

THE SOUTHERN HAIRY NOSED WOMBAT



The southern hairy nosed wombat is the smallest of the three wombat species.

Southern hairy nosed wombats are listed as near threatened and found in small, scattered populations mainly in South Australia. Their populations are predominately located on the York Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula and inland in the Gawler Ranges and Murraylands as well as across the Nullarbor Plain into Western Australia.

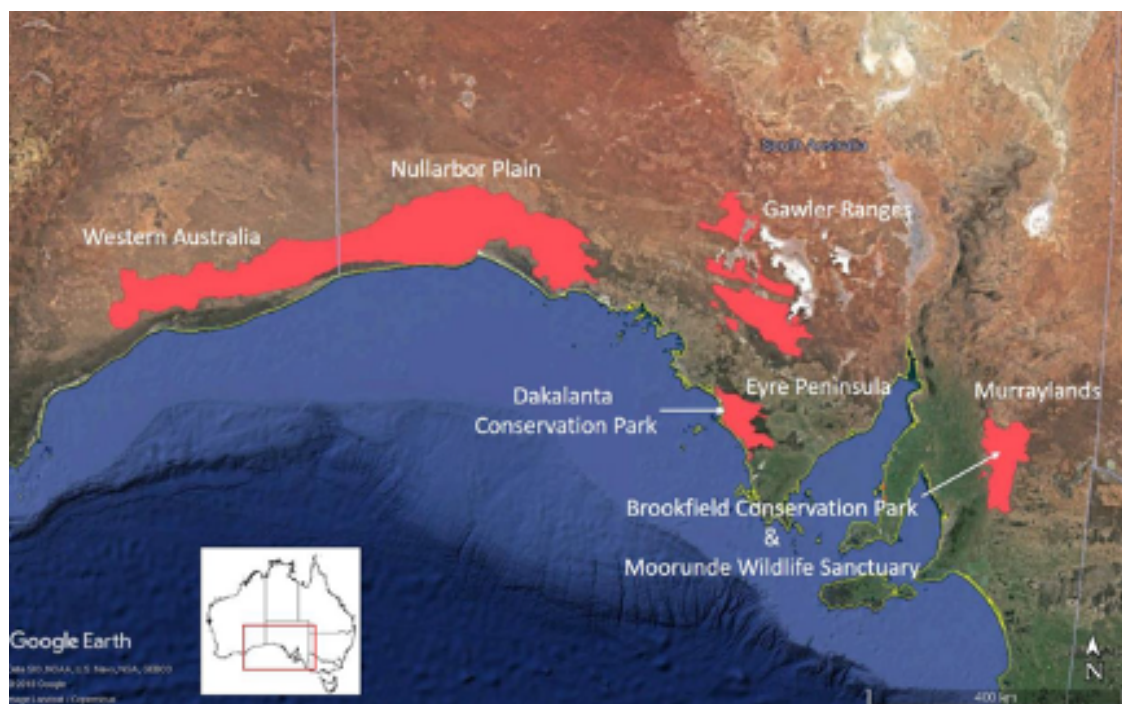
They live in extensive underground burrow systems that may contain five to ten wombats with the burrows providing a humid resting place during the day. At night, due to the harsh arid conditions, the southern hairy nosed wombat forages close to the warren. Females produce a single-young that lives in the pouch for six to seven months, the joey is weaned after approximately a year and in drought years reproduction may cease completely. Like other wombats, this species eats grasses, forbs and sedges where available.

Threats

A sharp population decline between 1870 and 1920 was mainly thought to be competition from rabbits and the control actions taken by landholders. Unfortunately, since early settlement, the wombat's habitat has continued to decline and in many areas the habitat that remains is sparse of native grasses forcing wombats to eat weeds, some of which are toxic. This is thought to be adding to the decline in wombat numbers overall. Rabbits continue to cause extensive damage to crop, pastures and native vegetation and are difficult to control needing constant management. The management of rabbit populations includes destroying their warrens and burrows, baiting, fumigation, trapping and exclusion fencing all of which can be detrimental to wombats.

Research suggests it is critical to the conservation of the southern hairy nosed wombat that ongoing control of rabbits uses alternative methods that are not harmful to wombats. The changing climate also appears to affect populations with more research needed on the topic to understand its full impact.

If you'd like further information on the southern hairy nosed wombat, please follow this link: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/8/11/186>



Distribution of southern hairy nosed wombats as at the most recent assessments in 2016–2018