

Numbats in the Stirling Range National Park.

The Stirling Range National Park (SRNP) was chosen in 1998 as a reintroduction site for then endangered Numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*), as it is within the historic range of the numbat and contained large tracts of suitable vegetation. Wandoo and jarrah woodlands and long-unburnt mallee-heath, provide the best habitat for numbats there. Prior to the reintroduction the last record of a numbat in the park was during the 1950's. Thanks to the work of the Numbat Recovery Team, and the establishment of new populations such as the one in the Stirling Range National Park the numbat is now listed as vulnerable, but is still not safe from extinction. If you are visiting the Stirlings and see a numbat, we would like to hear about it.



Numbat Reintroduction...

Numbats were released in the western end of SRNP each year from 1998 to 2004. The animals were sourced from Dryandra Woodland near Narrogin, a breeding colony at Perth Zoo and Yookamurra Sanctuary in South Australia. Monitoring of radio collared animals found that they dispersed widely, even outside the park and bred successfully. Most predation of numbats in the Stirlings is due to birds of prey. This led to the introduction of predator awareness training of captive-born numbats at Perth Zoo prior to their release.

Please report any sightings of numbats to the Department of Environment and Conservation, Albany on 98424500 or by email to Tony.Friend@dec.wa.gov.au

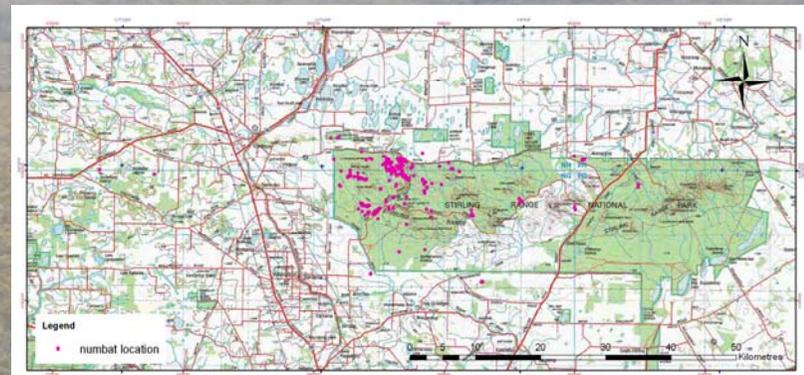


Numbat Facts...

- The Numbat is the WA state mammal emblem,
- The Numbat is the only member in their family Myrmecobiidae,
- Numbats most closely related to the carnivorous marsupials like the Chuditch,
- The Numbat is one of only two Australian mammal species only active during the day,
- Numbats eat only termites, and eat around 20000 termites a day.

What to look for...

Numbats are the most striking and distinctive of all Australian marsupials (in our biased opinion!). They have a long pointed snout, a black stripe through the eye from ear to nose and 4-11 white bands across their rump, with a long bottle-brush tail which is often held erect. Numbats are smaller than many people expect. A male can be up to 700g, with females averaging around 550g. The head and body is up to 250 mm in length with a tail up to 180 mm long (photo 1). Numbats are diurnal (active during the day) and are often seen as they cross the road while moving about their home range. A pair of numbats can require 50 Ha or more as a home range, so a large area is required for a sustainable population. When threatened numbats can run at speeds estimated at 35km/hr. They also have a characteristic alert posture, where they stand upright on their hind legs to assess the situation (photo 2).



Map 1. Locations of radio collared numbats in and adjacent to Stirling Range National Park.