



Australian Government

Fact Sheet



Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park Mala Reintroduction Project

What is a Mala?

- Rufous Hare-Wallaby *Largochestes hirsutus*
- Weight 800-1600 (1220)g males, 900-1250 (1310)g females (the Mammals of Australia, R. Strahan (ed), Reed New Holland, Sydney, 1995)
- Listed as 'endangered' under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- Classified by the Northern Territory Government as 'extinct in the wild'.

Why are there no wild Mala?

- European settlement, predation by feral species such as cats and foxes, and the reduction of traditional Aboriginal burning practices affecting the frequency and intensity of fires within Mala habitat.
- Where were the Mala prior to their release in Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park?
- The main population of Mala has been protected within a 100 hectare feral (cat, dog, fox) proof enclosure at Watarrka National Park, with between 150 and 200 animals.

Enclosure at Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park

- The result of a joint project between Department of Environment and Heritage, Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory and the Mutitjulu Community. Assistance in consultation with Anangu (the traditional owners) from the Central Land Council.
- 170 hectares, 5672 metres of fenceline.
- Fox, dog and cat proof.
- Commenced construction April 2004, completed September 2005.
- Over \$44 000 paid in wages to Mutitjulu Community (Anangu) members.
- More than 35 Mutitjulu Community members directly involved in the construction of the fence; many others from Mutitjulu and other communities involved in consultation at all stages of the project.

When did the Mala return to the park?

- Mala were captured on 28 September 2005 from the enclosure at Watarrka National Park and brought to Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park for release on the morning of 29 September 2005.
- 25-30 Mala were transferred to Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park.

The Benefits

- The National Mala Recovery Plan has as one of its goals the establishment of a relatively large population of Mala at Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park, to help secure the long-term survival of the species.
- The reintroduction of locally extinct species is part of the park's Plan of Management; Anangu have identified Mala as the priority.
- Bringing Mala back to Uluru also encourages the passing of important ecological and cultural knowledge between Anangu and Park staff.
- A prime objective of Joint Management is to make sure that traditional skills and values and a 'scientific' approach complement each other in looking after the country of the Park. Anangu and non-Anangu have worked together on this project, each providing their respective knowledge and skills.
- The Mala 'hare wallaby' people are important creation beings in Anangu Law, *Tjukurpa*. There are many spiritual places at Uluru associated with the Mala stories, and Mala inma (ceremonies) are part of the living culture which dates back tens of thousands of years.