



COULD MAN'S BEST FRIEND

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The Southwest corner of Western Australia is the last stronghold of the numbat, one of Australia's most endearing and endangered marsupials. Numbats originally ranged over much of the southern half of the continent. Their population has now dropped to less than 1,000 animals left in the wild (there are fewer numbats than giant pandas in the world). With the arrival of European settlement

and extensive land clearing plus the introduction of the European red fox, numbats disappeared over much of their range as the fox expanded into its habitat. By the early 1980s surveys had shown that the numbat could only be found in two small areas in Western Australia: Dryandra Woodland and Perup Nature Reserve. This beautiful little animal was actually on the brink of extinction.

Numbats feed exclusively on termites and are diurnal (active during the day), unlike most Australian mammals. They can be seen during the day as they search for the 20,000 termites they need to sustain themselves. It's a special thing when you watch as it frantically digs the termite galleries that crisscross the bushland floor, jumping logs, sniffing the ground, then breaking in and extending its