



# Amazing Animals Fact sheets

## Wombats

Wombats are Australian marsupial mammals that have very short muscular legs and are the closest relative to the Koala. They have a backwards facing pouch so that when they are nursing young in their pouch they can still dig burrows and not fill their pouch with soil! Wombats feed on grasses and roots (they are herbivores) and dig long extensive burrow systems with their powerful claws. Although the wombats at Australia Zoo are diurnal, in the wild, wombats are nocturnal and will rarely venture out during the day.

Wombats are generally slow movers however they can run quickly if required. Their best form of defence though is when they are in their burrow. Here if they are cornered they can crush their would be predator/attacker underground using a large solid plate in their backside against the roof of their burrow.



### Common Wombat

On the mainland common wombats grow to an average length of 1m and 27kg in weight, yet may reach up to 1.2m in length and up to 35kg. The Tasmanian common wombat is not as large or bulky, averaging a weight of 20kg and about 85cm in length. Their thick paws are designed for digging burrows. They also have a pouch which faces backwards to protect their young from flying dirt whilst the mother is digging the burrow.

### Habitat

The common wombat is found throughout south-east Australia and also in Tasmania. They inhabit all sorts of areas including coastal forests, alpine woodlands and grasslands.

### Diet

A wombat's diet can consist of coarse native grasses, sedges, rushes, succulent plant roots and tubers and pasture grasses. Wombats are mostly nocturnal, usually coming out at night to graze when the temperature is lower. However in cold periods they may be seen out during the day either grazing or basking in the sun. They graze between 3 and 8 hours a night, during which time they may travel many kilometres and visit up to 4 burrows within their home range.

### Breeding

When food is plentiful they breed throughout the year. Gestation lasts for one month, then a jelly-bean sized joey is born which attaches to a teat in its mother's pouch. The joey will leave the pouch at ten months but will stay with the mother for another eight to ten months. From the time the juvenile leaves the pouch it begins to substitute increasing amounts of plant material instead of milk. At between 12-15 months of age it stops suckling altogether. They commence breeding at two years and live for about 15 years in the wild or up to 20 years in captivity.

## Australia Zoo Common Wombat profiles



### Minibus

Minibus is our oldest wombat, born in June 1995! There are a number of ways Minibus, or Mini, likes to spend her day. You will often find her chilling out under the guava tree in the shade or having cuddles with her keepers ... Oh, what a life!

By far her favourite activity is going out on her daily walk.

Whether she ventures around the entire Zoo or 20 metres down the path to her favourite grazing area, she loves to get out and about on her little adventures.

One of the things that makes Mini so dear to us is the story behind her start to life. Upon hearing the name 'Minibus', most people look straight to her well rounded stomach for the inspiration behind her name. The name, however, is rather a sad tribute to her mum. Unfortunately Mini's mum was hit and killed by a minibus when she was crossing the road. If it were not for a good Samaritan who took the time to check her mother's pouch, Mini would not be with us. Minibus was taken to be hand-raised and now, years later, she lives happily here with us at Australia Zoo, and now she is a mum and grandmother herself! It just goes to show what a little extra care and attention towards our native wildlife can produce.

## Endangered Species!

Very low numbers are left in the wild. Wombats are at risk of extinction within the next ten years.

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