

The ability to conserve a threatened species begins when they are named! More new species of Rock Wallaby (Marsupialia: Macropodidae: *Petrogale*) from east Australia.

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ABSTRACT

Hoser (2020) formally named two species and two subspecies of Rock Wallaby *Petrogale* Gray, 1837 from northern Australia.

At the time the paper was being prepared, it was anticipated that putative east Australian and Centralian species were to be named by other people.

The Centralian ones were formally named, but those from the east, being putative *Petrogale penicillata* (Gray, 1825), long known to comprise three distinctive forms were not formally split.

The purpose of this paper is to formally split and name for the first time the forms from the north and south of the range as new species.

These are *P. fasciststateorum* sp. nov. for the Victorian populations and *P. rosswellingtoni* sp. nov. for that population from north of the Hunter Valley and into south-east Queensland.

The populations from (mainly) south of the Hunter Valley to southern New South Wales are of the type species *P. penicillata*, being the type form for the subgenus *Petrogale* as defined by Hoser (2020).

Keywords: Taxonomy; nomenclature; classification; Wallaby; Marsupials; Rock Wallaby; eastern Australia; Australia; Victoria; New South Wales; Queensland; Macropodidae; *Petrogale*; new species; *fasciststateorum*; *rosswellingtoni*.

INTRODUCTION

Rock Wallabies of the genus *Petrogale* Gray, 1837 are widespread and common in most parts of Australia, although some species in some areas have declined sharply in the period post-dating the second world war, with declines ongoing.

Numerous studies have been conducted into the phylogeny of *Petrogale* Gray, 1837, including those cited in the materials and methods section of this paper.

In spite of these studies and the paper of Hoser (2020) two well-known and previously identified divergent forms remain unnamed and therefore potentially under the radar of State and Federal wildlife conservation authorities, increasing their potential risk of decline or extinction.

To rectify this situation, and in accordance with the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (Ride *et al.* 1999) as amended by the *International Commission for Zoological Nomenclature* in 2012, these two species, currently treated as divergent populations of putative *Petrogale penicillata* (Gray, 1825) are formally named as new species.

Numerous previous studies, including those of Bee and Close (1993), Browning *et al.* (2001), Close *et al.* (1994), Eldridge *et al.* (2001), Hazlitt *et al.* (2006, 2010, 2014) and Paplinska *et al.* (2011), all identified three significantly divergent populations of the putative species.

The putative species occurs in hilly and mesic parts of Victoria, eastern New South Wales south-east Queensland.

The three identified divergent populations were one from north of the Hunter Valley and into south-east Queensland, the type form from New

South Wales, south of the Hunter Valley to the Brindabella Ranges area, but including western outliers north of the Hunter Valley (Eldridge *et al.* 2018) as well as the Australian Capital Territory and the third lineage from far southern New South Wales and hillier parts of Victoria, as far west as the Grampian Mountains.

Hazlitt *et al.* (2014) found a divergence in excess of 2 MYA for each of the three lineages, which is species-level divergence for each.

The Queensland population has long been known to have a less prominent tail brush and be lighter in colour above than southern populations, while those in Victoria are also divergent and of smaller adult size from the other two more northern populations (Close *et al.* 1988).

Because of reproductive isolation and separation of each population and obvious morphological divergences, it was deemed appropriate to formally name the unnamed forms as new species.

In addition to the obvious improvement in terms of the science relative to the taxa, it is important that the taxa be properly named and identified so that governments and NGO's brave enough to breach the monopolistic government wildlife bureaucracies in Australia can properly plan and conserve the species.

This is especially relevant in terms of the Victorian population that has declined sharply in recent decades on the back of a massive human population increase in the state of Victoria combined with a State Government and associated wildlife department that finds exterminating species fitting better within their agenda than active conservation of declining forms (see also Hoser 1989, 1991, 1993, 1996, 2019a, 2019b, 2020).

MATERIALS, METHODS AND RESULTS

Relevant literature was checked to confirm that there were no available synonyms for the two candidate species including Bannister *et al.* (1998), Groves *et al.* (2005), Strahan (1988) and Thomas (1888).

The three forms originally described as *Kangurus penicillatus* Gray, 1827 (being the type form of *Petrogale penicillata*), *Heteropus albogularis* Jourdan, 1837 and *Petrogale longicauda* Krefft, 1865 are all of the central New South Wales taxon and are therefore unavailable names for the putative species from Victoria or New South Wales and south-east Queensland, north of the Hunter Valley.

Before a decision is made to name any new taxon, reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that it is justified on all relevant grounds, including that it is morphologically, genetically and reproductively isolated from their nearest relative and to a sufficient degree to be of taxonomic significance.

A further relevant question to ask is should the reproductively isolated and morphologically divergent entities be labelled as subspecies, full species, or potentially higher level again.

As mentioned already, molecular studies giving known divergence times between populations and/or forms can be helpful and is so with respect of the putative taxa herein. Live and dead specimens as well as available bone specimens, were examined as was other necessary material, including past climate data for the relevant regions, sea level depths, and other relevant information.

In summary, as inferred already, the genetic, geological, historical and morphological evidence clearly showed that there were two obviously unnamed species of Rock Wallaby in the *P. penicillata* species complex.

Both are potentially threatened due to their relatively limited occurrences within general regions of known distributions, combined with the ongoing risk of decline from introduced species such as foxes, cats (in particular) (see Spencer 1991), dogs or direct human intervention in other ways.

Significantly, the two newly named taxa have both diverged across known biogeographical barriers as identified by Bryant and Krosch (2016) that have resulted in numerous species of reptile being discovered and formally named in recent years, having been separated from their nearest relatives across exactly the same barriers.

As mentioned earlier, the formal naming of these species now enables wildlife departments to formulate conservation plans for extant populations of these taxa and reduces the risk of their extinctions arising from them being treated as one and the same as otherwise more widespread and abundant species as has previously occurred (see Hoser 2019a, 2019b).

Because the *P. penicillata* (Gray, 1825) group is the type group for the genus, the two newly named species are also in the nominate subgenus.

In terms of morphological divergences between each putative taxon, because they were obvious, so too was the decision to formally name each as separate species, the southern and northern forms being formally named for the first time.

INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE FORMAL DESCRIPTIONS THAT FOLLOW

There is no conflict of interest in terms of this paper or the conclusions arrived at herein.

Several people including anonymous peer reviewers who revised the manuscript prior to publication are also thanked as are relevant staff at museums who made specimens and records available in line with international obligations.

In terms of the following formal descriptions, spellings should not be altered in any way for any purpose unless expressly and exclusively called for by the rules governing Zoological Nomenclature as administered by the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature. In the unlikely event two or more newly named taxa are deemed conspecific by a first reviser, then the name to be used and retained is that which first appears in this paper by way of page priority and as listed in the abstract keywords.

Some material in descriptions for taxa may be repeated for other taxa in this paper and this is necessary to ensure each fully complies with the provisions of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (Fourth edition) (Ride *et al.* 1999) as amended online since.

Material downloaded from the internet and cited anywhere in this paper as being sourced online was downloaded and checked most recently as of 1 June 2024 (including if also viewed prior), unless otherwise stated and was accurate in terms of the content (as described) cited herein as of that date.

Unless otherwise stated explicitly, colour and other descriptions apply to living adult specimens of generally good health and not under any form of stress by means such as excessive cool, heat, dehydration or abnormal skin reaction to chemical or other input.

Colour descriptions of species refer to fur colour and not skin.

While numerous texts and references were consulted prior to publication of this paper, the criteria used to separate the relevant species has already been spelt out and/or is done so within each formal description and does not rely on material within publications not explicitly cited herein.

PETROGALE FASCISTSTATEORUM SP. NOV

LSIDDurn:lsid:zoobank.org:act:2D5C53C5-DC06-4762-821C-7DB18DD110BD

Holotype: A preserved specimen in the form of a dry skeleton at the Museums Victoria Mammalogy Collection, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, specimen number C26045 collected from Red Rock, Muline Creek, The Grampians, Victoria, Australia, Latitude -37.22 S., Longitude 142.27 E.

This government-owned facility allows access to its holdings.

Paratypes: 1/ A preserved specimen in the form of a dry mandible at the Museums Victoria Mammalogy Collection, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, specimen number C26271 collected from Muline Creek near Red Rock, Victoria Range, The Grampians, Victoria, Australia, Latitude -37.22 S., Longitude 142.27 E., 2/ A preserved specimen in the form of a dry mandible at the Museums Victoria Mammalogy Collection, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, specimen number C26272 collected from Mt Stapylton, The Grampians, Victoria, Australia, Latitude -36.9 S., Longitude 142.38 E.

Diagnosis: The three species, *Petrogale penicillata* (Gray, 1825), *P. fasciststateorum sp. nov.* and *P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov.* are separated from all other species within the genus *Petrogale* Gray, 1837 by the following unique combination of characters:

Brown above, tending to be rufous on the rump and grey on the shoulders. The chest and belly is paler and in some individuals there is a white blaze on the chest. There is a white to buff cheek stripe and a black dorsal stripe from the forehead to the back of the head. The exterior of the ears is black, and inside the ears is buff. There is a black auxiliary patch often extending as a dark stripe to the margin of the hind-legs. There is a pale grey side-stripe sometimes present. The feet and paws are dark brown to black. The tail darkens distally with a prominent brush. The pelage is long and thick, particularly about the rump, flanks and base of the tail. Ear fluff is not white. Interior of ear is not dark.

Adult males grow to 529-586 mm and females to 510-570 mm in head and body length. The tail length of the adult male is 510-700 mm and 500-630 mm for adult females. Adult males reach a weight of 5.5-10.9 kg and females a weight of 4.9-8.2 kg (Eldridge and Close, in Strahan, 1998).

P. fasciststateorum sp. nov. are separated from both *Petrogale penicillata* and *P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov.* by having an orange tinge in the inner ear and also same on the forebody underside, versus yellowish in the other two species.

Adults do not exceed 560 mm head and body length, versus up to 586 mm in the other two species.

P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov. is separated from both *P. penicillata* and *P. fasciststateorum sp. nov.* by having a tail brush that is not prominent, versus prominent in the other two species.

Dorsally, the fur in *P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov.* is light greyish-yellow in colour, versus dark brown or dark greyish in *P. penicillata* and similar in *P. fasciststateorum sp. nov.* but with a strong russet or purplish tinge in *P. fasciststateorum sp. nov.* especially on the edges and lower surfaces anteriorly.

P. penicillata is depicted in life online at:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/11294846>
and

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/195997155>

P. fasciststateorum sp. nov. is depicted in life online at:

https://www.swift.net.au/cb_pages/sp_brush-tailed_rock-wallaby.php
(second image on page taken in 1999), and
<https://www.mtrothwell.com.au/>

and

<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/species/11509>

P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov. is depicted in life online at:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/67783413>

and

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/97004287>
and
<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/204890613>
and
<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/10082003>

Distribution: Living specimens are known only from the Grampians in Western Victoria and east Gippsland, Victoria. Unfortunately, the Grampians population now includes stock that has cross-bred with introduced *Petrogale penicillata* of the nominate form from New South Wales (Broadway *et al.* 2023) that was introduced to the area in about 2012 onwards, meaning that the population is one of mutts! The population known from Little River Gorge, Snowy River National Park is perhaps the only pure one of this species left in existence and it is important that feral government employed wildlife department officers both conserve this taxon on their lands and also do not introduce nominate *Petrogale penicillata* to this group, which would in effect make them mutts and potentially wipe out the species in its pure form almost overnight!

Captive populations are elsewhere, most notably including at an open-range facility at Mount Rothwell, south-west of Melbourne in southern central Victoria.

Etymology: The species name "*fasciststateorum*" is a direct translation of the name of the government in Victoria and Australia, including the wildlife department, police force and legal system and especially with respect to how it operates with respect of the wildlife.

The species is named after these evil people, so in effect honours them.

They spend a lot of their time putting out propaganda and being "liked" and like getting honours of various forms via the nepotistic Australian honours system.

The entire bureaucracy of government in the State of Victoria and Australia generally, is corrupt, self-serving and fundamentally evil. Human rights, rule of law and conservation of wildlife are all optional in the State of Victoria and always discarded when the interests of the individual bureaucrats conflicts.

There is absolutely no meaningful rule of law here.

Here in Victoria and elsewhere in Australia, public servants and their agents are effectively immune from the need to comply with any rules or laws. Other people, especially those deemed enemies or "competitors" are regularly harassed, charged with fictitious offences and once in the courts, are inevitably convicted and locked up by cocaine addicted magistrates and judges.

In terms of wildlife conservation and this species in particular, the fascist state they live in has spelt disaster for the species.

The welfare of the species has been effectively ignored and concerned members of the public have been forcibly stopped from doing anything to "save" the species.

Anyone who tried to work with the species and save it from threats is charged with the offence of "interfere with wildlife", convicted, fined or jailed and them barred from most kinds of gainful employment thereafter.

The much-condemned Chinese "Social credit" system is nothing compared to what is going on in Australia.

But because Australia is "white" and "British", people are not allowed to accuse Australian governments of their obvious corruption and human rights abuses.

The government-owned business enterprise, the dysfunctional "Zoos Victoria" enjoys a monopoly on this "endangered species" meaning that anyone who wants to even see the species must PAY THEIR CASH to the "Zoos Victoria" business to see specimens.

They must go to the Healesville Sanctuary (one of their sites) and then are forced to sign a legally binding "deed" to enforce the rule that they are not to make money selling any photos they may take of the animals or to otherwise undermine the "Zoos Victoria" business.

Well-meaning people donate hard earned cash to the "Zoos Victoria" business for their widely advertised "captive breeding recovery programmes" that are in fact designed **not to breed** these species, so as not to jeopardise their monopoly on possession of them.

A view of the "Zoos Victoria" web domain sees calls to "donate" to them on almost every webpage, including the main landing page at: <https://www.zoo.org.au/> where the "donate" button is most prominent at the top of the page. This is especially audacious considering they are government-funded by the Victorian taxpayer anyway, so in fact do not need to solicit a single cent in donations!

The methodology of seeking donations they do not need is to

effectively starve others in the wildlife conservation space of funds as they are seen as unwanted "competition" to the monopolistic and dysfunctional government owned business.

Think also about what "Zoos Victoria" did with all the live Tasmanian Tigers *Thylacinus cynocephalus* (Harris, 1808) that they hoarded in the 1920's at their Melbourne Zoo site in Parkville, ostensibly for a "captive breeding recovery program" and note that this species is now extinct.

Whether or not the species *Petrogale fasciststateorum sp. nov.* survives in the long term is literally in the hands of the Fascist State Government of Victoria and their corrupt self-serving wildlife department as detailed in Hoser (1993 and 1996) or see Lesh (2021) and Broadway *et al.* (2023).

Unfortunately, the prognosis is not good.

Furthermore, if the Australian government persists with its "Big Australia Policy", (see for example Saunders 2019 or Zaczek 2019), that being a long-term aim to increase the human population in Australia to over 100 million people by year 2150 (from the present 25 million as of 2019), all sorts of unforeseen threats to the survival of these species will almost certainly emerge.

PETROGALE ROSSWELLINGTONI SP. NOV

LSIDurn:lsid:zoobank.org:act:4D92FA02-39CC-4414-A470-3F2160C50238

Holotype: A preserved specimen in the form of a skin and skeleton from a female specimen at the Queensland Museum, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, specimen number JM16580 collected from Perseverance Dam, Queensland, Australia, Latitude -27.285278 S., Longitude 152.119167 E.

This government-owned facility allows access to its holdings.

Paratypes: 1/ A preserved specimen in the form of a skin and skull from a male specimen at the Queensland Museum, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, specimen number JM16381 collected from Perseverance Dam, Queensland, Australia, Latitude -27.285278 S., Longitude 152.119167 E., 2/ A preserved specimen in the form of a juvenile specimen in spirit at the Queensland Museum, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, specimen number JM16581 collected from Perseverance Dam, Queensland, Australia, Latitude -27.285278 S., Longitude 152.119167 E.

Diagnosis: The three species, *Petrogale penicillata* (Gray, 1825), *P. fasciststateorum sp. nov.* and *P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov.* are separated from all other species within the genus *Petrogale* Gray, 1837 by the following unique combination of characters:

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P. fasciststateorum sp. nov. are separated from both *Petrogale penicillata* and *P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov.* by having an orange tinge in the inner ear and also same on the forebody underside, versus yellowish in the other two species. Adults do not exceed 560 mm head and body length, versus up to 586 mm in the other two species.

P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov. is separated from both *P. penicillata* and *P. fasciststateorum sp. nov.* by having a tail brush that is not prominent, versus prominent in the other two species.

Dorsally, the fur in *P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov.* is light greyish-yellow in colour, versus dark brown or dark greyish in *P. penicillata* and similar in *P. fasciststateorum sp. nov.* but with a strong russet or purplish tinge in *P. fasciststateorum sp. nov.* especially on the edges and lower surfaces anteriorly.

P. penicillata is depicted in life online at:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/11294846>

and

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/195997155>

P. fasciststateorum sp. nov. is depicted in life online at:

https://www.swiff.net.au/cb_pages/sp_brush-tailed_rock-wallaby.php (second image on page taken in 1999), and

<https://www.mtrothwell.com.au/>
and
<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/species/11509>
P. rosswellingtoni sp. nov. is depicted in life online at:
<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/67783413>
and
<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/97004287>
and
<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/204890613>
and
<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/10082003>

Distribution: *P. rosswellingtoni* sp. nov. is found from Nanango, 100 km northwest of Brisbane (where it forms a hybrid zone with *Petrogale herberti*) (Eldridge and Close, 1992) south through the ranges to the Hunter Valley in New South Wales. Populations from the Warrumbungle's and Mount Kaputar are of *P. penicillata* not *P. rosswellingtoni* sp. nov.. Otherwise *P. penicillata* is found in the ranges and rocky hills south of the Hunter Valley to about the Brindabella Ranges (historically at least), New South Wales / ACT.

Etymology: Named in honour of Cliff Ross Wellington of Ramornie, northern New South Wales, Australia in recognition of a lifetime's working with wildlife in Australia and his immense contributions to wildlife conservation spanning more than 4 decades.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST - NONE