

Body Condition Scoring – Macropods

Speare (1988) demonstrated with diagrams of the vertebrae (see Jackson, 2003). The vertebrae at the base of the tail will be palpated and will be provided with a score of 0-5 based upon the degree of muscle coverage over the dorsolateral process at the base of the tail. Palpation of the muscle coverage of the scapula spine and the ribs can be used in addition to the tail base. To support this method, additional methods using the area between the hips can be used as an indicator of condition. The more concave the area, the lower the condition score; conversely, the more convex this area of muscle mass is, the better the condition and the higher the condition score (cited in Jackson, 2003).

Other methods typically used, such as demeanour, assessments of animals' health which will be recorded separately such as condition of fur, presence of ectoparasites, condition of cloaca (checking for faeces consistency), pouch condition. The pouch condition can will also be assessed and can also be used to indicate the reproductive status of the female and assist in the in-field aging of the animal.

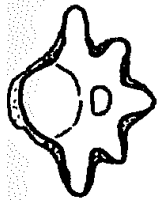
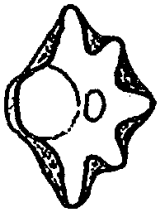

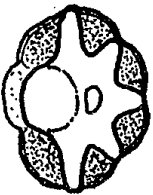
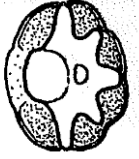
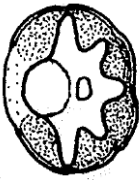
- 1) Pouch dirty, indicating non pregnant and no young
- 2) Clean, indicating oestrus
- 3) Glandular indicating pregnancy
- 4) Pouch young present
- 5) Elongated teat for young at foot
- 6) Regressing teat.

The body condition score can also be assessed against the weight of the animal in relation to its age. You can assess if the animal is underweight for its age after undertaking the Molar Progression Index.

Jackson, S. (2007). Australian mammals: Biology and captive management. Herndon;Collingwood;: CSIRO Publishing.

Speare, R. (1988) Clinical assessment, disease and management of the orphaned macropod joey. In D.I. Bryden (Ed.) Australian Wildlife. Proceedings 104 Post Graduate Committee in Veterinary Science. University of Sydney, Sydney, pp. 211-296

Body Condition Scoring – Using tail base and mass between the hips

Score	Visual reference (Tail base)	Description
0		No muscle coverage of dorsolateral process at the base of the tail, ribs and scapula spine. Concaved muscle mass between the hips.
1		Minimal muscle coverage of dorsolateral process at the base of the tail, ribs and scapula spine. Moderately concave muscle mass between the hips.
2		Thin covering of muscle dorsolateral process at the base of the tail, ribs and scapula spine. Flattened muscle mass between the hips.
3		Moderate layer of muscle covering dorsolateral process at the base of the tail, ribs and scapula spine. Slightly convex muscle mass between the hips.
4		Good muscle coverage over dorsolateral process at the base of the tail, ribs and scapula spine requiring moderate palpation to feel bony process. Convex muscle mass between the hips.
5		Thick layer of muscle over dorsolateral process at the base of the tail, , ribs and scapula spine requiring heavy palpation to feel the processes. Highly convex muscle mass between the hips.