



Draft Forest Management Plan 2024–2033

Fact Sheet: Animal biodiversity of the south-west forest



The numbat is the faunal emblem of Western Australia.

A key focus of the *Draft Forest Management Plan 2024–2033* is to value and protect the biodiversity of our south-west forests. This is captured within the strategic goals of the plan.

The south-west forests form a large part of the Southwest Australian global biodiversity hotspot – one of 36 regions from across the world recognised for having an exceptional and rich diversity that is exposed to significant threats. Many fauna species (especially invertebrates) represent ancient lineages that have persisted in wetter habitats and are remnants of the rainforest ecosystems that covered the south-west in Gondwanan times (between 200 and 65 million years ago).

Mammals

Thirty-four species of native mammals are found in the FMP area, including nine species of bats. Of these 34 species, 10 are listed as threatened under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). A further six taxa are listed as 'Priority' fauna, with either insufficient information to assess their conservation status, or because they are naturally rare.

Information on threatened species and communities is periodically updated. Current lists are available at a dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities

The forests are particularly important for Western Australian endemic species, such as the ngwayir (western ringtail possum), quokka, ballawara (brush-tailed phascogale) and kwer (western brush wallaby).

The southern jarrah forest is especially significant as it supports the largest remaining and most genetically diverse populations of several threatened and priority listed mammals.

The south-west forests are a refuge for numerous threatened native mammals that had wider ranges across Australia at the time of European settlement. This includes:

- woylie – critically endangered
- numbat – endangered
- chuditch – vulnerable

Reptiles and frogs

Reptiles and frogs can be important indicators of environmental health. There are 89 reptile and 25 frog species found in the forest region of the south-west. Reptile species include 64 species of lizards, 23 species of snakes and two species of turtles. For frogs, there are 23 ground dwelling species and two species of treefrog. There are seven species of reptiles and four frogs listed under the BC Act as threatened or priority fauna occurring in the planning area.

Forty-nine species of reptiles and all the frogs are endemic to Western Australia, and of these, 15 reptiles and 11 frogs are almost solely restricted to the forest region. They largely feed on ground-dwelling invertebrates and some have highly specialised diets.

Freshwater fish

There are 10 species of freshwater fish in the south-west, plus the pouched lamprey which spends most of its life in rivers but matures to adulthood in the sea. Eight of these are endemic to the south-west. The salamander fish and the freshwater cobbler, represent ancient evolutionary lineages unique to the south-west.

Five species are listed as threatened and another two are priority species, with major threats being altered hydrology, including from climate-change, exotic fish, barriers to migration and poor water quality.

Three out of four of the threatened frogs (white-bellied frog, sunset frog and orange-bellied frog) are all restricted to the forest region, have small population sizes and occur over very small, localised areas.

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Karak, Forest red-tailed black cockatoo, are endemic to the south-west.

Invertebrates

The south-west forest region has a diverse range of terrestrial invertebrate species, including insects, spiders, worms and snails. Expected invertebrate richness for the forest area is upwards of tens of thousands of species, although the total number of species is unknown as many are undescribed or undiscovered. Some 4200 species of macro invertebrates (greater than 10mm in size) have been collected from the jarrah forest and some adjacent heathland.

There are a number of earthworms, velvet worms, land snails, millipedes, and mygalomorph spiders that are found only in small, localised areas.

Birds

At least 141 native terrestrial bird and 113 waterbird species have been recorded in the south-west forest area. Thirty-six bird species are listed as threatened under the BC Act, with a further 15 taxa listed as 'Priority' fauna.

The forest area is the stronghold of most of the 13 bird species endemic to the south-west region including the striking red-capped parrot, and three threatened black cockatoo species; karak (forest red-tailed), ngoolyanak (Baudin's), and ngoolyak (Carnaby's).

Threats to biodiversity

Today, many threatened species and ecological communities are suffering from the cumulative impact of multiple threats. The interactions between threats such as invasive species, habitat loss, changed fire regimes, a warming and drying climate and altered hydrology have contributed to significant declines in species.

The management of Western Australia's south-west forests will be outlined in the Forest Management Plan 2024-2033. For more information visit our website at dbca.wa.gov.au/forest-management-plan



Foxes are highly adaptive introduced predators that prey on variety of native animals in the south-west.

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Conservation and Parks Commission
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions