

# Threatened Fauna of the Hunter & Mid Coast



## Spotted-tailed Quoll {*Dasyurus maculatus*}

The Spotted-tailed Quoll is a distinctive marsupial carnivore endemic to eastern Australia, where it is widely distributed from north-eastern Queensland to Tasmania. It is a well-adapted carnivore and one of the most ferocious animals in the Australian bush. Two subspecies are currently recognised: *D. maculatus gracilis*, restricted to north-eastern Queensland; and *D. maculatus maculatus*, that occurs from southern Queensland through to south-western Victoria and Tasmania. Its distribution and population have dramatically declined, and the animal is now found over a restricted range. In many cases, quolls are living in isolated areas that may be too small to support viable long-term populations.

The Spotted-tailed Quoll is also known as the Tiger Quoll, (but shouldn't be confused with the Eastern Quoll, which are only found in Tasmania). Foxes caused their extinction on mainland Australia more than 50 years ago.

A small population of Eastern Quolls were released in NSW at Booderee National Park, as part of a recovery program in early 2018.

To protect Spotted-tailed Quolls, retain or enhance native vegetation on your property, and take care on the roads to avoid hitting them at night.

## Hunter and Mid Coast region

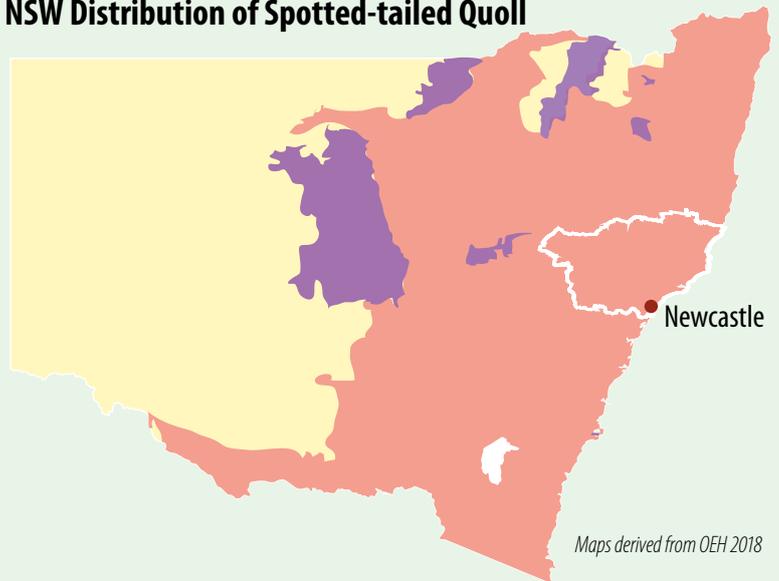


- Known
- Predicted

The areas shown in pink and purple are the sub-regions where the species or community is, or known to occur. They may not occur throughout the sub-region but may be restricted to certain areas. The information presented in this map is only indicative and may contain errors and omissions.

The known distribution represents historical sightings, however distribution has considerably reduced, as discussed below.

## NSW Distribution of Spotted-tailed Quoll



Maps derived from OEH 2018

## Are Spotted-tailed Quolls found near you?

The range of the Spotted-tailed Quoll has contracted considerably since European settlement. It is now found in eastern NSW, eastern Victoria, south-east and north-eastern Queensland, and Tasmania. The Spotted-tailed Quoll is known to occur throughout the Hunter region.



## Why is this species important?

The Spotted-tailed Quoll is mainland Australia's largest carnivorous marsupial and is the second largest of the world's surviving carnivorous marsupials after the Tasmanian Devil. The Spotted-tailed Quoll's conservation status is listed as vulnerable in NSW and endangered under the Commonwealth legislation.



Courtesy P Spark

## Habitat

Spotted-tailed Quolls live in various environments including forests, woodlands, coastal heathlands and rainforests. They are sometimes seen in open country, or on grazed areas and rocky outcrops. They are mainly solitary animals, and will make their dens in rock shelters, small caves, hollow logs and tree hollows. They use these dens for shelter and to raise young. They only live for about three to four years, so they have large litters of about six babies every year to keep their numbers up. Adult Spotted-tailed Quolls have a territory of up to 500 ha. There are few areas where such territories can exist without quolls encountering the effects of humans. Females may maintain an exclusive area while rearing her offspring.

Spotted-tailed Quolls are nocturnal and hunt at night and rest underground or in hollow logs during the day. These animals are highly mobile and can move up to several kilometres in a night. Within their territories, they will have latrine sites where they defecate. These are often in exposed areas, such as on rocky outcrops.

Spotted-tailed Quolls forage over large areas of intact vegetation. They are agile climbers and kill and eat a variety of prey including gliders, possums, small wallabies, rats, birds, bandicoots, rabbits, insects and reptiles. They also scavenge on carrion and may take domestic fowl. This carnivorous marsupial kills its prey with a bite on or around the head, using its strong teeth and jaws.



Spotted-tailed Quolls require large areas of native vegetation to survive.  
Courtesy, Dean Stanley



*Courtesy, P Spark*

## Threats

- Loss, fragmentation and degradation of suitable quoll habitat through land clearing, change in fire patterns and logging
- Loss of potential den sites such as large hollow logs
- Foxes and cats prey on quolls and also compete with them for food
- Feral cats can also spread diseases which affect quolls
- Persecution by humans, who have often blamed quolls for the loss of stock and poultry through intentional poisoning or shooting
- Baiting programs can result in minor accidental poisoning of quolls, especially to female and juvenile Quolls in their breeding seasons, if best practice techniques are not applied.

## Identification

The Spotted-tailed Quoll is about the size of a domestic cat, from which it differs most obviously in its shorter legs and pointed face. The average weight of an adult male is about 3500 grams and an adult female about 2000 grams. It has rich-rust to dark-brown fur above, with irregular white spots on the back and tail, and a pale belly. It has a physically strong body and strong teeth for slicing meat off its mammalian prey and crushing invertebrates. The spotted tail distinguishes it from all other Australian mammals, including other quoll species. However, the spots may be indistinct on juvenile animals.

The Spotted-tail Quoll communicates using a variety of hisses, cries and screams, its cries sound like the noise of a circular saw.



*Foxes are a threat to Spotted-tailed Quolls survival.*  
*Courtesy, Pixabay*



*Courtesy, David Paul*

## You can help the Spotted-tailed Quoll.



1. **Consult with Office of Environment and Heritage NSW (OEH) / National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)** if Spotted-tailed Quolls are raiding poultry, rather than taking direct action.



2. **Consult** with OEH/NPWS if poison baiting is planned in or near areas where Spotted-tailed Quolls are known or likely to occur.



3. **Quoll proof** your chicken pens.



4. **Undertake wild dog or fox control** use best management practice to prevent accidental poisoning.



5. **Retain and protect large**, forested areas with hollow logs and rocky outcrops, particularly areas with thick understorey or dense vegetation along drainage lines.



6. **Take care** when driving on the road at night, to avoid hitting quolls.



7. **Report** sightings to Atlas of Living Australia



## For more information contact

### Hunter Local Land Services:

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### Atlas of Living Australia

W: [www.ala.org.au](http://www.ala.org.au)



*Applying best management practice (monitoring for Quolls, technique and timing) during baiting greatly reduces any accidental poisoning to Quolls.*



*Courtesy, David Paul*

### Guide: Quoll Proofing Chicken Pens

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/protect-your-chooks-and-save-our-quolls](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/protect-your-chooks-and-save-our-quolls)

### Guide: Best Management Baiting

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/pest-animals-and-weeds/pest-animals/foxes/guidelines-for-fox-control](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/pest-animals-and-weeds/pest-animals/foxes/guidelines-for-fox-control)

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