



### 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 NRE Tas in eastern, northern, southern and central Tasmania for the past 35 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. For details on treating wombats with mange, visit NRE Tas' website.

## WHAT IS BEING DONE?

- NRE Tas assists the public by providing advice on treatment of mange-affected wombats.
- Wildlife carers are treating mange-affected wombats.
- NRE Tas is monitoring wombat numbers and the prevalence of mange around Tasmania
- The University of Tasmania is investigating a new treatment option for mange-affected wombats and is undertaking research to better understand what causes mange outbreaks.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Web: [www.nre.tas.gov.au/wombats](http://www.nre.tas.gov.au/wombats) Email: [wildlife.services@nre.tas.gov.au](mailto:wildlife.services@nre.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 NRE Tas by calling **(03) 6165 4305** or via email: [wildlife.services@nre.tas.gov.au](mailto:wildlife.services@nre.tas.gov.au)
- Treat mange-affected wombats in your area – contact NRE Tas
- Drive carefully in areas where wombats may be present 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

