

## Eastern Quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*)

### Conservation Status

**NATIONAL: Vulnerable** (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

Australia has four species of quoll: eastern, northern, western and tiger quolls. All four species are now either endangered or severely reduced in number.

### Description

The eastern quoll has a wet pink nose, large ears and black or brown fur with white spots. It is a solitary nocturnal marsupial.



The quoll was once called the 'Native Cat' because the first European settlers in Australia thought it looked like a cat, although it is not related and the eastern quoll is actually smaller than a cat.

### Habitat

The Eastern Quoll can be found in a variety of habitats including forest, scrub, heathland and even cultivated land but it appears to prefer areas of eucalypt forest interspersed with pastures. It usually requires hollow logs or rock piles for dens, but in agricultural areas dens have been found in haystacks.

### Distribution

Eastern quolls were once found throughout Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania. They are now considered extinct on the mainland, although some recent sightings in the New England region of northern New South Wales suggest that the species may still survive. The last time an eastern quoll was seen in the wild in South Australia was over 100 years ago. The species is however widespread and common in Tasmania.

### Diet

Quolls mostly eat insects and small animals and also like to eat grass and fruit.

### Breeding

A female Eastern Quoll can have as many as 30 babies at the same time but she only has six teats so only six babies survive. Quoll babies are six millimetres long when they are born. They stay in the pouch, attached to the mother's teat, for about 7 weeks. When the babies grow too big for the pouch the mother keeps them in a den filled with soft grass. She will carry them on her back if she moves from one den to another. After another 8 weeks the young quolls leave the den to face the world.

### Threats

Loss and fragmentation of habitat, loss of large hollow logs suitable for dens, competition for food and predation by foxes and cats, spread of disease from cats, road mortality and poisoning by dingo baits have impacted on the ongoing survival of the Eastern Quoll.

### Recovery Plan

Several eastern quoll captive breeding programmes exist on the mainland. FAME helped establish a breeding program at Mt Rothwell in 2002. This breeding program was so successful that it has now been discontinued and in the next year or two Mt Rothwell will have an entire population of Eastern Quolls that has been born wild.

### References & More Information

Strahan R. (Ed) 1995. *Mammals of Australia*. The Australian Museum Trust. Reed New Holland, Australia.

New South Wales Parks and Wildlife Service 1999. Threatened Species Information: Eastern Quoll. [www.npws.nsw.gov.au](http://www.npws.nsw.gov.au).