

FIRE INFORMATION NOTE | NUMBAT

Species and conservation status

Numbat *Myrmecobius fasciatus* – Endangered

Description

Numbats are small marsupials of distinctive appearance. The numbat's overall colour is reddish brown which is the predominant colour of the head and upper back. There is a distinct horizontal black stripe through the eye and partway down the back. The faint white bands across the body become stronger towards the rump and are accentuated by the progressively darker and eventually jet-black bands between the white bands. The hair on the underside of the body is off-white. The tail is covered with long brown hairs, many of which are tipped with white.



Where are numbats found?

Numbats are known to occur in Dryandra Woodland, the Upper Warren area (including Tone-Perup Nature Reserve, Greater Kingston National Park and adjoining State Forest), Boyagin, Tutanning and Dragon Rocks Nature Reserves and Batalling forest block and may be present on private property adjoining these areas.

Ecology and biology

- Numbats are solitary and territorial. They occupy home ranges that are exclusive of other individuals of the same sex. Male and female home ranges overlap.
- Many of the characteristic features of the numbat are a result of its adaptation to a specialised diet of termites (*Isoptera*).
- Termites occur in mounds, in tree-trunks or underground from where their subterranean feeding galleries spread out.
- Numbats intercept termites in these feeding galleries, rather than in the nests, exposing them by digging in the upper 50mm of the soil, by turning over small pieces of dead wood and by scratching bark and decayed wood from old logs, stumps and fallen tree limbs.
- Young are born in late January or early February. Young are deposited in a nest (usually in a burrow) in late July and continue to be suckled each night. By mid-October the young numbats are supplementing their mother's milk with termites. In late November to early December, all young disperse. The dispersal movement is quite rapid, rarely taking more than a week.

What should I consider when undertaking fire mitigation activities?

- Plan for low intensity burns in autumn, when there are no young in nests or burrows, or late spring to create a mosaic of fuels.
- For large areas, plan a management regime that treats small sections over a number of years.
- Aim to wait until the area has recovered before undertaking further bushfire risk management actions in additional areas.
- You can protect hollows and other habitat by raking leaf litter and other fuel away, and wetting habitat elements down before burning.
- Consider conducting fox and feral cat control (e.g. 1080 baiting, trapping or shooting) immediately after your fire management activities.

More information

Threatened species management contact: DBCA's Species and Communities Program:
speciesandcommunities@dbca.wa.gov.au or your local DBCA Regional or District office:
www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/locations

Fuel management on your land: www.dfes.wa.gov.au/plannedburning/