EASTERN GRAY KANGAROO

Description:
The Eastern gray kangaroo is a large kangaroo with hind limbs and feet of intermediate length, and a heavy long tapering tail. Its fur is short and fine, silver-gray in color in both sexes, frequently darker on the hands, toes, and tip of the tail. In males the head and body length is about 60 inches, and the maximum recorded weight was 200 lb, but females are much smaller.

Size:
These kangaroos can grow to be as large as 7 ft. tall. Tail length ranges from 16-39 inches for males and 17-32 inches for females. Muscle mass makes up approximately 80% of the body weight for this species.

Lifespan:
Eastern grey kangaroos have lived to be upward of 20 years old in captivity. However, the maximum lifespan of these kangaroos in the wild is approximately 10 years.

Diet:
In the Wild: grasses, leaves, tree bark, and shrubby browse. This kangaroo requires very little water and is able to survive on plants high in fiber. Eastern grey kangaroos spend between 6 and 10 hours grazing per day, mostly at dawn and dusk.

At the Zoo: fed a pelleted grain or hay.

Scientific name: Macropus giganteus
Class: Mammalia
Order: Marsupialia
Family: Macropodidae
Genus: Macropus
Species: giganteus

Group: Mob
Male: Buck
Female: Doe
Baby: Joey

Credit: Ashley Clayton
**Geographic Range:**
This species of kangaroo can be found in Eastern and Central Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, Se South Australia, Tasmania

**Habitat:**
Eastern grey kangaroos are capable of using several different types of habitats. They can be found in woodlands, open forests, coastal heathland, and open grassland areas. They have also been found near city areas and on golf courses.

**Reproduction:**
Eastern grey kangaroos can breed continuously, but a peak in reproductive activity exists in the seasons of spring and summer. Sexual maturity is reached at approximately 20 months for males and 17 months for females. Females have an estrous cycle of approximately 35 days. Usually, only a single offspring weighing approximately 0.8g is born after a mean gestation period of 30.5 days. The offspring, commonly called a joey, will climb from the birth canal to the pouch where it grabs hold of a teat and nurses. The joey will begin to leave the pouch after an average of 46 weeks, and may continue to nurse from the pouch for up to an additional 6 months after leaving the pouch. After the joey has left the pouch, the female is capable of mating again.

**Behavior:**
Eastern grey kangaroos form social groups called "mobs" consisting of kangaroos living in small family groups with an adult female as the matriarch, other group member females, and young. These family groups can consist of as little as 2 or as many as 10 members. A daughter often remains close to her mother even after giving birth to a joey of her own. Males compete for dominance of the social groups, with the strongest male becoming the head of a mob. Males determine sexual dominance by “boxing”, a form of male competition, in which males stand upright and kick with their hind legs while balancing on their tails, scratching with their fore-limbs.

**Current Status:**
This species of kangaroo is not in danger of extinction as there are an estimated 1.5 million in the wild.

**Related Species:**
The Eastern gray kangaroo is related to the Western gray and red kangaroos. There are at least 2 subspecies, one on the mainland and one on Kangaroo Island.

**Trivia:**
When European explorers first saw these strange hopping animals they asked a native Australian (aborigine) what they were called. He replied "kangaroo" meaning "I don't understand" your question. The explorers thought this was the animal's name. And that's how the kangaroo got its name.
Where am I in the Zoo:
The kangaroos are in the Children’s Zoo in the Australian Walkabout and share an exhibit with the Bennett’s wallabies.