

Quenda are not rats (and they are great for the environment)

Quenda (*Isoodon obesulus fusciventer*), a sub-species of the Southern Brown Bandicoot, are sometimes confused with rats (*Rattus rattus*), particularly when they are young. People occasionally inadvertently poison quendas by putting out rat bait. Most commercially available rat baits are toxic to quendas.¹

Here are the differences between quenda and rats:

This is a quenda:



Quenda Photo: Kimberley Page

This is a rat:



Quenda:

- Grey-brown fur with short spiny blackish hairs
- Long pointed nose
- Long front claws
- Small round ears
- Short tail
- Weigh up to 2 kg
- Grow to 35.5cm (about the same size as a rabbit)
- Stout shape
- Hopping bounding walk
- Don't climb trees or walls
- Live in the garden and bush.

Rats:

- Black, brown or grey fur
- Shorter rounded nose
- Short front claws
- Larger oval shaped ears
- Long tail
- Weigh up to 0.3kg
- Grow to 16 – 24cm
- Long, lean shape
- Smooth gliding walk
- Great climbers
- Live inside houses and sheds.



Quenda help keep the environment healthy

Quenda are great animals to have in your garden and there are many good reasons for helping to keep quendas healthy. Quendas love fungi, insect larvae, roots and tubers and when they dig for these foods, quenda help the environment by:

- breaking down soil organic matter;
- enabling nutrient cycling;
- helping water infiltrate the soil;
- aerating the soil; and
- helping seeds germinate.¹

It has been estimated that an individual quenda can turn over almost 4 tonnes of soil each year.²



Holes caused by quenda digging for food. Photo: Miroslav Vujaklija

Quenda scats (faeces) contain spores from the fungi they eat, which helps disperse fungi in the environment. Fungi have an interdependent relationship with tree roots, which helps trees to access water and nutrients needed to keep the tree healthy. Increased plant growth and survival provides shelter and habitat for quendas.³

Source:

¹ [Community Quenda Survey.](#)

² [Valentine et al. 2012.](#)

³ [Backyard bandicoots.](#)

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

