

Tasmanian Devil

FACT SHEETS FOR A CAUSE

12

 **DOMAIN**
Eukaryota

 **KINGDOM**
Animalia

 **PHYLUM**
Chordata

 **CLASS**
Mammalia

 **ORDER**
Dasyuromorphia

 **FAMILY**
Dasyuridae

 **GENUS**
Sarcophilus

 **SPECIES**
harrisii

WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

Tasmanian Devils live exclusively on the island of Tasmania, off the southeastern coast of Australia. They inhabit coastal scrublands, dry forests, agricultural areas, and mountainous regions.



THE BLACK-SPIRITED CARNIVORE

Tasmanian Devils are stocky, dog-sized marsupials weighing 13-26 pounds, with males larger than females. They have coarse black fur, sometimes with distinctive white patches on the chest or rump. Despite their fierce reputation, devils are shy and mostly nocturnal scavengers. Their powerful jaws and broad heads allow them to crush bones and consume entire carcasses, leaving nothing behind.



DEVILS AT THE DINNER TABLE



Tasmanian Devils are primarily scavengers, feeding on carrion such as wallabies, wombats, and birds. However, they can hunt small prey, including insects, frogs, and reptiles.

Thanks to one of the strongest bites per body size of any mammal, devils can consume bones, fur, and organs, leaving virtually nothing behind. This makes them essential "clean-up crews" in Tasmania's ecosystems.



Extinct
|
EX

Threatened
|
EW **CR** **EN** **VU**

Least Concern
|
NT **LC**

LIVING TOGETHER... OR NOT

While usually solitary, Tasmanian Devils will gather at large carcasses, where noisy squabbles break out. They scream, growl, lunge, and bare their teeth in dramatic displays of dominance. These fierce-sounding interactions, filled with spine-chilling screeches and hisses, help set the feeding order and reduce the risk of real injury.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF LITTLE DEVILS

Tasmanian Devils breed once a year, usually around March. Females can give birth to 20-40 tiny, underdeveloped young, but only four typically survive because the mother has only four teats in her pouch. The surviving joeys remain in the pouch for about four months and then stay in a den until weaned at around six months old. Young devils become independent by nine months and are capable hunters and scavengers.

THE TUMOR THAT THREATENS THEIR EXISTENCE



Habitat loss



Vehicle
Collisions



Devil Facial Tumor

Since the mid-1990s, Tasmanian Devils have been devastated by a highly unusual disease: Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD). This aggressive cancer grows as tumors on the face and inside the mouth, making it impossible for affected devils to eat. However, recent research suggests devils may be evolving resistance, and some populations are beginning to show signs of natural immunity or slowed tumor growth.

Habitat Loss: Agricultural development and urban expansion reduce devil habitat.

Vehicle Collisions: Devils frequently become roadkill while scavenging carcasses on roads.



*Did you
know?*

5 FUN FACTS ABOUT TASMANIAN DEVILS



The cartoon character "Taz" from Looney Tunes was inspired by the devil's reputation for ferocity.



Devils glow under ultraviolet light, revealing mysterious patterns scientists are still investigating.



A devil's bite is strong enough to crush bones, with a bite force comparable to that of a dog four times its size.



Devils use their tails as fat storage; a thin tail is a sign of poor health.



Early European settlers named them "devils" because of their chilling screams and fierce temper.