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NANNUP TIGER?



Over the years a number of sightings throughout the south west of Western Australia have been made of an animal that has become known locally as the "Nannup Tiger". From the descriptions given of the animal some claim that there may be a surviving mainland population of the Thylacine or "Tasmanian Tiger".

THYLACINE

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Thylacinus cynocephalus* (pouched dog with a wolf's head)

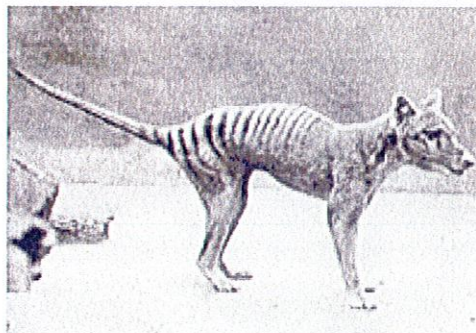
IDENTIFICATION: The Thylacine looked like a large, long dog, with stripes, a heavy stiff tail and a big head. Fully grown it measured about 180 cm (6 ft) from nose to tail tip, stood about 58 cm (2 ft) high at the shoulder and weighed up to 30 kg. The short, soft fur was brown except for 13 - 20 dark brown-black stripes that extended from the base of the tail to almost the shoulders. The stiff tail became thicker towards the base and appeared to merge with the body. Thylacines were usually mute, but when anxious or excited made a series of husky, coughing barks. When hunting, they gave a distinctive terrier-like, double yap, repeated every few seconds. Unfortunately there are no recordings. The thylacine was shy and secretive and always avoided contact with humans. Despite its common name, 'tiger' it had a quiet, nervous temperament compared to its little cousin, the Tasmanian Devil. Captured animals generally gave up without a struggle, and many died suddenly, apparently from shock. When hunting, the thylacine relied on a good sense of smell, and stamina. It was said to pursue its prey relentlessly, until the prey was exhausted. The thylacine was rarely seen to move fast, but when it did it appeared awkward. It trotted stiffly, and when pursued, broke into a kind of shambling canter.

HABITAT: The Thylacine preferred open forests and grasslands, but by the end of its existence it was confined to dense rainforests by human pressures. Thylacine lairs were located mainly in hollow logs or rock outcroppings located in hilly areas that were adjacent to open areas, such as grasslands.

DIET: The thylacine was a meat-eater - in fact, the world's largest marsupial carnivore since the extinction of *Thylacoleo* the marsupial 'lion'. Its diet is believed to have consisted largely of wallabies, but included various small animals and birds.

STATUS: Extinct?

INTERESTING FACTS: The Thylacine was thought to be a livestock killer. This was never substantiated, but because of this misconception the thylacine was hunted (by the private sector and the government) from 1840-1909 for bounty.



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