

## K'GARI WONGARI (Fraser Island dingo)



### Common name

K'gari wongari (Fraser Island dingo)

### Scientific name

*Canis familiaris* (breed dingo)

### Habitat

Wongari are capable of surviving in a wide variety of habitats. On K'gari, they roam freely across all of the island's natural habitats including its beaches, sand dunes, lakes and rainforests.

### Habitat range/distribution

K'gari is a World Heritage Area and part of the Great Sandy National Park. It is located 200km north of Brisbane, off Queensland's east coast near the cities of Maryborough and Hervey Bay, and the coastal town of Rainbow Beach.

### Description

Adult wongari on K'gari stand more than 60cm high (on average), are about 1.2m long, and have an average weight of around 18kg. They are naturally lean with wedge-shaped skulls. Most K'gari wongari are a golden sandy colour, while younger wongari have a darker back and neck.

Most wongari have white markings on their paws (described as socks), tail tips and chest. These are unique for each individual wongari and are used to help with identification as part of monitoring programs.

### Importance

Wongari are apex predators. This means they are at the top of the food chain! Wongari play an important role in keeping the island's natural ecosystem in balance. They help maintain the biodiversity of the island's plant and animal species by keeping populations of smaller carnivores (meat eaters) and herbivores (plant eaters) under control.

The wongari are culturally significant to the Butchulla People, the Traditional Owners of K'gari, who maintain a strong connection to the wongari in their hearts, minds and spirits.

The K'gari wongari, while classified as least concern wildlife under the *Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992*, have significant conservation value because they have rarely interbred with dogs. As native wildlife, dingoes are protected in Queensland national parks, including the Great Sandy National Park on K'gari.

### Key threats

- 1. People feeding wongari:** When wongari lose their natural wariness of humans they can come to expect food from people. This impacts the natural hunting skills wongari need to stay 'living wild' and they may become aggressive towards people.
- 2. Inter-breeding with domestic dogs:** Domestic dogs are banned on the island to prevent inter-breeding which can weaken the unique genetic characteristics of K'gari wongari.

### What is being done to help protect and conserve this species

The Queensland Government's Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) rangers work in partnership with the Butchulla People to manage, conserve and protect the K'gari wongari.

Key actions to reduce human-wongari interactions include:

- establishing dingo-deterrent fencing around some camping areas, some eating areas and around some townships
- scientific and research programs to monitor the status and genetic health of the wongari population
- communication and education programs to reinforce safety messages for visitors and residents.

### Become a K'gari wongari champion

- Never feed wongari and only observe from a distance.
- Walk in groups (do not run or jog) and stay alert—do not go out alone.
- Put all snacks, drinks and empty containers away securely.
- Keep your camp site boring—don't leave anything lying or flapping around that the wongari can steal or tear at.
- Talk to your friends and family about threats to K'gari wongari and what they can do.



Wongari are naturally lean and fit, often travelling up to 40km a day.



## WONGARI TRUE OR FALSE

### Circle your answer

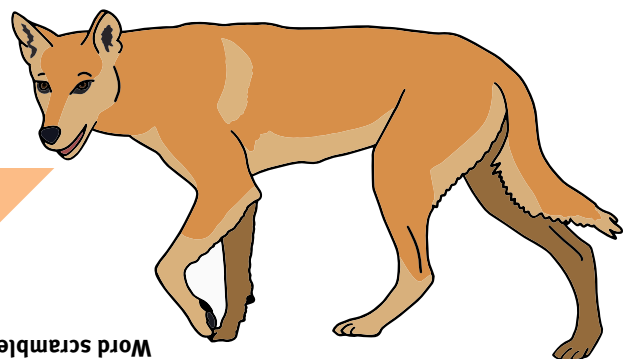
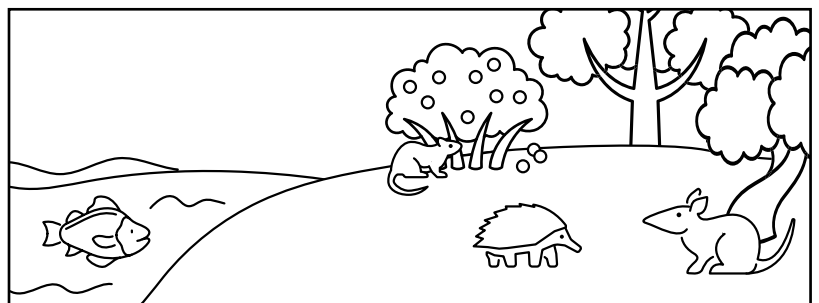
- |   |      |       |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Wongari are apex predators.  | TRUE | FALSE |
| 2. All skinny wongari are starving.                                     | TRUE | FALSE |
| 3. Butchulla People have a special connection to wongari.               | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4. If you feel threatened by a wongari, run away.                       | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5. Wongari eat a diverse range of prey.                                 | TRUE | FALSE |
| 6. Families with children should camp in a fenced camp area.            | TRUE | FALSE |
| 7. If wongari lose their wariness of people they can become aggressive. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 8. Taking a selfie with a wongari is safe.                              | TRUE | FALSE |

## WONGARI WORD SCRAMBLE

### What do wongari eat?

Wongari are naturally lean and skinny-looking but they have plenty to eat on the island. Unjumble the words below to find out what they eat (look at the scene for hints).

- HFIS \_\_\_\_\_
- NEACDHI \_\_\_\_\_
- ANCTIDOOB \_\_\_\_\_
- UHBS ATR \_\_\_\_\_
- ISBERER \_\_\_\_\_



Wongari howl to announce their location, keep their pack together, and find out where other wongari are.

Answers | True or False: 1. True | 2. False | 3. True | 4. False | 5. True | 6. True | 7. True | 8. False  
Word Scramble: Fish, Echindna, Bandicoot, Bush rat, Berries

