

## Bandicoots finally find a home

**A** Do you know what a bandicoot is? Bandicoots are small animals that look like rats or mice, but they're a different kind of animal. They are a marsupial – an animal like a kangaroo, where the baby lives in a pocket in its mother, called a pouch. They have small pointy noses, big back feet and a thin tail. They are the same size as a rabbit. They make different sounds when they are angry, scared or in pain, or when they are trying to find another bandicoot.



**B** Most bandicoots live in Australia, but a few live in Papua New Guinea, in the south Pacific. There are 20 different species of bandicoot, and 12 of these live in Australia. They are very common in New South Wales, which is on the east coast of Australia. They live in different habitats, such as woods, coastal areas and open land. They live in small holes in the ground, under vegetation to help them hide from other animals.

**C** Unfortunately, all species of bandicoot are in danger. About half of the species in Australia are now extinct, including the desert bandicoot, which was from the central part of Australia. Bandicoots are in danger for two reasons. One reason is that people farm the land where bandicoots live. When they farm the land, they clear it of the trees and other vegetation, and the bandicoots die. Another reason is because of natural predators. These are animals like foxes, cats and dogs that hunt the bandicoot. One species of bandicoot is in a lot of danger. The Eastern barred bandicoot, which lives in Victoria in the south of Australia, is becoming extinct. In 1988, the population of Eastern barred bandicoots was only about 100.

**D** Because Eastern barred bandicoots were nearly extinct, there was a campaign to breed more bandicoots. The aim was to increase the number so they weren't in danger anymore. There are now nearly 1000 more bandicoots living in zoos and in other places in Victoria. The zoos now want to release the bandicoots into the wild, so they can live in their natural habitat.

**E** However, there is a problem with this plan. There are still lots of foxes, cats and dogs in the wild. If the zoos release the bandicoots, they are still in danger. So, they plan to release the bandicoots onto an island, called French Island. The island is on the south-east coast of Australia. There aren't any foxes or other predators on it, and they think the bandicoots can be safe here. There are now 55 bandicoots living on French Island, and the future is good for the rest of the bandicoots.



1 Read the article. Why do the bandicoots need a new home?

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2 Read the article again. Match headings 1–5 with paragraphs A–E in the article.

- 1 What was the plan to help them? \_\_
- 2 What is their natural habitat? \_\_
- 3 What is a bandicoot? \_\_
- 4 What problems do they have? \_\_
- 5 What is the next step? \_\_

**Subskill: Understanding the content of paragraphs**

Underline the key words in each heading first, then look for words with the same or a similar meaning in each paragraph.

3 Answer the questions.

- 1 What type of animal is a bandicoot?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Why do bandicoots live in small holes?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What was the problem with the Eastern barred bandicoot in 1988?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Was the campaign to breed more bandicoots successful?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Where is the bandicoots' new home?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Why is this their new home?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 Word work Match the definitions to the underlined words in the text.

- 1 the natural environment
- 2 let an animal leave a place and be free
- 3 get animals to have babies
- 4 take things away from a place to make space
- 5 animals that kill and eat other animals
- 6 plants and trees

5 Think of the advantages and disadvantages of bandicoots living on an island by themselves. Do you think it's a good idea? Why/Why not?

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