

Bendeela Wombat Treatment Program

Sarcoptic Mange

Sarcoptic mange is a condition commonly spread in animals and is caused by mites. Mange can make a wombat lose fur and develop sores on their skin, eyes and ears, resulting in sickness or death of the animal. The Bendeela Recreation Area is habitat for Bare-nosed Wombats (also known as Common Wombats), some of which suffer from Sarcoptic Mange. As with all wild animals it is important that visitors do not try to touch or pat wombats.

Previous trials

WaterNSW has been monitoring the situation and working with National Parks and Wildlife Service, the University of Tasmania and University of Sydney to find a solution.

A number of trials have been conducted to identify the best way to treat mange in wombats. This includes a trial at Bents Basin with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and with the University of Tasmania at Narawntapu National Park in Tasmania. Both trials used Cydectin and have now finished.

It has been identified that Bravecto 'spot on for dogs', a topical flea and tick treatment commonly used by pet owners and vets, can more effectively treat mange in wombats than Cydectin. Bravecto is long lasting, approximately 30-90 days, and can also protect wombats from re-infection.

The use of Cydectin is a labor-intensive treatment program that requires ongoing treatment of all animals in the area to prevent reinfestation. This treatment type is not considered suitable for Bendeela as the population is large and the population is not isolated from other wombats within the Kangaroo Valley Area.



Dr Scott Carver from the University of Tasmania



Wombats at Bendeela

What has WaterNSW been doing to date?

Surveys of wombats and their mange status (Baseline Surveys) have been undertaken by University of Tasmania and University of Sydney at Bendeela to gain an objective understanding of disease in the population site. The surveys were undertaken on three consecutive evenings in each of December 2020, April 2021, May 2021 June 2021 and November 2021

What was discovered during the Survey work?

A total of 477 observations of wombats were made during the surveys. This number includes wombats that may have been sighted more than once during surveys and does not represent the wombat population at the site.

13 observations of wombats with signs of mange disease were made. Observations were consistent with mange occurring in up to 7 individual wombats.

Conclusion from initial baseline surveys was that a small number of wombats with mange disease exist at Bendeela. Otherwise, it is a large and healthy wombat population. Beyond Bendeela, reports of mange in the Kangaroo Valley area appears lower in 2021 than previous years.

Treatment program

The treatment phase of the program will commence in March 2022. Treatment and disease monitoring surveys will run on a monthly basis for 3 to 4 months with the University then adapting the frequency of treatment if required.

Targeted treatment will be administered by University of Tasmania around dusk and into the night when wombats are more active.

The treatment will be delivered only to wombats with visible mange and the team will use a pole to deliver a 'spot on' dose of Bravecto. This method of treatment requires no need for the animals to be captured and non-infected animals will not be impacted.

The dose of Bravecto to be given to wombats will be similar to a dose for a dog of the same weight. This is an effective way to treat wombats and requires minimal interaction with humans.

At the end of the program WaterNSW will have a long-term treatment guideline that will continue to be delivered.

Treatment location

Wombats will be treated on WaterNSW land in and around the Bendeela campground.

No camping areas will be closed and there will be minimal impact on campers.

Becoming involved

Wildlife Rescue South Coast and WIRES are the carer groups that cover the Kangaroo Valley Area.

Any person wanting to be involved with caring for wildlife in the area should contact these groups.

WaterNSW will look for opportunities for wildlife carer groups to be involved after the initial treatment program has concluded.

Staying informed

For the duration of the treatment program the community will be kept informed through regular updates and via the website:

www.waternsw.com.au/supply/visit/bendeela-recreational-area

Estimated timeline

2020

Project team mobilises

2021

collection of baseline information completed
Treatment plan determined

2022

Treatment Plan designed and treatment commences March

2023

Treatment program concludes

2024

Long term treatment guideline drafted and implemented



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