

Mala (*Lagorchestes hirsutus*)

The Mala is a little known but charismatic wallaby, rescued from imminent extinction in the 1980s when the last 22 animals were secured in predator-proof enclosures. The last mainland wild population perished in a wildfire in 1991. Mala numbers remain critically low, dispersed among six predator-free sites, isolated from each other and located in three different States and Territories. Given the risks present at these sites (wildfire, predator incursion, rabbits, carrying capacity limits, inbreeding depression, disease) it is unlikely that any one of the six remaining populations will persist over the long-term if in continued isolation. Learn more at the [IUCN Red List](#).

In November 2015, the Mala Recovery Team, which is comprised of thirteen people from eight organisations, met to take a national view of Mala management and to identify and agree what it would take to move beyond saving the species from immediate extinction and towards securing its long-term future.



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Five-Year Goals

Though an essential conservation tool for the short to medium-term, current enclosures are considered to have a number of disadvantages. Participants envisaged a long-term future for the species in much larger fenced areas with sufficient habitat heterogeneity to support larger, viable, demographically self-regulating mala populations under minimal management. In the interim, agreed goals targeted improvements in the viability and resilience of populations at current sites. **Click on the text in the table below to learn more about each goal and related actions.**

Maintain best practice management at all sites:

- prevent and contain wild-fires
- use fire to manage for optimal habitat
- exclude and control rabbits
- minimise fence breaches and their impacts

Understand and resolve carrying capacity issues and increase capacity where possible.

Develop and implement a plan for management of gene diversity and inbreeding.

Maintain cultural and ecological knowledge.

Manage disease risk:

- carry out baseline health assessments
- implement best practice disease risk management
- manage Toxoplasmosis

Full workshop report available at: <http://www.cbbsg.org/content/mala-phva-2015>

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Photo by Ken Johnson