

THE TASMANIAN DEVIL

(*Sarcophilus harrisii*) is the world's largest marsupial carnivore.

Marsupials are mammals that are warm-blooded, furred and feed their young on milk. They are born in an embryonic state and reared in a pouch. Tasmanian devils are nocturnal and though they do hunt for food, they mainly scavenge carrion, which means they find and eat animals that are already dead.

Tasmanian devils are an endangered species.

They are a vital part of the ecosystem.

If Tasmanian devils were to become extinct in the wild many other native animals would be put at risk.

DEVELOPMENT

BIRTH: eyes closed, no hair, front legs prominent, back legs not developed.

IN THE POUCH: by three months their eyes are open, hair starts to grow and they are beginning to regulate their own body heat.

IN THE DEN: fully furred, can call loudly, can cling on to the mother and can move around.

MATURITY: Both sexes are fully grown by two to three years old and generally live for about six years. An adult female weighs about seven kilograms while an adult male weighs about 10 kilograms.



SAVE THE TASMANIAN DEVIL PROGRAM

www.tassiedevil.com.au



Australian Government



Tasmania
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UTAS



Photo credit: Anaspides Photography, Iain D. Williams

MARCH

MATING

Females normally start to breed when they are two years old. They reproduce generally for three to four seasons. Males fight over who will get to mate with a female. One litter may have several fathers.

Pregnancy (March – April)

The gestation period is around 21 days.



Photo credit: Taronga Zoo, Tony Britt-Lewis

DECEMBER – JANUARY

DISPERSAL

From six months old the imps start exploring the den vicinity by themselves, catching small invertebrates and learning skills through play. They are fully weaned and independent by nine months and start to disperse and establish their own dens.



APRIL

BIRTH

Females give birth to 20 – 40 babies, each the size of a grain of rice. The young follow a trail of mucus up to the mother's pouch to compete for a place at one of only four teats.

The young attach themselves to the teats where they will stay for the next few months.



MAY – AUGUST

POUCH LIFE

After four months the young begin to leave the pouch to explore. The mother will leave them safely in a den while she scavenges for food.



SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER

DEN LIFE

The mother regularly comes back to the den to:

- feed milk to her imps,
- teach them what to eat, and
- teach them about dangers.

When they hear a noise they will hide in crevices in the den, keeping very quiet, until the mother calls to let them know it is safe.

LIFE CYCLE OF THE TASMANIAN DEVIL