

DFTD's taking over Tasmanian Devils

By Vivian Year 3

In Australia, the Tasmanian Devils' numbers are decreasing as a contagious cancer is leading them towards extinction.



Shh! A sleeping Tasmanian devil.

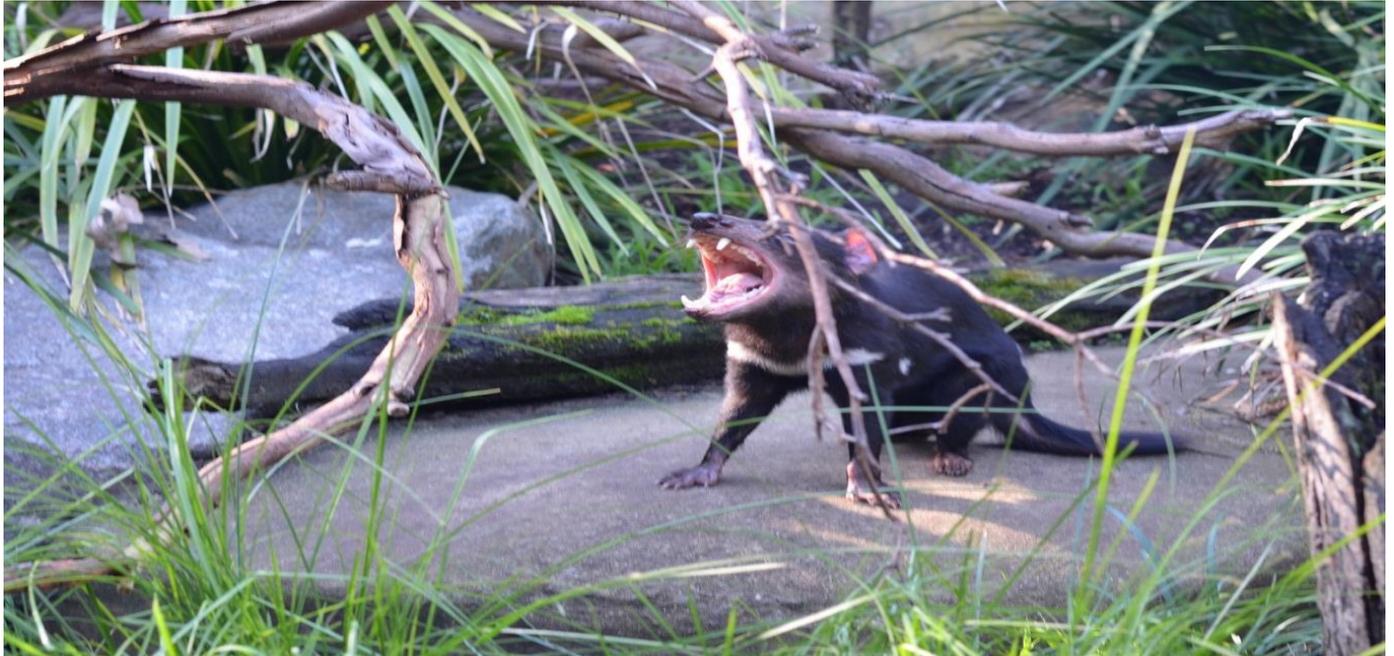
A disease called Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD) is spreading through Tasmanian Devils in the wild. This could lead to their potential extinction as there is no current cure. The contagious disease is spread when an affected devil bites a healthy one. When they share food, traces of saliva from a contagious devil will be left behind on the food. If a healthy Tasmanian Devil eats the same food, they contract the cancer. Alternatively, when their breeding is finished the female kicks the male out of her den. As the male doesn't want to leave they begin to fight. 'During the breeding season, it is very normal for Devils to bite each other,' said Taronga zookeeper. Therefore, if either Devil has DFTD, the chance of their partner catching the disease is high.

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DFTD produces tumours that are mainly located on the animal's face, neck, tongue and bottom. These huge red tumours make Tasmanian Devils extremely sick as they prevent them from being able to eat. Eventually they will starve to death. This is what is causing their population decrease.

DFTD was first discovered in the north –east region of Australia, 1996. By February, 2011, there had been an 84% decline in average sightings of devils across Tasmanian.

In 2010, scientists found a drug named EBC-46 which comes from a plant called Blush wood. Its benefits were uncovered with the help of a rat. EBC-46 had showed promising signs for curing DFTD with tests being able to extend the life of sick devils. EBC-46 has been shown to work on other animals including cats, dogs and horses.



The strong jaws of a Tasmanian devil

If you would like to help save Tasmanian Devils, there are a number of options available:

1. Donate to Devil Ark, Taronga Zoo or Australian Reptile Park
2. Host a 'Black and White' day with gold coin donations (Money will go to one of the above organisations)

If you want to please go to:

Devil Ark: <https://www.thankq.net.au/donate/v269/Donate1.aspx?ref=565686&pid=3>

Taronga Zoo: <https://taronga.org.au/how-you-can-help#donate>

Australian Reptile Park: <http://www.reptilepark.com.au/donations/>

Please remember that every coin donated helps save a life!