

# Am I your BUSH Bud?

## Eastern Bettong

### About me:

If you love digging – then look no further, you have found your Bush Bud! For a hundred thousand years Australia's landscape has been tilled by hundreds of thousands of little marsupials called Bettongs. As ecosystem engineers Bettong's digging helps to aerate the soil and leaf litter assisting in natural litter breakdown, penetration of seedlings, organic mixing and thus improving nutrient availability for plants. Bettongs live in dry open eucalypt forests and grassy woodlands. It is nocturnal, spending the hours of daylight in a domed, camouflaged nest of grass.

Bettongs are able to reproduce at any time of the year. The Eastern Bettong's gestation period is only three weeks long, and while it has only one young per litter, it can produce three young per year in favourable conditions. This relatively high rate of reproduction can lead to 'extreme fluctuations' in population, depending on rainfall and drought.



### Threats:

The mainland population of the Eastern Bettong became extinct in the 1920's following the introduction of predators like the Red Fox, and the domestic cat. The species is now restricted to Tasmania, where its population has recently declined alarmingly, and a reintroduced population (inside a predator-proof fence) at Mulligans Flat in the Australian Capital Territory.

## Become my Bush Bud!

Take a stand for Canberra's Nature and sign up to get the chance to walk with an expert in the habitat of the Eastern Bettong!

