



# Have you seen a southern brown bandicoot?

FACT SHEET | AUGUST 2015

## What is a bandicoot?

Southern brown bandicoots are small, fast moving, ground-dwelling marsupials. They are mainly nocturnal but can be seen during the day. They are secretive and rarely venture far from cover.

## What do they look like?

Southern brown bandicoots have a streamlined body with a long pointed snout, small round ears, large rump and short thick tail. They have coarse, grey-black, golden-tipped coloured fur with a pale coloured belly. They bound rather than run and are about the size of a half-grown cat.

## Why are they important?

Eight species of bandicoots once lived in South Australia, now only one remains. KI is likely to be an important refuge for bandicoots because it is fox-free. The southern brown bandicoot is the last bandicoot species naturally occurring in the state and is now listed as endangered nationally.

## Where do they occur on Kangaroo Island?

Southern brown bandicoots occur throughout Kangaroo Island except for areas heavily cleared of native vegetation.

## Fast facts:

Scientific name: *Isoodon obesulus obesulus*

Diet: insects, spiders, fungi and plant roots, seeds and berries

Breeding season: late winter to mid-summer

Length of pregnancy: 14 days

Litter size: 2-3

Pouch life: 2 months then independent

Longevity: 3-5 years

Weight: average 700 g (females) and 850 g (males)

Habitat: native vegetation with a dense shrub layer



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# How to find southern brown bandicoots



diggings



Southern brown bandicoots are skilled at digging for their food under leaf litter and in the soil. Their front legs are short with curved claws to dig small, deep conical-shaped holes between 3–10 cm wide and 6–15 cm deep. Several holes are often found close together.

nests



Nests are made into distinct mounds from the surrounding leaf litter and soil. Old yaccas with leaf skirts reaching to the ground provide good nesting and shelter sites.

A thick, dense layer of shrubs near the ground protects southern brown bandicoots from cats, birds of prey, snakes and goannas, and provides ideal nesting sites.

scats



Southern brown bandicoot scats (poo) are firm and cylindrical with a smooth, mud-like surface. They are 25-50 mm long and 8 mm in diameter. They are easily broken to reveal small pieces of insects and soil. The scats are often found near their diggings.

Text and nest, scat and track images from:

Triggs, B. 1996. *Tracks, scats and other traces: A field guide to Australian mammals*. Oxford University Press, Australia.



PLEASE REPORT SIGHTINGS TO

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