Plenty

Wallaby are listed as a Containment Pest Animal in the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP). They are defined as an Unwanted Organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

Rules in the RPMP and the Biosecurity Act make it an offence to knowingly communicate [move], release, sell, display or propagate [breed] wallaby.

What can you do about them?

Report wallaby sightings

If you see a wallaby or wallaby sign west of Rotorua, east of Kawerau or south of Rainbow Mountain, report your sighting by phoning **0800 STOP PESTS (0800 786 773)**.

Control methods

Night shooting

On private farmland night-shooting is an effective control option. Generally a scoped .22 LR is adequate, although a .22 Magnum is more effective. Centrefire rifles in .222 and .223 calibres are also effective. Effective nightshooting is a skill and should only be attempted by licensed, experienced shooters.

Poisoning

Limited poisoning options are available for wallaby. Only two pesticides (1080 and Feratox Cyanide capsules) are registered for use on wallaby. Both of these pesticides require the handler to hold a Controlled Substances Licence and their use is restricted by the Medical Officer of Health. Although highly vulnerable to aerial or hand broadcast baiting, wallaby are reluctant to feed from some types of bait station. Where wallaby co-exist with possums, they are likely to be excluded from accessing bait stations by the smaller, yet more aggressive possum.

CAUTION: When using pesticides please READ THE LABEL thoroughly to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

Trapping

Leg-hold trapping is not an appropriate or effective control method for wallaby. Because of their powerful hind legs they will either suffer severe injuries or pull out of leg-hold traps used for possums. Cage or fence traps can be used to capture wallaby, although this method is unlikely to control an established population. Note that it is a legal requirement for all live capture traps to be checked within 12 hours of sunrise the day after they are set.

How can we help?

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Land Management staff are available to offer advice on wallaby control and will assist in identifying wallaby damage if required.

DISCLAIMER: Information in this fact sheet regarding pesticides does not necessarily appear on the labels of the products concerned. Bay of Plenty Regional Council does not accept liability for any damage that may arise from the use of pesticides. Mention of product trade names implies neither endorsement of those products nor criticism of similar products not mentioned.



For more information contact a Bay of Plenty Regional Council Land Management Officer.



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