

Australian Threatened Species

Tiger Quoll, Spotted-tailed Quoll or Spot-tailed Quoll

Dasyurus maculatus

Conservation Status

Commonwealth: southeast mainland population – Endangered; Tasmanian population – Vulnerable; North Queensland subspecies – Endangered (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

NSW: Vulnerable (*Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*)

QLD: Endangered (*Nature Conservation Act 1992*)

ACT: Vulnerable (*Nature Conservation Act 1980*)

SA: Endangered (*National Parks & Wildlife Act 1972*)

TAS: Rare (*Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*)



Australia is home to four species of quolls. Most parts of Australia were once inhabited by at least one quoll species, and quolls were among the first native animals to be described by European scientists. All quoll species have declined in numbers since European settlement due to habitat loss and modification across the land, and introduced predators such as foxes.

What do they look like?

The Tiger Quoll, Spot-tailed Quoll or Spotted-tailed Quoll is the largest marsupial carnivore surviving on mainland Australia. Tiger Quolls are more than 50% larger than other quolls and, unlike the other species, have white spots that extend along their tail.

Tiger Quolls have bright eyes, a moist pink nose and sharp teeth. They have a pointed snout and a long tail. Their fur has a coarse texture and is red-brown to dark brown with white spots of varying size above and pale below.

What do they eat?

Tiger Quolls hunt mostly at night. Their diet appears to consist primarily of medium-sized mammals (up to 70%), including gliders, possums, rabbits, and even small wallabies. They also like carrion (dead animals), birds and eggs. Small mammals, reptiles and invertebrates are also a significant part of the diet, particularly for juvenile quolls.

Tiger Quolls are sexually mature at two years of age. Adult males begin searching for females around May, and mating takes place in mid-June. The young are born in early July, and by mid-August are no longer attached to their mothers, although they feed from her and spend much time in the den. By early November, young are completely independent at 18 weeks of age. Tiger Quolls live for approximately five years.

Where do they live?

Tiger Quolls are found in a range of forest habitats, from rainforest to open woodland. They require forest with suitable den sites such as rock crevices, caves, hollow logs, burrows and tree hollows.

The Tiger Quoll has a large home range and can cover considerable distances (more than 6km) overnight. It is largely nocturnal and solitary.

The Tiger Quoll was once common throughout southeastern Australia, including Tasmania. However, since European settlement it has become rare across most of its range.



What is threatening them?

Adult Tiger Quolls have a 'territory' of up to 500 hectares. There are few areas where such territories can exist without quolls encountering the effects of humans. This makes them particularly susceptible to a number of threats including:

- Land clearing: loss and fragmentation of habitat is a primary threat to this largest of Australia's marsupial carnivores, especially areas of suitable forest with sufficient numbers of den sites and prey
- Scattered populations: populations of Tiger Quolls are now scattered and hence vulnerable to chance events such as bushfires and disease
- Introduced competitors: competition for food with introduced foxes and cats, as well as possible predation on young quolls by these introduced species may also threaten them
- 1080 baits: these are used to control fox and wild dog numbers. Unfortunately, female and juvenile quolls are especially susceptible. It is vital that when 1080 baits are used, best practice management guidelines are employed in order to keep impacts to native species to a minimum
- Fire: since Tiger Quolls favour dense habitats with a lot of ground litter on the forest floor, burning is also likely to threaten the species.

Did you know...

- Captain Cook collected quolls along the east coast in 1770, and recorded 'quoll' as an Aboriginal name for these animals
- Quolls share communal latrine (toilet) sites which are located in open spaces and may have up to 100 droppings piled up. Quolls may use these sites for marking their territory and for other social functions

- Male Tiger Quolls are not the most sensitive of partners. They have a lengthy courtship where the female may be bitten quite severely. Copulation can last around eight hours
- In the breeding season, male Tiger Quolls may emit a slow, deep growl and a loud, explosive spitting sound (like that of a cat, but enormously magnified). The female's call is not quite as loud. These calls may have given quolls their fearsome 'tiger' reputation.

How you can help

- Find out if your land is likely to be Tiger Quoll habitat - you can contact your Threatened Species Network Coordinator for information. If so, take care to maintain the vegetation surrounding any waterways on your property to a distance of at least 20 metres as these are favourite foraging grounds for Tiger Quolls
- Road-related deaths are quite common for this species, as the quoll often scavenges on road kill and is thus placed in danger. Take extra care driving through areas of known quoll habitat, especially at night
- Keep your pets indoors or fenced in at night so they don't escape and become feral predators
- Participate in revegetation and tree-planting schemes in your local area. You should ensure that all plants are locally sourced and appropriate for the region and the animals within it
- If you live in southeast Queensland, join the Quoll Seekers Network. For more information visit www.quollseekers.com.

Contacts and References

Julie Kirkwood
Victoria Coordinator
Threatened Species Network
Ph: (03) 9656 9907
Email: tsnvc@wwf.org.au

Alison Colyer
NSW & ACT Coordinator
Threatened Species Network
Ph: (02) 8202 1222
Email: tsnsw@wwf.org.au

Keryn Hyslop
Queensland Coordinator
Threatened Species Network
Ph: (07) 3221 0573
Email: tsnqld@wwf.org.au

Visit: www.wwf.org.au

You can also find out more information about Australia's threatened species by calling the Department of the Environment and Heritage Community Information Unit on freecall 1800 803 772 or by visiting www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened.

Photo

Tiger Quoll in southwest VIC
© WWF / Frédy MERCAY



The Threatened Species Network is a community-based program of the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust and WWF Australia.