

Spotted-tail Quoll

Den & Latrine Sites



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Spotted-tail Quoll

Spotted-tailed Quolls

The Spotted-tailed Quoll (or sometimes called the Tiger Quoll or Tiger Cat) is distinguishable by its rich-rusty to dark-brown fur and irregular white spots which occur on both its back and tail. It has a paler coloured belly. The white spots may be less clearer or indistinctive on younger, juvenile animals. Adults are about the size of a large domestic cat but with shorter legs and a much more pointed face. An average size of an adult male is about 3.5 kgs and for an adult female about 2 kgs.

Where do they live?

Areas where Spotted-tailed Quolls live have been severely reduced since European settlement. They are now restricted mainly to forested areas along and adjacent to the east coast of NSW on both sides of the Great Dividing Range. Whilst Spotted-tail Quolls occur in south-east NSW and Victoria, north-eastern NSW and south-east Queensland now represent the stronghold for the species.

Spotted-tailed Quolls utilise a variety of habitats including eucalypt forests and woodlands, coastal heathlands and rainforests. They require large areas of relatively intact vegetation but may also traverse more open country such as farmlands, rocky outcrops and other treeless areas when moving between feeding areas.

Favourable habitat contains generally older and more structurally diverse forests which support a range of habitat requirements such as trees with hollows, hollow logs on the ground, rocky outcrops, caves and rock crevices. These areas provide both shelter, den and breeding sites, and support a more abundant food supply such as birds and other small animals.

The Spotted-tailed Quoll is mostly a solitary animal that feeds at night and rests during the day in tree hollows, hollow logs, rocky outcrops, caves or crevices. It is also a good climber and uses trees for hunting or as vantage points for observing prey. Quolls may also scavenge on carrion and have been known to take domestic poultry.

Identifying Spotted-tail Quoll den sites ?

Spotted-tailed Quolls den in hollow logs on the ground, in rocky outcrops, small caves, rock crevices, underground borrows (usually under logs, rocks or dense vegetation or those used by rabbits or Wombats) and/or in hollows in trees or tree roots. They often utilise a number of different dens (up to 20) within their home range area which may be of considerable size (100 – 200 ha for females and much larger for males). Quolls are highly mobile and may forage over large areas in one night, often travelling several kilometres.

Critical habitat for Quolls includes large tracts of forest, particularly those with older trees containing hollows. As well, larger hollow logs on the ground, rocky outcrops or areas with caves and crevices are important habitat for Quolls. These areas provide both shelter and an abundant food supply.



How do I identify latrine sites ?

Within their home ranges, Quolls establish 'latrines' where they regularly defecate and scent mark. These are often visited several times during night time foraging activities, particularly during the breeding season between April and August. They are typically found on exposed rocks or flat top boulders (often indicated by patches of dead moss or lichen) along creeks or on rock outcrops and/or large ground logs, exposed rock at the base of cliffs or sometimes on exposed ground adjacent to tracks. Latrine sites can be identified by the presence of a number of scats (faecal deposits) of varying ages and stages of decay. Detection of latrine sites requires extensive ground searching in suitable areas and may be more difficult to detect after wet weather as rain may degrade or wash away scats.

Spotted-tail Quoll scats

Scats are usually dark in colour but may vary depending on the Quoll's diet. They are often twisted and cylindrical shaped with evidence of animal fur (hairs), feathers, small broken bone fragments and/or may contain broken beetle shells. They usually have a strong and unpleasant smell. Older scats often have a more bleached appearance. Please note that scats should not be handled as they may

contain parasites harmful to humans.

What can you do?

Quolls are threatened by continued loss, fragmentation and degradation of their habitat, accidental poisoning during wild dog and fox control programs, competition with introduced predators such as cats and foxes and sometimes, deliberate poisoning or shooting.

Timber harvesting and clearing, particularly of older mature to over mature trees and removal of ground logs and undergrowth can impact on Spotted-tail Quoll habitat. These activities reduce the numbers of tree hollows and ground logs available for Quolls and their prey species.

Protection of old hollow-bearing trees, understorey vegetation and riparian areas, as well as Quoll den and latrine sites, such as large logs on the ground, rock outcrops and/or boulders will help Quolls survive in your area.

References and Further Reading

DECC website Spotted-tail Quoll species profile: <http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/profile.aspx?id=10207>

Triggs, B (1996). *Tracks, Scats and other Traces*. A field guide to Australian Mammals. Oxford Press



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Quoll latrine site on exposed rock. Note the hair and bone fragments in scats.

