

## Gile's Planigale (*Planigale gilesi*)



Above: Gile's Planigale. Photo: Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

**This fact sheet summarises background information about the Gile's Planigale (*Planigale gilesi*).**

### **Description**

The Gile's Planigale (also known as "Paucident Planigale") is a small carnivorous marsupial that is about the same size as a mouse. It is a brindled, cinnamon-grey colour on the top of its body and an olive buff colour below. This species is easily distinguished by its flattened triangular head and beady eyes. It has small, rounded ears that lie against its head. The Gile's Planigale has short legs in comparison to its body, which means it moves close to the ground.

The length of adults varies from 60 to 80 mm (including head and body), while tail lengths range from 55 to 70 mm and weight from 5 to 16 grams.

### **Habitat**

The Gile's Planigale lives in the arid and semi-arid regions of eastern Australia, but is also found east of Lake Eyre where the associated habitats exist close to permanent water or areas that are periodically flooded, such as bore drains, creek floodplains or beside lakes. In Victoria, the Gile's Planigale has been found on riverine floodplains that have grey cracking soils; or in/near Black Box woodlands that have patchy, but dense

under stories of Tangled Lignum, Nitre Goosefoot or Old-man Saltbush<sup>1</sup>. In the Mallee CMA region the Gile's Planigale can be found in the riverine areas along the Murray River, to the area west of Mildura. The Gile's Planigale tends to favour living in areas where cracks in the soil and clumped dense under



### At a glance

- The Gile's Planigale is listed as threatened in Victoria under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.
- It is a small, carnivorous marsupial about the size of a mouse, with a flattened triangular head, beady eyes and fox-like teeth.
- The Gile's Planigale lives among lignum shrubs in riverine areas, using cracks in the soil as shelter.
- Introduced grazing animals are considered to be a major threat to the habitat of Gile's Planigales.



Above: Habitat of the Gile's Planigale. Photo: Mallee CMA.

stories can provide it with protection from extreme temperatures and predators<sup>2</sup>. Research has shown that these cracks in the soil, or soil crevices, may be the single most important factor influencing the distribution of the species in Victoria<sup>3</sup>.

The Gile's Planigale was first discovered in Victoria in 1985, north of Lake Cullulleraine during an extensive flora and fauna survey of the Victorian Mallee. Further surveys carried out since its discovery have found the Gile's Planigale at Wallpolla Island State Forest, Ned's Corner Station, Murray Sunset National Park and Lindsay Island.

### Ecology

The Gile's Planigale feeds on a range of invertebrates, including spiders, cockroaches, beetles and slaters. It is predominantly nocturnal, but has been known to be active during the day as well, especially during winter when animals have been observed basking in the sun. In western New South Wales, individuals were found to be highly mobile and occupied shifting home ranges<sup>4</sup>. The Gile's Planigale has an extended breeding season from late winter to mid-summer, during which females may have one or

two litters of three to 10 young<sup>5</sup>. Surveys undertaken in north-west Victoria have indicated that the Victorian population may adopt a similar approach to reproduction, with juveniles being captured during trapping programs from December to March (pers.comm Robertson 2009).

### A matter of survival

The Gile's Planigale is not considered to be threatened nationally. However, this species is recognised as 'near threatened' in Victoria and is listed as a threatened species under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 and is protected under the Wildlife Act 1975<sup>6</sup>.

A number of factors threaten population numbers of the Gile's Planigale, all of which have the potential to cause long-term changes to vegetation on alluvial floodplains. These include:

- Changes in flooding regimes,
- The clearing and/or fragmentation of woodland areas,
- Reduced natural regeneration,
- Selective grazing,
- Firewood removal,
- Recreation activities,

- Vehicle tracks, and
- Introduced predators, such as foxes and feral cats.

### How can you help?

You can help the Gile's Planigale indirectly by:

- leaving debris and timber on ground;
- retaining and enhancing vegetation along watercourses and surrounding areas to protect habitat for planigales and their prey;
- controlling feral predators (e.g. foxes, feral cats and pigs);
- supporting the delivery of water to wetlands and creeks; and
- managing stock rates.

### Find out more

The Mallee CMA has undertaken a number of monitoring based projects to help address knowledge gaps for the Gile's Planigale. To find out further information on these projects please contact the Mallee CMA on 03 5051 4377 or refer to the Technical Bulletins available on the Mallee CMA website at [www.malleecma.vic.gov.au](http://www.malleecma.vic.gov.au)

### References

- <sup>1&3</sup>. Robertson, P and Sluiter, I. (2010). Field survey of Wallpolla and Lindsay Islands to examine distribution and abundance of the Paucident Planigale (*Planigale gilesi*), January 2010, and an assessment of habitat characteristics at known localities. Unpublished report to the Mallee Catchment Authority. Wildlife Profiles Pty. Ltd., Melbourne.
- <sup>2&6</sup>. DSE (2003). Flora & Fauna Guarantee Action Statement No.52 – Gile's Planigale *Planigale gilesi*. Published by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria. 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002 Australia.
- <sup>4</sup>. Read, D.G. (1984a) Movements and home ranges of three sympatric dasyurids, *Sminthopsis crassicaudata*, *Planigale gilesi* and *Ptenurostris* (Marsupialia), in semi arid New South Wales. *Aust. Wildl. Res.* 11: 223-34.
- <sup>5</sup>. Read, D.G. (1984b) Reproduction and breeding season of *Planigale gilesi* and *Ptenurostris* (Marsupialia: Dasyuridae). *Aust. Mammal.* 7: 161-73.

## Project Partners



Published March 2011

This publication may be of assistance to you but the Mallee Catchment Management Authority refers readers to our Terms and Conditions, available from our website.

Printed on 100% recycled Australian paper, made from pre- and post-consumer waste.