

# Numbat

## Description

Numbats are reddish-brown on their shoulders and head. This colour changes further down the body to black with white stripes. Their bushy tail is about 17 cm long.

## Diet

Numbats are insectivores and eat an exclusive diet of termites. An adult Numbat requires up to 20,000 termites each day.

## In the wild

They are not strong enough to break into termite mounds themselves, so they wait for termites to come into easy to reach places. For this reason, the Numbat's lifestyle is very closely linked to termite movements. In summer, termites are out early in the day but retreat deeper into the soil as the day becomes hot. During that part of the day, Numbats retreat to the shelter of either a hollow log or burrow and wait for the cooler part of the afternoon to feed again. In winter, the termites are not active until late morning when the soil begins to warm but remain active until dusk. The Numbat is active at the same time to feed.

## Threats

Numbats are threatened by loss of habitat through land clearing, fire and predation by feral predators including foxes and cats.

## At Perth Zoo

Perth Zoo, as part of its Native Species Breeding Program, is breeding Numbats for release into protected habitats. Since 1993, 200 Numbats bred at the Zoo have been released into the wild.

You can see a Numbat in the Australian Bushwalk.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Numbat is one of two marsupials that are strictly diurnal (active during the day).

The Numbat is Western Australia's mammal emblem.



## Fast Facts



**Scientific Name:** *Myrmecobius fasciatus*

**Conservation Status:** Endangered



**Body Length:** 20–27 cm

**Weight:** 400–700 g

**Gestation:** 14 days

**Number of young:** 4

**Habitat:** Forests, woodlands

**Distribution:** South-west Western Australia



Distribution ■