

# THE WOMBAT

The wombat is often called “the bulldozer of the bush” because of its short, powerful legs, broad shoulders and its burrowing abilities. Adults vary in size from 75cm to 1m long, are approximately 25cm high and can weigh between 20kg and 30kg. The wombat’s coat varies in colour depending on its habitat. It may be glossy black, dark grey, silver grey, chocolate brown, sandy or cream. There are 3 species:

## Common wombat

*Vombatus ursinus*

Common wombats occupy a variety of habitats including woodland, coastal-scrub, heathland and alpine areas.



Common wombat



Southern hairy-nosed wombat

## Southern hairy -nosed wombat

*Lasiorhinus latifrons*

Southern hairy-nosed wombats have greatly diminished in numbers since European settlement. They are found on the eastern Nullarbor Plains and other semi-arid land in Southern Australia.

## Northern hairy -nosed wombat

*Lasiorhinus krefftii*

Northern hairy-nosed wombats are listed as critically endangered by CITES\*. There are currently only 110 left. They are found in Epping Forest National Park. In an effort to conserve these wombats, the National Park has been fenced, to minimise disturbances and threats.

## DIET

The wombat has a high fibre diet of grasses, bark and roots. Exactly what grasses are eaten is determined by the local climate and vegetation.

The wombat’s teeth are rootless and continue to grow throughout its life. As a result, it needs to eat coarse food to wear the teeth down to a useable level.

## BEHAVIOUR

Although they are usually solitary animals, there seems to be a definite dominance hierarchy throughout their home ranges. This is established through fighting. Wombats are largely nocturnal, sheltering in burrows during the day and emerging at night to feed. The burrow is a secure haven and can be easily defended against potential predators. The long, shovel shaped claws on both the front and hind feet have blunted tips that aid in the digging of these burrows.



Front foot



Back foot

## REPRODUCTION

Breeding can occur at any time of the year. After a gestation period of about 30 days, the joey emerges from the cloaca and climbs through its mother’s fur to the pouch opening. Being a marsupial, a newborn wombat is extremely underdeveloped, weighing only 0.5 grams and measuring approximately 15 mm in length. Once inside the pouch, it attaches itself to one of two teats and remains there for 7 to 8 months.

Between the 8th and 10th month the joey leaves the pouch permanently. It begins to eat grass, but continues to suckle from the pouch until 15 months of age. The bond between mother and joey usually remains strong for some months after weaning, although some young wombats move away immediately.

\* CITES is the “Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora”.



## Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary

Jesmond Road  
Fig Tree Pocket QLD 4069

Phone: 07 3378 1366  
Email: education@koala.net