

Is feeding backyard quenda (bandicoots) making them fat?

- Quenda naturally eat plant tubers, bugs and fungi.
- Human food is not natural for quenda, and **can make them sick**.
- Increasing numbers of quenda are visiting backyards in the Perth Hills due to urban expansion and land clearing.
- The backyard provides quenda with access to **free easy meals** in addition to their natural diet.
- A recent survey of property owners in the Perth Hills found that people are **hand feeding** quendas. Food offered included vegetables, fresh and dried fruits, bread, rice, muesli, wholegrains, rolled oats, horse muesli, seeds, nuts, cheese, cooked meat bones and leftover table scraps.
- Quendas are also **scavenging** pet, poultry, pig and bird food.

Why is this a problem?

A recent study¹ of male and female quenda in the Perth Hills found that **quenda in the urban environment weigh more** than quenda in bushland (Fig 1).

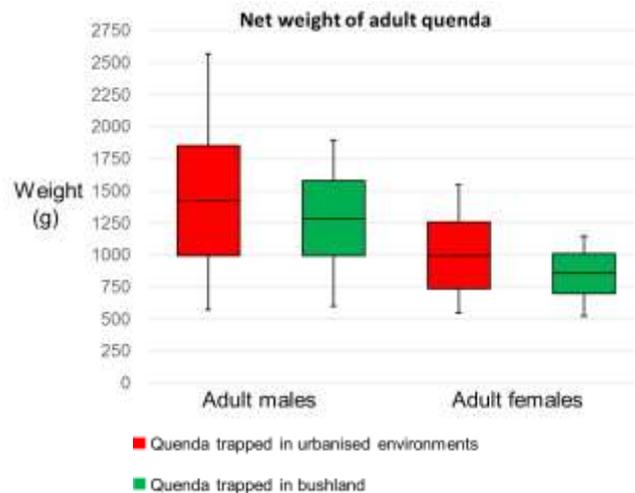


Figure 1: Net weight of adult quenda trapped in urbanised environments and bushland.

Of the 107 quenda trapped in an urban environment:

- 6.5% were obese, 47.7% were overweight, 43.9% were optimal weight and 1.9% were underweight.



Of the 151 quenda trapped in bushland:

- none were obese, 17.9% were overweight, 73.5% were optimal weight, and 8.6% were underweight.

This suggests that the additional food available to quenda in the urban environment is making them **fatter** than quenda eating a natural diet. The quenda you feed in the backyard may also be getting food from your neighbours!

According to the *Community Quenda Survey 2012*², additional food may also be allowing quenda populations to exist at higher densities in urban areas than in bushland. This means:

- There are more encounters between quenda, which are normally solitary, leading to aggression between the animals causing stress and injuries.
- Higher densities of quenda may lead to increased parasite loads.
- Increased contact with pets in the backyard can result in quendas getting domestic animal parasites that are not common in quenda populations.
- Feeding raw meat can be a source of the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*.

The Department of Parks and Wildlife recommends **not feeding** wildlife. For more information see ***Should I offer backyard quenda (bandicoots) food?***

About Healthy Wildlife

The 'Healthy Wildlife Healthy Lives' – A One Health project aims to educate the public about people's interaction with wildlife in urban areas, particularly how people and domestic animals spread diseases to wildlife, such as birds, quenda (bandicoots), native fish, bobtails and kangaroos. The project informs people about how to avoid harm to wildlife, create positive interactions with wildlife and protect and conserve the environment. The aim is to keep wildlife healthy for a healthier world.

The project is a partnership between Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council and Murdoch University, supported by Lotterywest.

VISIT: www.healthywildlife.com.au

References:

¹ Hillman Alison, Thompson R. C. Andrew (2016) Interactions between humans and urban-adapted marsupials on private properties in the greater Perth region. *Australian Mammalogy* **38**, 253-255. <http://www.publish.csiro.au/AM/AM15045>

² Howard K.H., Barrett G., Ramalho C.E., Friend J.A., Boyland R.J.I., Hudson J. and Wilson B. (2014). *Community Quenda Survey 2012*. Report prepared by WWF Australia and the Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia. WWF Australia, Perth, WA.