

Bendeela Wombat Treatment Program

What is Sarcoptic Mange?

Sarcoptic mange is a condition commonly spread in animals and is caused by a mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei*.

Why is Sarcoptic Mange serious for wombats?

Mange can make a wombat lose fur and develop sores to the skin, eyes and ears, resulting in sickness or death of the animal.

Is Sarcoptic Mange contagious?

Yes, this condition is contagious to humans and can cause itching and a rash. The condition is called Scabies in humans. If you see a sick wombat, do not touch it or go near it.

How many wombats are infected?

There are approximately 200-250 wombats across the Bendeela Recreation Area and surrounding land. It is estimated that less than 5% of the wombats show visible signs of mange

What has WaterNSW been doing to date?

WaterNSW has been actively working with National Parks and Wildlife Service, the University of Tasmania, and the University of Sydney to identify the best treatments for mange.

Surveys of wombats and their mange status (Baseline Surveys) have been undertaken by the university researchers 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.

When will the treatment program commence?

Progress towards implementing a mange disease treatment program, was delayed in 2021 by the NSW Covid travel restrictions. Baseline Surveys have now been completed and the treatment program is due to start in mid-March 2022.

Disease monitoring and targeted treatment delivered to diseased individuals will be undertaken on an approximately monthly basis. After 3-4 months the Uni will evaluate the program and adapt the frequency of monitoring and treatment as required.

The University treatment program will conclude in 2023 with the development of a long-term treatment guideline for future implementation.

What will be used to treat Mange?

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 are now finished.

It has been identified that Bravecto 'spot on for dogs', a topical flea and tick treatment commonly used by pet owners and veterinarians, can more effectively treat mange in wombats.

Why was Bravecto chosen?

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 much larger and the population is not isolated from other wombats within the Kangaroo Valley Area.

How many wombats will be treated?

The exact number is not yet known as targeted treatment will be delivered monthly to animals with visible signs.

How will the wombats be treated?

Treatment will be administered by University of Tasmania / Sydney Researchers around dusk and into the night when wombats are most active. Treatment will only target visibly affected wombats using a pole device that can deliver a 'spot on' dose without needing to capture the animal or use burrow flaps that may treat animals not impacted by mange. This is an effective way to treat wombats and requires minimal interaction with humans.

How does Bravecto work?

Bravecto will be applied to the wombat's skin and will quickly reach tissue fluids just under the skin. When the mites feed, they will ingest the Bravecto and die.

How much Bravecto will be used?

The dose of Bravecto to be given to wombats will be similar to a dose for a dog of the same weight. The University has undertaken studies to ensure that this dosage is safe for the wombats

Where in the Bendeela Recreation Area will the wombats be treated?

Wombats will be treated around accessible areas on WaterNSW land in the Bendeela area. The program will be undertaken to minimize impact on campers.

Will any areas of the Bendeela Recreation Area be closed during treatment?

No areas will be closed during the treatment program.

What will happen at the end of the treatment program?

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

How can I be involved in the treatment program?

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 where possible.

How can I find out more?

For more information call the WaterNSW Helpdesk on 1300 662 077 and visit www.waternsw.com.au/supply/visit/bendeela-recreational-area

Keep in touch

 Call us on 1300 662 077

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