



## WHAT IS WOMBAT MANGE?

Wombat Mange is a disease caused by the parasitic mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*. The mite burrows into the skin of its host causing thick, crusty skin, and hair loss. Mange can affect lots of mammal species but the common wombat is one of the most affected species. This is partly because wombats are burrowing animals and burrows provide good conditions for mites to survive and to spread between wombats.

Mange has been present in mainland Australia and Tasmania for over 200 years and there is good evidence that it was introduced by Europeans and their domestic animals.

## WHERE DOES WOMBAT MANGE OCCUR?

Mange occurs in most common wombat populations throughout their range. It generally occurs at low prevalence, but more extreme outbreaks can occur within localised populations. It is not known why these outbreaks occur but they appear to be associated with times of nutritional stress and/or overcrowding.

## EFFECTS OF WOMBAT MANGE

Wombat mange has significant health and welfare impacts for individual wombats. If left untreated mange can result in the death of affected individuals.

Severe outbreaks of mange can result in a significant reduction in wombat numbers in local areas as has occurred in Narawntapu National Park and nearby areas in northern Tasmania.

Although mange occurs widely in Tasmania, monitoring of wombats by DPIPW in eastern, northern, southern and central Tasmania for the past 30 years has shown that counts of wombats have generally been stable or have steadily increased. There may be other localised declines of wombats that have not been detected.

While mange may cause localised population declines of wombats, there is very little evidence to suggest that the disease will cause wombats to go extinct in Tasmania. The Tasmanian wombat population will continue to be monitored to detect signs of population change.

## CAN WOMBAT MANGE BE ERADICATED?

There is no method to eradicate mange from the wild. Individual wombats and other animals can be treated for mange. While this may be relatively straightforward for tame or captive animals, it is more challenging to treat animals in the wild, especially for wombats which are typically nocturnal, live underground and are not well-suited to captivity. This is because effective treatment of mange in wombats requires regular doses of anti-parasitic drugs over four months. For details on treating wombats with mange, visit DPIPWE's website.

## WHAT IS BEING DONE?

- DPIPWE assists the public by providing advice on managing treatment of mange affected wombats.
- Community groups are making and providing kits to enable the public to treat mange.
- Wildlife carers are treating mange affected wombats.
- DPIPWE is monitoring wombat numbers and the prevalence of mange around Tasmania.
- The University of Tasmania is investigating more effective ways of treating wombat populations in the wild and undertaking research to better understand what causes mange outbreaks and wombat population declines.
- The Tasmanian Government has provided grants to community groups to help treat mange affected wombats, to the University of Tasmania to investigate more effective treatment options, and to Conservation Volunteers Australia to help assess the prevalence of mange in wombats in key areas around the State.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Web: [www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/wombats](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/wombats)  
Email: [wildlife.reception@dpipwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:wildlife.reception@dpipwe.tas.gov.au)  
Phone: (03) 6165 4305



## HOW CAN I HELP?

**There are many ways you can help:**

- Report observations of injured wombats or wombats with mange to DPIPWE by calling **(03) 6165 4305** or via email: [wildlife.reception@dpipwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:wildlife.reception@dpipwe.tas.gov.au)
- Treat mange affected wombats in your area – contact DPIPWE
- Drive carefully in “wombat country” to reduce the number of wombats killed or injured by cars
- Use non-lethal methods to manage wombats on agricultural land, including “wombat gates” to allow their passage through fences, while excluding wallabies from grazing pastures and crops
- Prevent dogs from roaming in areas where wombats occur