

SMALL AUSTRALIAN MARSUPIALS

May 2013



The water rushes down the river, near the holes where the Wombats thrive. The wind whistles in the grass. The Koalas sleep and eat in the eucalyptus trees. The Bandicoots and the Bilbies sleep in their ground nests. The Numbats sleep in their hollow logs.



Help Is Truly
Needed to Save
the Marsupials Of
Australia

Now this doesn't happen much anymore. The land has been turned into farmland. Droughts cause competition for food. There are too many dingoes, the predators, and not a lot of marsupials, the prey. Diseases and parasites kill. Invasive species destroy food sources. All of this spells T-R-O-U-B-L-E for marsupials!!!!!!

What is a Marsupial?

Charles Darwin once said 'on seeing the marsupials in Australia for the first time and comparing them to placental mammals; an unbeliever might exclaim, "Surely two distinct Creators must have been at work"'. He meant that people thought they were unreal. Placental mammals are animals that give birth to well-developed young. Only marsupial mammals give birth to undeveloped young. The baby stays in its mother's pouch for a couple of months, then just stays close to its mother.



This is a Numbat



Northern Hairy-Nosed Wombats

Wombats are a member of the Vombatidae Family. There are three species of wombats (Common wombat, southern hairy-nosed wombat, and Northern hairy-nosed wombats). The Northern Hairy-Nosed Wombats are the largest of the three. They also are the largest burrowing mammals and most endangered of all wombats.

They can weigh up to 40 kilograms. Did you know that females are heavier than males? They only live in Epping National Park. Young ones stay in their mother's pouch for 6-9 months. During droughts, they have food competition from Grey Kangaroos, sheep, goats, and cows. This makes them the most endangered wombats.

Australian Marsupials

Marsupial moles are really unique. They have no external ears and they are blind. Their forelimbs are specially designed for digging and sand-swimming. They live underground in desert areas in Central Australia. They eat insect larvae, insect pupae, and ants.

Koala Bears are not bears! Koalas sleep in the daytime for 18-20 hours. Did you know Baby Koalas look exactly like pink jelly beans? Koalas are herbivores. They eat about 100 trees each over 20 years. That means they eat 2 ½ pounds of eucalyptus leaves a day. That's a lot, considering they only weigh 20 pounds. Koalas were actually hunted in the 1920's and 1930's. Koalas can live about 20 years in the wild.

Tasmanian Devils are called "the devil". They only live on the island of Tasmania. It is the largest living carnivorous marsupial in the world. Since the late 1990's facial tumor disease has threatened them.

The Problem

There are now fewer marsupials than ever. Loss of habitats, invasive species, and diseases are the biggest problems. In 2010, there were fewer than 163 Northern Hairy-nosed Wombats left. Tim Flannery says, "national parks may become marsupial ghost towns!"