

## **Chapter 7 – Habitat Loss.**

This is a muted chapter. The first draft of this book was quite negative about the Tasmanian logging and farming industries, as well as the history of land use in Tasmania, and the current attitude of Tasmanians themselves. However that has now been totally revised, because good advice was that this kind of criticism would distract Tasmanians from the central message of the book.

The reason why this negative comment was included in the original draft is because current land use practices, and past & present habitat loss in Tasmania are huge problems for the remnant thylacine population. However if negative comment is ultimately counter-productive, then it would be better left for another time; this book is after all not about logging or farming.

In the case of forestry it is not just logging companies who are primarily involved in thylacine habitat loss; the government and a large portion of Tasmanian society are part of the industry, and if not, then many people have good friends who are. So to criticise logging is therefore to criticise a foundation of Tasmanian society. This would likely make people switch off, and not listen to the real message of the book.

And so I will make no more than a few basic points about habitat loss as this relates directly to the Tasmanian tiger.

### **A) Logging.**

Few people would be unaware of the problem of habitat loss in Tasmania; it makes the Tasmanian newspapers almost every day. By far the most prominent issue is logging, and specifically clear fell logging of “old growth” forest. Tasmania is the largest exporter of woodchips in the world, and it currently appears that most of that comes from remnant forest which has not previously suffered significant logging. There are many “protected” areas excluded from logging, however the best places for the Tasmanian tiger are also the best places for logging, and in that habitat there is little or no protection.

I had been tracking thylacines in the area shown in Plate 58 before it was logged, and 1080 poison was subsequently used there by the logging industry to kill native herbivores.

*Plate 58. Logging activity in previously prime thylacine habitat.*



Over the past 30 years the logging industry has focussed increasingly on high volume chipping of dry forest eucalypts, which in the North West for example, has displaced some thylacines into thicker central rainforest areas of what is now referred to as the Tarkine Wilderness.

However there has recently been a shift toward utilisation of rainforest timbers as well. Example; a joint government/industry announcement mentioned in the July-September 2004 edition of Australian Geographic Magazine, which refers to mill alterations and logging operations about to begin, both aimed specifically at virgin rainforest myrtle trees (Mocatta, 2004). According to the Forestry Tasmania Assistant General Manager of Operations, “Forestry Tasmania plans to manage the heart of the Tarkine for extraction of myrtle indefinitely” (p.47).

Large scale institutionalised logging which specifically targets rainforest is a new development in Tasmania, and an additional pressure the thylacine has not previously dealt with; one more reason why now is clearly the time of urgency for this species.

I understand the reason why poison is used to kill native animals in wilderness areas is because possums, wallabies and wombats have a habit of nibbling the tops of new plantation seedlings. This makes the trees grow in two or three stems instead of one; reducing the final profit margin. The impact of this on the thylacine or any other native species is not clear, but it obviously cannot be good. Briefly with regard to the use of 1080 poison, the following appeared in “Tasmanian Country” newspaper (12/9/2003 p.2):

*“Statutes short on 1080 safeguards ... according to DPIWE (Department of Primary Industries, Water and Energy), one poisoned pademelon (native wallaby) can contain enough 1080 to kill 12 dogs or 90 cats... animals could wander for kilometres before dying, and carrion eaters could carry the carcasses even further... ‘anyone who lives 2km from where poison has been laid has to keep their dog muzzled or tied up for six months.’”*

### ***B) Farming.***



*Plate 59. Cleared farming land in previously prime thylacine habitat.*

Current farming practices in Tasmania are a problem for the thylacine. Using 1080 poison to kill wallabies & wombats (to stop them eating grass in the paddocks) is one of several normal farming practices which have a range of flow-on effects to influence and alter entire wilderness ecosystems. Farmers’ habit of shooting native animals, then leaving them to lay dead on the ground, creates a boom in the number of Tasmanian devils.

### ***C) Mining.***

Mining obviously causes direct habitat loss, but poisons which come from mines are the greater long term problem. Example “The Advocate” newspaper (15/8/03 p.39):

*“River clean up ‘a priority’ Cleaning up the headwaters of the Arthur River should be a priority task for Waratah and the surrounding region, the Tarkine National Coalition said. And it may take many years and an investment of many millions of dollars from the State Government. A 30km stretch of Tasmania’s longest wild river, flanked by myrtle rainforest, has been killed by a cocktail of heavy metals leaking from the old Mt. Bischoff mine site.”*

When people say the North West of Tasmania holds the best remaining habitat for the Tasmanian tiger, they refer to the Arthur River catchment, which is within the “Tarkine”. These heavy metals would have caused long term problems for the food chain as they made their way through “the best remaining thylacine habitat”. Heavy metals collect in body tissues of the top order predators, to cause death, metabolic stress, or long term infertility problems. I would not like to eat a trout caught near the river mouth, yet people have been doing exactly that for years.

Mines, like logging coupes, become source points of introduced weeds, such as gorse.

#### ***D) Gorse plant.***

Another important aspect of thylacine habitat loss is the introduction of gorse to Tasmania. Gorse currently poses one of the most serious threats to Tasmania’s wilderness areas, due to its ability to create a dense mat of impenetrable woody, prickly stems, and to smother all other plant life. All Australians should fear this growing menace, which is already plaguing New Zealand. Gorse currently occurs in most farmed regions of Tasmania, particularly the South East. Patches of it are popping up in isolated towns such as Zeehan on the west coast, and in all wilderness regions.

Gorse plant grows naturally on the windswept heaths of Scotland, and so is particularly well adapted to the equivalent windswept heaths or button grass plains of Tasmania. Tasmanian native heath occurs along much of the coast line, along the entire west coast, in much of the high country, and in patches throughout most wilderness areas.

Gorse disperses thousands of seeds, which often collect in muddy areas such as car parks or log stockpile yards. Mixed with mud on tyres, the seeds are then carried deep into wilderness areas.

To date invasion of gorse into the Tasmanian heaths has been minimal, but this is about to change. When gorse does become established in the heaths, it will devastate natural ecosystems, and will likely be impossible to eradicate.

*Plate 60. Gorse plant in the foreground (seed bound) with Mt. Balfour in the distance. Shape of this particular plant was retarded by browsing native animals, but if left to grow it would soon have been too high for them to reach.*



The biologically diverse Tasmanian heath country has been generally stable for 60 million years, and its continuing stability will be necessary if the thylacine is to have a long term future.

The looming Tasmanian tragedy of gorse plant invasion must not be underestimated.

#### ***E) Dams.***

Construction of dams for hydroelectric power generation or irrigation is another cause of habitat loss throughout Tasmania’s wilderness areas. New dams are still being approved in areas where thylacines could otherwise live.

### ***F) Remaining wilderness weakened and vulnerable.***

The impacts A-E mentioned above do not only affect their immediate locations, but all areas surrounding them. These impacts slowly chip away at remaining large wilderness regions in Tasmania, and make those areas weaker.

During November 2003 a connected series of fires burnt around 90,000ha; almost one third of the Tarkine wilderness. Again this is supposedly the best remaining habitat for the Tasmanian tiger. Around one third of the Tarkine is heath land, and it is that habitat which was burnt. During the time of the fire a large number of fire fighting vehicles were active in the Tarkine, including bulldozers making firebreaks, and at least four helicopters which flew continually every day over a three week period, using 50,000 litres of fuel.



*Plate 61. Checking an old camera site on what was previously a well used game trail*  
*Plate 62. Tasmanian devil filmed with an automatic motion activated camera at that same spot May 2001*

Many habitats in Australia have been purposely burnt for thousands of years by Aborigines, including the Tarkine heaths, but in patches - not on such a comprehensive scale.



With virtually all the heath habitat destroyed, then animals which rely on heath have either died, soldiered on where they are, or moved into the Tarkine forests, which are now being logged and poisoned. It remains to be seen what scale of impact of this fire will ultimately have.

*Plate 63. Tarkine heath - mountains in the far distance are also completely burnt.*

Thylacine habitat is being lost now for a wide range of reasons, and what habitat remains is being weakened by current land use practices. Many say “if the thylacine still exists, then leave it alone to breed in peace”. People who say that have not considered the issue very carefully – as this book keeps saying, peace was shattered for that species long ago, and pressures upon it are growing.

Nobody is saying there should not be mining, logging, or farming - just that there are more sensible, and more sustainable ways of doing these things in the future.

## ***CHAPTER 8 - Impact of other Animals.***

Introduced animals are the greatest long term threat to the Tasmanian tiger. Once foreign animals become established in a place the size of Tasmania they will most likely be impossible to control. Animals like feral goats or pigs may not affect the thylacine directly, but they would definitely cause long term, probably irreversible changes to the ecosystem. The balance of plant species would shift away from those preferred by invading herbivores, which would have a flow-on effect to change the populations of native fauna.

So many complicated, unpredictable changes come from the introduction of exotic animals - not just now, but thousands of years from now. Who can tell what effect cats will ultimately have in Tasmania a thousand years from now? Cats are here to stay, so I suppose we will find out. Surely we are not so short sighted that what happens a thousand years from now as a result of current actions is not our concern.

Of all continents on earth, Australia is particularly vulnerable to invasion by animals and plants from other places. The Australian continent has had a long history of climatic disturbance. Over many millions of years much of the land mass has alternated between thick forest cover, inland sea, and desert. That means evolution has continually been derailed in Australia. Just as species radiate into different forms and specialise on precise habitat types, the climate and habitat has changed, so evolution has been continually set back.

The only species to last through these changes are a relatively small number of generalists, which occupy large ecological niches, normally without any serious competition from other species. In contrast to this, the other major continents of the earth have been relatively stable over very long periods of time, resulting in ecosystems characterised by many species with overlapping ecological niches. Lake Victoria in Africa for example, is home to more than 2,000 different types of freshwater fish, where the total number of freshwater fish species in Australia is only around 145.

Competition between species on other continents has been extreme over long periods, and so animals from outside Australia are usually very good competitors. They breed fast, eat fast, grow fast, care well for their young, they are aggressive and adaptable. When these northern hemisphere animals meet Australian natives they usually push the natives aside.

In other words any introduced animal will probably cause serious, unpredictable, irreversible changes in Tasmania. Some foreign species do have more immediate impact than others however, and the worst are discussed below.

### **A) Cats.**

The observable impact of exotic animals is most acute in cases where an invader occupies generally the same niche as a native species. This is the case with cats and the native quolls. Quolls are essentially the marsupial version of a cat; they live and hunt in basically the same way, have the same general body shape and size, yet they effectively have no genetic relationship. This is one of the world's most fascinating and valuable examples of convergent evolution, where two unrelated animals take the same body shape to live and hunt in the same way - because that body shape is successful whether in Australia or the northern hemisphere.

Cats will almost certainly cause extinction of wild native quolls in Tasmania. If this does not happen soon, then it will probably happen later, because we will never be rid of cats, and the future is a very long time. If it is not cats then with current land use, quolls will be driven to extinction by the long term effects of habitat loss, disease, or the impacts of other exotic animals. Perhaps it will be a combination of all of these things that will bring about the downfall of this extremely valuable marsupial form; either way society should not assume wild marsupial quolls have a long term future.

Large numbers of feral cats are present in every type of bush in Tasmania. There is no way to tell how serious an effect they are currently having on the ecosystems, however it is certain that they impact negatively on thylacines, indirectly or otherwise. Feral cats can grow quite large, and they do prey on many native species that are also the prey of thylacines. Cats would probably take vulnerable thylacine young left behind in the lair as the mother hunts. Quolls may do this also from time to time, but cats would be more efficient.

Cats alone may not cause the eventual extinction of the thylacine, but they are clearly one more nail in the coffin.

## **B) Dogs.**

There is little doubt that dingoes had an immediate and dramatic effect on thylacines in New Guinea and mainland Australia. Dingoes occupy the same ecological niche as thylacines, so in the long term there will only be room for one in town, and the dingo will win the fight. The only way to stop dingoes from causing extinction of the thylacine in Tasmania is to exclude them from the island at all cost. In my experience there are currently not a lot of wild dogs in Tasmania. I have found dog packs in two areas which are also occupied by thylacines, but dogs generally do not seem to run wild on the island. This is not the case on the mainland, where it is unusual to walk into a bushland area and not see wild dog footprints.

It seems that dingoes on the mainland are suited to living wild without human contact, however in Tasmania there are no dingoes, so when domestic dogs become wild, they have a tendency to quickly gravitate back toward humans, and generally do not seem to form a growing population of wild dogs. The same appears to be the case in New Zealand.

That may mean domestic dogs can co-exist in Tasmania with thylacines, but there would need to be tight controls to ensure a large wild population does not develop. Dingoes are a different matter however, and the Australian dingo (or cross breeds) must again be excluded from Tasmania at all cost.

## **C) Foxes.**

Newspaper articles over the past few years have discussed the presence of foxes in Tasmania, including one article in “The Advocate” (14/8/03) which shows a photograph of a wild fox near Wynyard. Several stories have come to light, including that of a single fox running off a Burnie-based ship which had just docked from Melbourne in 1998, and also of a coordinated effort a few years later to hand raise 19 fox cubs in Victoria. These fox cubs were apparently smuggled across on the passenger ferry, then released in three different Tasmanian locations so they would have a good chance at establishment. Many local residents and even at least one politician refuse to accept there is a fox problem, but all informed people agree that Tasmania now has a population of foxes.

There is a chance these foxes will not become established, but it would be a chance of ecology, not good management. It is probable that Tasmanian devils kill fox cubs waiting in the lairs as the mother hunts, just as they kill thylacine young in the same way. This may not allow the fox population to increase, until it eventually dies out. If it is true that 19 fox cubs have been released, then it is more likely that foxes will become established in Tasmania as they have on the mainland, and that they will be impossible to eradicate. A serious disease is now affecting the devil population, at the very time when devils are needed most to help stop foxes.

If foxes do become established, then Tasmania can look forward to a tragic series of disasters which transcend far beyond the ecological environment, to dilute the very value and identity of Australia; thus even catching up with the fools who put foxes there in the first place. Native quolls would be the first carnivorous marsupial to suffer because foxes will eat both the same prey, and the quolls themselves.

Devils will suffer likewise, but over a longer period of time. It is likely that both of these forms would become extinct as a primary result of contact with foxes. Fox numbers would boom on sustenance from the vulnerable pademelon until that too is extinct.

Foxes would definitely be the last straw for thylacines. Even with all other factors optimal in Tasmania, it is certain that foxes would out-compete the Tasmanian tiger, and ultimately make the species extinct in the wild. Foxes eat most of the same prey species as thylacines, and will certainly prey on the young. This will remain a constant danger, even if foxes do not become established in Tasmania “this time”; quarantine on the ferry from the mainland will need to be maintained for the next million years! The mess we get ourselves into - it is sad that so many people in Tasmania see such childish novelty in the introduction of foxes.

## **D) The devil is in the detail**

Native Tasmanian devil numbers have increased dramatically since the 1960's. In fact in recent years there have been more devils than at any time since European settlement. Devils were historically hated and persecuted second only to the tiger, and so once full scale hunting and baiting pressure was lifted during the 1950's the population started to recover. Faster cars, more roads through wilderness areas, and farmers' habit of shooting native animals to leave them dead in the paddocks have greatly increased the amount of food for devils. So there is currently a man made imbalance in devil numbers.

In my experience if a dead wallaby is left anywhere in the Tasmanian bush it will most likely not be there in the morning - devil numbers are very high in most areas. Tasmanian devils usually eat carrion, but they will kill live animals when they can. Poultry owners dread having a devil enter their chicken shed, because though clumsy, devils can behave very violently, and they do not stop until all within reach are dead.

There is a time in thylacine reproduction when the adult female must leave her young in a hiding place while she hunts. This is the 4-8 week period when the young are too big for the pouch, but not yet able to follow behind the mother.

*Plate 64. Typical carnivorous marsupial throat yawn*

The early part of this period (perhaps the first three weeks) is when devil attack occurs. After that the young are old enough to defend



themselves. Devils either stumble across the lair or actively sniff it out, then rush in and kill whatever cubs they can reach. Thylacine mothers may end up with only one surviving offspring instead of three or four. This is the main reason why the thylacine population has not increased in number over the past 40 years.

A serious transmissible cancer disease is now affecting the Tasmanian devil population, and it remains to be seen what the final impact of that will be. However at this stage I understand it kills up to 90 percent of devils in areas where the disease is present. The disease apparently passes from one animal to another through saliva when fighting over food. My work strongly suggests that thylacines kill Tasmanian devils, and hence the worry is that if a tiger attacks a devil, and the devil happens to bite the tiger, then this disease may transfer to the thylacine.

Below is a layout (on the ground) of footprints which were found 24/5/03 near the location of sightings mentioned in Chapter 5. I believe these footprints clearly show that a Tasmanian tiger pounced on a Tasmanian devil, then carried it away.

Devil prints approach the scuffle marks shown, but they do not leave; the print bed was fresh, so there was no confusion. The “front right skidding” print, and the two “skidding rear” prints were cast; they are convincing adult thylacine. The “front right skidding” print cast had devil hair protruding from it. A similar print story was told at the same spot one month later.

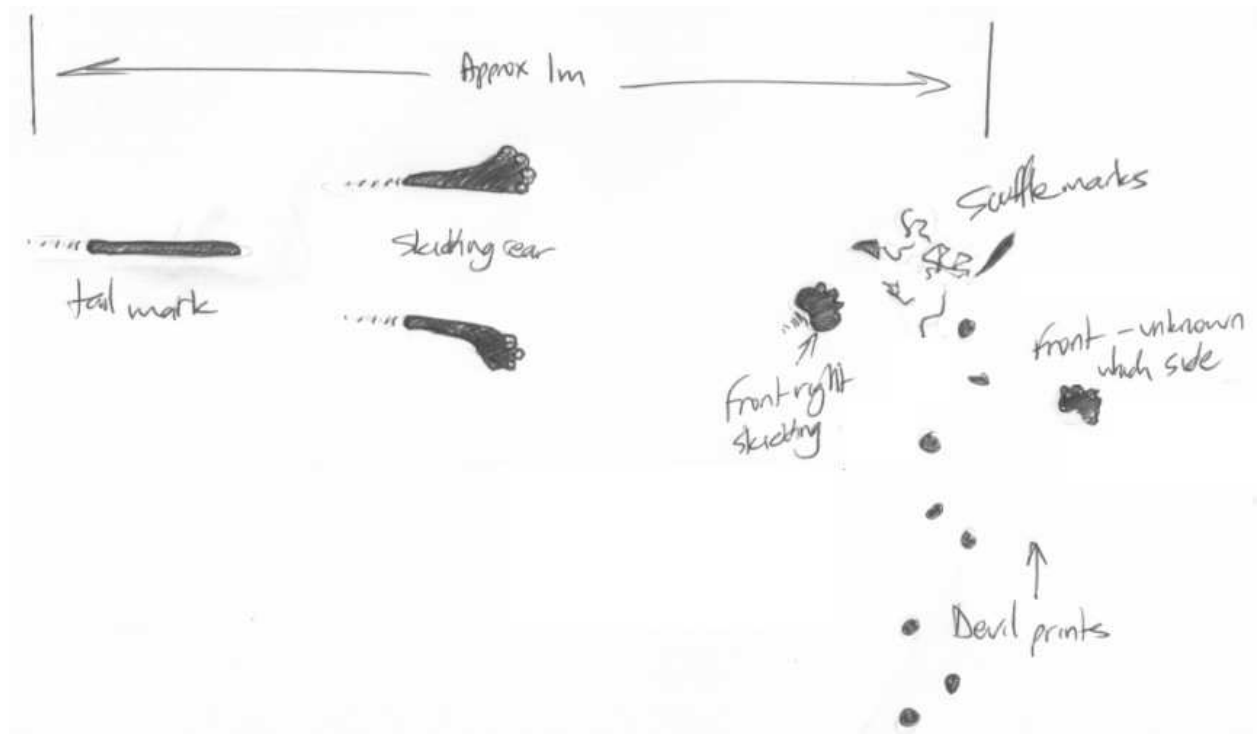


Plate 65. Layout of prints suggesting an adult thylacine attack on a Tasmanian devil

The threat of thylacines dying from the same cancer disease now affecting Tasmanian devils is very real. This combined with the current threat of foxes, increased devil predation and the increasing rate of habitat loss, should leave no doubt the time of urgency is now.

All of these pressures on a species “left alone to breed in peace”. All of these pressures compounded by apathy and secrecy.



## ***CHAPTER 9 - Apathy and Secrecy***

There have only been two or three human generations since the main thylacine bounty period in Tasmania. That time was characterised by hatred and ignorance of native wildlife. Particular animosity was reserved for the thylacine, because that was something only Tasmanians were laboured with, it was very elusive (hence prompting fear of the unknown), and it dared to kill sheep.

These attitudes still linger in Tasmania, particularly in the more isolated areas. Many Tasmanian farmers routinely shoot wallabies and wombats, and young men enjoy hunting native wildlife using what are termed “kangaroo dogs”. The government, logging companies and most farmers all believe it is acceptable to purposely poison native wildlife.

### ***A) The Tasmanian Government.***

A “them and us” attitude often applies toward the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service in isolated areas, because many local residents see that section of government as ineffective and patronising, or even as an extension of mainland politics telling locals how to live their lives.

When somebody is good enough to go to the TNPWS to report a thylacine sighting, they obviously do so because they hope something will be done about it. It appears that nothing is done however, and that these reports are simply filed with all the others. People reporting thylacine sightings risk being treated by authorities with patronising ridicule. Not only does the government apparently do nothing about formal sighting reports, but these reports are now kept secret (not available to the public), so it is difficult for other people to do anything about them either. The only information that needs to be kept secret is the specific location, and that is very simple to do.

Owen p.191 shows the common attitude of people who make a serious effort to search for the thylacine:

*“Now, perhaps, we can get the Parks & Wildlife people not to make tiger hunters and environmentalists like ourselves to be seen as “kooks” as we have in the past. I do not argue about whether the animal exists or not. We now have about 100 sightings from the past 25 years from dozens of people, and no, we will not share it with the Parks & Wildlife people. They do not deserve our trust...yet. The animal will have to survive on its own. One day soon, we hope, verification will come. Until then we wish the perhaps five bands of tigers good luck and happy hiding.”*

As mentioned in Chapter 1, thylacine matters are routinely kept secret by government authorities, presumably because many personalities consider that the thylacine probably does still exist, and they take the position that it is better to leave the species alone to “breed in peace”. Apparent attitude of some is that possible existence of the thylacine is better kept quiet in case hunters from interstate or overseas try to shoot it. My response is that people from outside Tasmania cannot even prove the tiger exists let alone shoot it. Government inactivity/secrecy is the far more pressing threat, and that will not change until the species is proven to exist.

Furthermore, I believe if anybody is likely to shoot a thylacine, then it will be back country Tasmanians themselves, and convincing evidence says this is happening now; it never actually stopped.

The Threatened Species Unit of the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service has produced a definitive 420 page “Threatened Species Handbook”, which clarifies the status of more than 180 threatened or endangered animal species in Tasmania (see bibliography). Every species is described in detail, with topics of “description”, “distribution, habitat and biology”, “key sites”, “key threats”, “habitat management”, and “other ways to help” for each.

The “key threats”, “habitat management” and “other ways to help” sections are the most important for endangered animals, as this presents the final expert word on what is going wrong, with government advice on ways the public can help.

For the thylacine there is no “habitat management” section, and the “other ways to help” section has been re-worded to “ways to help other native species”. Below is what is listed in the “key threats” section for the thylacine:

*“Species was hunted to extinction during early colonial settlement.”*

In other words the government has no formal management plan for the thylacine; zero consideration of current threats, no recommendations for improving conditions for its survival, and no action plan ready in case one is captured or even photographed. This is obviously (written in black and white) because the government, and hence society, believes the thylacine is extinct. In the face of continuing sub-proof evidence (more so than for any other supposedly extinct Australian species), then this is either government apathy, or government secrecy, or both. Once again we arrive at one of the core concepts of this book - that society will not protect an animal it thinks is extinct.

## ***B) Tasmanian farming industry***

The historic pastoral enterprise of Woolnorth figures frequently in Tasmanian tiger history, as this was one of the few early farming enterprises which kept daily records of events, including matters relating to the thylacine. This business is still in operation, and occupies 22,000ha of what some say was the best area of thylacine habitat in the whole State. Many millions of dollars have been spent by the company to improve pastures for sheep and cattle. Even today some people believe the privately owned Woolnorth property may be a good place to look for thylacines.

Woolnorth employees claim to have seen Tasmanian tigers on the property, including station managers. There were apparently a lot of sightings at Woolnorth and surrounding areas in the sixties, which prompted Dr. Eric Guiler to search there. He believed he was getting close until thylacine searches were banned in 1966; Guiler p.202.

Why would the management of Woolnorth not allow a respected biologist to try and prove the existence of thylacines on its property, just when he was getting close? It is not hard to make a guess - and remember we are talking about a species which supposedly died out in 1936.

Chapter 1 included a section titled “**Example of sub-proof evidence; Location X**”. Photographs of thylacine indications were shown, including pictures of two sheep attacked with a classic thylacine kill pattern in an isolated back paddock in the east coast forests of Tasmania. While filming these dead sheep, on private land, the land owner arrived and asked what I was doing there. When I said I was looking for the Tasmanian tiger he suddenly became irate and told me to leave; “there’s no tigers round here”. There was a third dead sheep nearby but I was not allowed to film it.

Over the next five months I secretly investigated a 100km<sup>2</sup> adjacent area of public forest, including an extensive sandstone cave area three kilometres into the bush from where the two sheep were killed, which overlooked the farmer’s land.

There I found a range of convincing indications of at least one adult thylacine, and probably several young. All of Plates 3 - 33 were photographed within a 4km radius of those caves, or in the caves themselves.

My point is that I also found empty shotgun shells around those caves. Plates 26 – 29 show one cave in particular with strong indications that one or more thylacines had recently occupied it. This cave was not obvious from the approach below, and a long way into the bush. Yet outside the cave, tied to a tree, visible from the approach below, was a length of blue marker ribbon. Somebody knows more than they are saying.

This all proves nothing of course, but I do question why anybody would walk that far into the bush to shoot wallabies and wombats when they abound on the paddocks below. Deer were present in the area, but nobody would use a shotgun to hunt deer. No sign of any other feral animal was found except the occasional cat footprint. There were no deer footprints or dung anywhere near the caves, and after a five month search of the surrounding area there was no sign of wild dogs whatsoever.

Some farmers or hunters I have spoken to freely admit they would shoot a thylacine if they saw one. This could easily happen on impulse, but once the perpetrator has time to think about the consequences they may decide to bury the body and keep it quiet; several stories have circulated to that effect. The author has seen convincing evidence that at least one thylacine has been shot recently in the South West of Tasmania, but this cannot be discussed further for complicated reasons. Perhaps that will reveal itself in time.

### ***C) Tasmanian locals***

Isolated communities in Tasmania enjoy freedoms which do not exist in other parts of Australia; locals can effectively drive where they want, do what they want, shoot what they want. These people are well aware of the impact thylacine rediscovery would have in their area, and it is true that many locals do not want it to be found. By keeping quiet these people do not seek to protect the thylacine, they seek to protect their lifestyle. Rediscovery of the Tasmanian tiger in any isolated region would bring an influx of know-nothing outsiders telling locals how to live, and that many people have a very deep cultural fear of.

I believe the economic fortune of any society is limited only by the attitude of its people. Instead of embracing the thylacine, and environmental change, for all their sustainable worth, many residents in isolated parts of Tasmania are playing games of secrecy, and meanwhile an incredibly valuable species dwindles away.

*Plate 66. Residents countering a conservation rally; 2003*



Here is one reason why I write under a pseudonym. My field work is ongoing in isolated areas, but I would not be welcome in a lot of cases if people knew what I was doing there. I am the enemy of some in the logging industry, and the Parks & Wildlife Service would only hinder and/or has proven itself irrelevant at this time. If anyone in the Tasmanian government is honestly concerned about minor disturbance private tiger searchers may cause to native wildlife or habitat, then I refer those people to the government's own forestry policies.

## **D) Museum curators**

I mention this group of people specifically, because with a few exceptions it seems they are the most patronising of all with thylacine matters. Yet museum curators are also regarded as experts on the subject, so their comments have a lot of influence. Example; page 199 of Owen shows comment by David Pemberton of the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery. People spoke to David to make a good 2002 sighting report of what looked like a thylacine that was dark coloured and bounded into the bush. Believing they saw a devil he says:

*“your average punter wouldn’t pick the difference, I reckon. Devils do bound. And they probably would have expected a devil to be covered in white markings because of the tourist brochures, and if it’s not gaping at them like the postcards then they’ll think it’s something else”.*

At 3:15pm, 22/5/2002 I saw a thylacine which was dark coloured and bounded into the bush. That is a fact regardless of what David Pemberton reckons. Careful, thoughtful and respectful treatment of thylacine sighting reports is very important. When will people with the power to help the thylacine actually take serious action to benefit the species? The simple, obvious answer is when there is proof of existence.

Apathy and secrecy; so many questions come to mind:

- \* *Why have there been so few government attempts to find thylacines?*
- \* *Why have all of those been of such limited scope?*
- \* *Why does the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service now apparently do nothing to prove the species exists in the face of continued sub-proof evidence?*
- \* *Why does the Tasmanian government threaten to fine any private searcher who “harasses” the species (documentary video) - even though the same organisation declares it extinct?*
- \* *Why have virtually all of the significant searches been conducted by people not originally from Tasmania?*

What enormous economic and political pressures boil under the surface in this strange place Tasmania, and how many of these directly or subtly help to keep the thylacine hidden? How many people know the thylacine exists, but hope it will die out before the rest of the world realises? How many farmers or hunters have shot thylacines, then later buried the bodies for fear of prosecution? How many private companies, operating at the edge of wilderness areas, know full well the species occupies their land, but actively keep that information hidden, because they fear the devaluation or closure of their businesses?

Think of what the Tasmanian logging or farming industries would lose if the tiger was rediscovered, and remember the majority of Tasmanians are linked to those industries. Sudden land use changes would rain down upon the State. This is an issue of federal and global significance, so control could shift away from the Tasmanian government, and away from the Tasmanian people. Given their lack of interest, government wildlife authorities could become redundant in the recovery process.

Farmers would need to be compensated for lost back paddocks, and I understand private deals made with logging companies now mean the Tasmanian government faces massive compensation payouts if logging rights are retracted in forest areas. If that happens the government will look bad - if the tiger is rediscovered a lot of people will look bad.

Imagine for a moment that all of these things are true. Imagine if the magnificent, enduring thylacine still battles ignorance, apathy, greed, and hunting today as it did in the past. I say to you these things do happen; it is part of the reason why this defiant animal has the “bizarre set of circumstances” Nick Mooney speaks of in Chapter 1, it is part what makes the concept so powerful, and it is part of why when the world hears this story, conservation will never be the same again.

The remaining chapters form the third part of the book, and offer relevant comment from two well known thylacine advocates.

## **Chapter 10 – Col Bailey.**

*Col Bailey is probably the most recognised thylacine advocate, and the person who has done the most to publicly declare that the species is not yet extinct. Col has written one book on the subject, “Tiger Tales: Stories of the Tasmanian Tiger” (see bibliography), and is currently in the process of writing his second book. Col’s second book will detail the history of thylacine searches, including his own, with more first hand interviews and extra “Tiger Tales”.*

*Col Bailey was approached to write a chapter for this book, and here is his contribution. Despite weathering years of ridicule, Col has never given up on the Tasmanian tiger, conducting numerous private searches from his base in Southern Tasmania. This chapter is subject to normal copyright law as defined in the Conclusion/Bibliography*

### **THE END OF EXTINCTION**

To this point in time, every search for the thylacine, either official or private since 1936 has ended inconclusively, thus continuing to fuel public opinion that the animal is extinct.

To pursue the line that the thylacine suddenly became extinct in 1936 is to do so in blind ignorance of the facts to hand, despite the actuality that lack of conclusive evidence of an extant population continues to defy logic. As a result, the sceptics and text- book theorists continue to loudly beat the extinction drum.

The debate therefore must be considered to be a line ball, for there is no guarantee that the animal will not one day be proven to still exist. As long as this perplexing puzzle continues, the mystery of the Tasmanian tiger will continue, and the passage of time will not dim the fortuitous possibility of its rediscovery.

For as long as this bewitching phantom continues to tantalise and seduce an ever-increasing army of true believers, the intriguing and fascinating saga of the Tasmanian tiger will endure.

There is little doubt that once conclusive proof of a thylacine presence does eventually emerge, there will be many who consider the mystery solved and the deal sealed, but this will only be the beginning.

Stringent contingency plans coupled with absolute confidentiality and latent security will be the essential ingredients, and these will have to be rigidly enforced to ensure the animal’s future survival.

In 1967, the Tasmanian Fauna Board (precursor to the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service) decided on Maria Island which lies off Tasmania’s east coast as the most advantageous venue to institute a semi-captive breeding programme should the Tasmanian tiger be re-discovered. This location would be as perfect an environment as could be found anywhere in Tasmania for this express purpose. It would in time, focus the world spotlight on what is hoped would be a ground breaking and innovative promotion of what is undoubtedly the world’s rarest animal.

As far back as 1914, an island sanctuary was advocated by Professor T.T.Flynn of the University of Tasmania. Suggestion of a thylacine sanctuary between the Arthur and Pieman Rivers in North Western Tasmania were put forward by early expeditioners Summers in 1937 and Sharland in 1939.

Emerging public and government interest in the survival of the species was no doubt hindered by the continued stance put forward by the scientific fraternity that the Tasmanian tiger became extinct when the last specimen died in the Hobart Zoo. Prior to Dr Eric Guiler’s painstaking research of government records, the year of death was first believed to be 1933 simply because no one could rightly remember. Dr Guiler finally officially established that date as September 7, 1936.

It was not until 1963 that the question of a thylacine sanctuary was fully addressed by the Tasmanian Fauna Board. Several areas were under consideration, namely Rocky Cape, Mt Field National Park, Toom's Lake, the Freycinet Peninsula and Maria Island.

All but Maria Island presented inherent security problems as well as projected expenses such as fencing and on-going maintenance. The necessary acquisition of private land was also of prime consideration. Finally Maria Island was seen as the perfect location; private land on the island was duly acquired, and ever since, this consummate location has been awaiting arrival of its star resident.

However innovative the implementation of present-day contingency plans, they could nevertheless, prove to be one of the most profound and singularly rewarding conservation programmes mounted anywhere in the world.

Only time will tell as to the eventual outcome of this somewhat futuristic prediction, but given the continuing flow of thylacine sighting reports emanating from so many different areas of Tasmania, there is a distinct possibility that it may well happen sometime in the foreseeable future.

Many may see the move to relocate the Tasmanian tiger from its present habitat as counter-productive and against the animal's best interests. But this may be necessary in the long term to provide it with as safe an environment as is humanly possible, considering the outside interference that would undoubtedly follow were its location to be either accidentally or purposely revealed.

Therefore, I urge both the Tasmanian State and Federal Governments to stop pretending that the thylacine no longer exists in Tasmania, or at least seriously consider adopting an unambiguous stance by preparing procedures by way of a survival agenda which in turn could implement a semi-captive breeding programme. This would be an absolute prerequisite in order to fully ensure the animal's protection into the future.

Prevention of human interference to habitat would be the largest single factor facing a resurging thylacine population and can, under present State and federal laws, in no way be guaranteed. This must be corrected in the thylacine's favour at the earliest possible instance. Regardless of what the Tasmanian State and the Federal Governments believe, the fact remains that the thylacine does still exist in Tasmania and its future ultimately rests with them.

The rest of the world looks on, already pondering our 'clean, green, image' in the light of recent adverse publicity, and should we botch this chance to resurrect the rarest animal walking the face of the earth today, future condemnation can be assured and our reputation will be tarnished forever.

The fox is a prime example of how an animal of reasonable size can go to ground and absolutely defy all efforts to locate it, despite several million dollars having been spent over recent years in an attempt to eradicate this animal. The substance of the fox in Tasmania is all based on anecdotal evidence, all unsubstantiated; a rumoured introduction, road and hunting kills, and a host of sighting reports from many areas of the state.

If the respective governments are prepared to adopt a positive stance on a fox presence in Tasmania, then why not take note of the countless hundreds of reported thylacine sightings over recent years.

I speak from years of experience spent attempting to track down the thylacine in some of the more inhospitable parts of Tasmania.

There is absolutely not a shred of doubt in my mind that this animal still exists today.

I have found evidence, but so far the proof has eluded, not only myself, but all others who seek to prove this animal is extant.

Conversations with trappers and bushmen many years ago went some way in skilling me on the vagaries of the thylacine; these men are all gone now and with them went our first-hand evidence of the animal. All we have left now are anecdotal accounts, a few pro-scientific books, scant scientific notes and museum specimens.

The aged belief that the animal was a dopey, morose, bumbling fool of a thing has, in recent years proven to be false. For today, the thylacine could hold its own with any top order carnivore in the areas of stealth, prowess, and out and out cunning.

It is a much - underestimated quarry, in that where once it was reputed to be an easy catch, but today is a willow-the-wisp phantom of the forest. In short, the animal has re-invented itself in order to cope with the modern era.

The future of the Tasmanian tiger is in our hands, and the rest of the world is watching. The buck stops with us if we fail yet again to save it from extinction. Truly, this must be the end of extinction for the magnificent thylacine.



*Plate 67. Col Bailey*

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## ***Chapter 11 – Ned Terry.***

*A name which commonly shows up in newspapers and television documentaries is Ned Terry. Ned has spent many years searching for the Tasmanian tiger; working from his base in Northern Tasmania. Though he has never seen a thylacine himself, Ned Terry has never accepted the species to be extinct, and he continues to stand firm.*

*Of all text written on the thylacine over the years, direct quotes are by far the most valuable, particularly from people who have had contact with the species in the early days. Raw quotes, unpolluted by editing or second opinions, allow us all to read between the lines and extract as much information as we can. Of course most of the old tiger hunters have now passed away, so compiling a collection of direct quotes at this time, is an extremely important endeavour.*

*Ned Terry has spoken to many old timers over the years, and many of those discussions were recorded on tape. Ned is now in the painstaking process of translating those discussions to text. He is currently releasing collections of previously unpublished quotations in both book and recorded CD form. Some of this new information is offered here. This chapter is subject to normal copyright law as defined in the Conclusion/Bibliography.*

### ***Experiences from the Past.***

I am not a scientist or trained formally in any way, and the following notes that have been put together are the accumulation of knowledge that has come from over fifty years of being involved with bush trips, hunting and closely observing birds and animals in the wild.

The thylacine has always been the ultimate challenge, and began in earnest when on a fishing trip up the Pine Valley in 1963, I found some footprints in some soft mud. Not having a pencil I traced them out as best I could using the nose of a .22 rifle bullet, on a piece of paper out of my fishing bag. They were sent to Eric Guiler, who replied that they were too rough to form an opinion as to whether they may have been thylacine or not! However, my query was recorded in his notes.

In the 1970's, after I teamed up with Alec le Fevre - who had seen five - and we made that documentary "The Search for the Tasmanian Tiger", much interest was created, and over the next few years I was asked to help with the production of five films from various countries. These included two from the Natural History Research Unit in Bristol, England, and most recently one from Germany.

There were also several interviews and demonstrations of cameras etc, on local TV programs, such as the Seven-Thirty Report etc., and I only did those to try and give some credibility to the search.

All this publicity about the thylacine - which I wasn't looking for - has brought in many genuine people with stories, sightings etc over the years, and despite a steady stream of ridicule (which is like water off a duck's back), has enabled me to tape many wonderful experiences of genuine people, who *would not* go to National Parks to tell their story. There are between thirty to forty tapes and another list of people who, for various reasons, didn't get their story recorded.

It makes one wonder how many other people have seen this animal, but are reluctant to report for fear of being ridiculed, or don't want the exposure. There were only two people who didn't wish to have their story recorded when I asked them if they minded. Others were satisfied if only their initials were used in the recording.



It should also be remembered that now there is no snaring and very little hunting, and in most places an abundance of herbivores. This means that tigers no longer have to travel across roads or venture into mans' domain, where they may be seen when hunting for food.

The thylacine has a number of peculiarities that I believe are associated strongly with this animal. These are my own thoughts that have been generated over the years from my discussions with dozens of people, and my own observations and experience. The aspects that were most common to all these reports could be analysed and listed as follows:

- 1 The animal *never* (except in one report) gave the impression of being in a hurry. It always just loped, or trotted, across the road or moved off into the bush quietly;
- 2 Various descriptions of colour were from fawn (Jersey cow colour) to greyish-brown and always with darker stripes from the middle of the back to the butt of the tail. About seventeen stripes (if counted), tapered from top to bottom;
- 3 It had a pungent smell, mentioned about three times;
- 4 Those in close contact with it said it gave them a funny feeling and made the hairs on the back of your neck stick out. Four told me that;
- 5 It had short pricked little ears;
- 6 When it stopped moving it would sit back on its hind legs like a kangaroo, with its tail straight out behind;
- 7 When it did go to move, the first few movements (four or five perhaps), would be half hopping, until it got right up on all four legs. Several told of this;
- 8 When hunting or chasing a wallaby on scent it would give a 'yip, yip' at regular intervals, perhaps up to two minutes apart. This was mentioned several times. However, if it was prowling around a camp, it would make a guttural growl, or more of a howling noise;
- 9 It was mentioned (and I have seen), that the animal eats into a wallaby and also a sheep from the front end, cleaning out the liver, heart etc. It was also mentioned that a female tiger would chop through the rib cage of a sheep, particularly to get the kidneys and kidney fat for the cubs;

Another habit described several times is that they will leave a wallaby or kangaroo skin spread out on the ground, after eating the meat. The same for a sheep - leaving the big bones. If a devil gets onto a sheep, wool is scattered about all over the place, but not so with a tiger;

- 10 Many people have said how terrified dogs are of tigers. That is very common. Paddy Hartnett and Basil Steers give good descriptions of that. Dogs would come to heel and not hunt and get into the tent or hut, and cringe if a tiger would come around at night (see interview of Tom Barrett);

- 11** A common comment was that the animal can't turn quickly, it has to turn its whole body to get around. Mick Branch, in his interview describes that well. However, Paddy Hartnett describes how he went to grab a tiger by the tail once (in his hut - see interview), and it turned around and took the end off his thumb - so he said be careful!;
- 12** Many people claim they have seen footprints. I always respect these reports, but unless the person is well informed, footprints can be easily mistaken for another animal;
- 13** The female, *with cubs*, never seems to be alarmed, always composed, when in a light, or in close contact with man. Several times mentioned.
- 14** The animal can have three moods -
- a) It is *extremely* cunning and quick to size up danger, particularly with smell;
  - b) Over a period of time it can get used to human intrusion, e.g. people in a hut, hunters or shepherds after three to four weeks. It tends to 'sticky-beak' and gains confidence to come close;
  - c) Just plain hunger, probably from old age, will overcome fear.

Footprints to get confused with:

- 1 The most common would be that of a large dog;
- 2 The next one most like a tiger is the front foot of a large devil;
- 3 Another one many get confused with is the front foot of a badger. If the print is clear 1. and 3. should be easy to eliminate. One has to be lucky to find a print in damp soil which is just firm enough to leave a clear image.

If the ground is too wet, the detail won't be clear. If it's too dry and hard there won't be enough imprint to show detail. If the soil is sandy, the edges of the print will fall in, making the print indistinct.

Examples of the cunning instinct in the animal.

Alec le Fevre - date unknown:

*That's right, now that other thing indicating how cunning these things are, that fellow that got that little cub and he reared it, he caught it, and he reared it in the bush, right away back in the bush and it finally left him when it was three years old you know. And when it was lying outside his hut, and he was inside, if anyone was going to come it'd bristle up and walk round the hut, he'd know it was time to put the billy on, and it would disappear altogether, and by the time the billy was boiling someone would walk out of the bush. They're just so cunning. But remember this, those days they was all gravel roads, now people rode horses or travelled in a bloody jinka, or walked with hobnail boots, and he'd hear that perhaps a mile away.*

Bill Steers - 1930's:

*Paddy reckons they've got the best nose of any wild animal that was ever put in the bush. They can pick up scent. And another thing they were telling me, the old Dad was with him one day up there and he went to help the old fellow and he said the old bugger wouldn't stop to have any dinner or anything - he'd eat of a night and morning and that was it. All of a sudden he popped his head up and said 'what do you hear'. He said, 'a tiger over there, didn't you hear him?' Anyway, sure enough he said 'he is down the flat and we are sitting on the side of the hill'. And next thing we saw a wallaby heading down and out across the flat plain and he said you could tell by the way he was jumping he'd about had it.*

*'Anyway,' he said we will see a tiger. The tiger stopped yipping and he said, 'he's lost him.' 'No,' he said, 'he hasn't lost him. 'Well', he said, 'he is not barking.' 'No,' he said, 'he won't go across that clearing,' he said, and old Dad said a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes after he must have went down around the bottom of the plain and back to where the wallaby went into the bush off the plain, that's where he started yipping and away he went again. He was that cunning he wouldn't show himself even in those days.*

When there were a few more tigers about they seemed to have had patterns of moving around. Whether it was looking for fresh hunting area or for some other reason - perhaps mating, I don't know, but will mention two or three that I know of and quote one from Les Skelly's experience near Table Mountain. They would move around on a seasonal basis.

- 1 On the West Coast years ago they used to move away from the coast in late Autumn - could have been weather, or following the game.
- 2 On the East Coast they used to kill sheep regularly on a certain property very close to a particular phase of the moon - the first full moon in April. In the 1870's and '80's the tigers were killing quite a lot of sheep at Cockle Bay near Dunalley, and it was regular practice to move the sheep off a certain run there just before the first full moon in April.
- 3 Les Skelly relates how they always came and killed on a sheep bedding bank on or near 13th April every year.

Les Skelly (Excerpts from Central Plateau Oral History Project 2/38, circa. 1940)

*A) LS: Yes. And that one I saw over in Jinks's there. There was a lot of shooters, but there was a big ti-tree run up, straight up through it, about a mile. Well, if you went down towards Allison's fence, like here, come up that, you'd always shoot when kangaroo was scarce, you'd shoot four or five kangaroo up at the top often, coming out ahead of the shooters. I went up there this morning to wait; put a gang in at the bottom of her. They went down to Allison's fence and opened out. And coming up - and they'd only just started and they was, I reckon, the best end of a mile, from where I was, and this tiger walked through, sneaked out straight away. And it come up past me.*

*B) DB: You're talking about tigers killing sheep at Serat?*

*LS: Yes, I could show you the place where they killed them. And it was always either or near the thirteenth of April every year. They'd kill these sheep where they're bedded, on the same four or five acres of ground, every year.*

DB: *So you reckon the tigers came back every year like that?*

LS: *He'd come round. It goes round in a circle, a tiger. Right clean around the bush. And they always come off the end of the Western Tier, over the mountain - Table Mountain - and across over the road, up the road here, Tiger Hill, and went across the river onto Allison's Tier again. And their food is - say there was two old ones and two young ones or so, and when they come on, about, round about the thirteenth of April - it might be one day or two days before, or one day or two days after the thirteenth. But that's an every-year job. They would kill four or five sheep.*

*Well, every sheep, they'd get him by the neck - they'd take the blood out of him - every bit of blood out of him, out of his jugular. And if these couple of little ones that they have - might be two or three, perhaps - they've not got enough, another one goes in on that bare patch under a sheep's shoulder, and it'd tear the ribs out just bite them through like that - open a gap there. They'd go in on that bare patch and take all the fat from round the heart of the sheep. He pulls it off and he gives it to the young ones to eat.*

DB: *So that's why you were saying that their droppings looked like fat?*

LS: *Always, mm. They only eat blood and fat.*

DB: *So, if you saw some droppings with bone and all that in them, you'd say that would be a ... ?*

LS: *That's a devil. You don't see bones in a tiger's, because he don't eat bones.*

DB: *Did you used to find the droppings around here?*

LS: *Oh, I have seen them, yes. You'd see them when they used to go through, when I was a young feller, like, up here at Serat.*

DB: *What colour were the droppings?*

LS: *Snow-white! Just like fat?*

DB: *And very hard?*

LS: *Very, very hard! You wouldn't know that it wasn't a stone, see. It was smooth - as smooth as that and as white as that. Yeah, but they don't eat bones.*

DB: *You saw a couple of tigers yourself? You're lucky to have seen one.*

LS: *Yeah. I've seen two in my time.*

DB: *Did they used to trap them a bit around here?*

LS: *No. They never caught many here. No, there was - they caught a few down on the Western Tier; down the road, going from Interlaken down. And - but a lot of these old blokes, they had a dog that'd kill them. Well, I've heard my father say well, he only had one brother like (there was only the two boys), and he was killed with a tree up at Dungle, his brother. And they was up at Lagoon of Islands there, and he had a beautiful hunting dog. He used to go shooting every weekend, and kangarooing and that.*

*And he was out there towards Mt Penny one day, and this dog that he had looked at the log he was standing on and knew there was something in it. And there was an old one, a female one and three young ones in it.*

*So he - this dog - dived in and caught one of the young ones. He was a half-breed kangaroo dog and sheep dog. He was bred, like special, for hunting kangaroo and that. And out come the old one and a young one, and he shot that - one each barrel. And out come another one and away he went, this young one. And when they was all - the three was dead, he put the dog onto the track of th'other one, and he chased him for about a mile and caught him. He killed the four of them, he got the four of them.*

I have just listed a few of the traits attached to tigers that I have personally learnt and others that have emerged from talking to many who have had first-hand experience. The above are a few examples that illustrate how cunning the animals are, or can be.

My sole desire has been, and still is, to establish that the thylacine is still living, and prove it to the world. Money has never been an issue - it's the challenge. So all the planning and hard physical work in the bush I have enjoyed immensely. Meeting so many genuine people and working quietly by myself a lot of the time investigating reports, and keeping cameras operable, nights in the bush etc., has given me a wealth of experience and understanding with native animals, and at home on the farm with domestic animals.

I claim to be just an amateur self-taught observant searcher, with the firm belief the animal is still there.



Plate 68. Ned Terry

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## ***Conclusion/Bibliography.***

So does the Tasmanian tiger still exist?  
Of course it does.

This book was divided into three sections; Part A – It does exist now (the fact that the Tasmanian tiger does exist today), Part B - Factors affecting continued existence into the future, and also Part C - Two wise men; comment from two leading tiger searchers of our day.

Chapter one explained how it is possible, how it is, that the Tasmanian tiger still exists; no proof of existence has been found because numbers are critically low, the species has changed to become more elusive than it has been in the past, and also because there is a veil of secrecy smothering evidence of thylacine existence. The author's own strong sub-proof evidence was also offered in Chapter one.

Chapter two shows part of a recovery action plan which was written two years prior in expectation of rediscovery. This could be a useful start if somebody else obtains proof of thylacine existence. Chapter three discussed current Tasmanian tiger distribution. It is expected there are around 200 thylacines now in existence in Tasmania, of which about half live in the South West World Heritage area, a small number in the North East, and the remainder in the North West. If this total number is incorrect, then the true number of remaining thylacines will be lower, not higher.

Chapter four offers a description of Tasmanian tiger psychology. The animal is extremely nervous, and suspicious of anything unusual. Behaviour seems random, though they generally do occupy a set territory. Males and females often move together, but not in strong monogamous pair bonds. Preferred sleeping places have a lot of exits for escape if necessary. Thylacines are not interested in "bait", though they will sometimes investigate strange things out of curiosity. Chapter five discussed the author's own two sightings in detail.

Chapters 6 – 9 discussed factors affecting continued existence of the Tasmanian tiger into the future. Field advice was offered in Chapter six to help fieldworkers or private searchers. The most reliable element of fieldwork is looking for thylacine footprints, however this is difficult because of bad weather, flexible feet, too many other animals with similar footprints, and also the thylacine's pickiness with where it treads. These things and many more all conspire to torment the mind and drain motivation.

Habitat loss, impact of other animals, as well as apathy & secrecy among some elements of Tasmanian society, are all acting now to hold the thylacine species down. Part of the reason why the rest of the world thinks this animal is extinct is because many people in Tasmania know it exists, do not want it to be found, and actively suppress information.

Finally Part C offered comment from two men who have devoted a large part of their lives to search for the species, and have never given up on the Tasmanian tiger despite the years of ridicule. These are the heroes of the thylacine story. Thanks go to these two wise men, to James Malley, Bob Brown, and also to Michael Lowe of Launceston for proofreading my chapters of this book.

There has certainly been a lot of discussion about the Tasmanian tiger over the years. But after all things are considered, is a single species really that important anyway? The thylacine could truly become extinct at any time, and may never be seen again, but is that really a cause for so much debate?

Society will tick along just fine without the thylacine, that is true, but where does that concept end? Imagine the creation of the "Spring Bay Tiger and Eagle Extermination Society" only a few generations ago; one example of people actively seeking to remove native animals and replace them with introduced species. I do not want to live in a world with only domestic animals and human associated vermin.

One foundation of conservation is that the world actually needs variety or all kinds of problems start occurring, and the globe will ultimately not sustain human beings. Forests are required to clean the air; if the whole world was pasture, humans would die from lack of oxygen. Forests die a slow death unless they are stable, and stability requires a balanced ecosystem with a diverse range of plants & animals.

Already Tasmanian society is facing problems caused by booming herbivore populations. Removing the main predator is obviously one cause of that. Imagine what complicated, unforeseeable, uncontrollable problems we face in the future without some sort of balance in the world. Allowing animals like the quolls to survive needs more than just a maybe I will, maybe I won't attitude. Native animals are required, as they create long term stability for us all.

But what about the money? Imagine how much money Tasmania would make if the thylacine was rediscovered. Astronomical monetary and cultural benefits would flow, both immediate and sustainable. Already the tiger has generated a wealth of tourist income - even when it supposedly doesn't exist!

And why is that? Why is the potential benefit so great? Because of only one thing; the incredible, unbelievable inner strength of this magnificent animal. It is definitely not from anything we have done in the past or now - society has done its best to throw all this away, even though it keeps trying to come back.

It makes bare economic and rational sense to recover the Tasmanian tiger, but surely we can appreciate, and respect, and protect animals like thylacines or quolls simply because they are fascinating. Some say "no, who cares", but I wonder if those people have ever actually looked at a quoll. If people make an effort to really understand native animals, then they cannot help but be fascinated. Conservation comes only through education; people will not conserve something unless they love it, they will not love it unless they understand it, and they will not understand it unless they make an effort to learn about it.

The Tasmanian tiger is surely one of the world's most fascinating creatures. The marsupial equivalent of a wolf or panther; unique, majestic, primitive yet not, clumsy yet not, stupid yet not. Look at the amazing history, and the amazing biology. Nothing could be more Australian than the Tasmanian tiger, and few stories could be so tragic, or so potentially uplifting.

So many deep and important lessons wait to be learned from the thylacine story. A second chance to protect this animal after such a monumental historical mistake, is so significant that it marks a turning point in world conservation; a second chance to view a whole range of issues. What a wonderful thing to imagine; the thylacine, devils and quolls, all part of a stable Tasmanian wilderness. People would travel the world to see it and spend billions upon billions. Tasmania has perhaps the greatest opportunity in the world to create an island showcase of unique native animals - a model of conservation for the rest of the world to admire.

This book contains a lot of negativity. Unfortunately I found that to be necessary, however the central message of course is 100 percent positive. I hope any negativity has not turned you away from the sole point of the book. What myself and others are screaming to the world is that the thylacine does still exist - it is important, it is valuable, it can bring about enormous change for the better, but the species is hanging on by its fingertips and it needs help now or it will die out.

Secrecy does not help the thylacine, because society will not act to protect an animal it thinks is extinct. Cloning will never replenish the species, or excuse our actions.

I have done my best to prove the Tasmanian tiger still exists, and now failing that I have tried to convince you that it exists in the absence of irrefutable proof. Did I succeed? Maybe, probably not. Most people live and die without ever making a serious attempt to change their world for the better; is that you? Probably, maybe not.

Think of the author of this book as greenie, egotist, dreamer, know nothing outsider exaggerating the negative. Those things could all be true, but that would not change the reality, the importance of the message. Do not be distracted by who I am - instead take five minutes to think about who you are, and what you want your world to be.

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\* This is part of the Thylacine Recovery Action Plan shown in Chapter 2.

***PART C – Appendix 1.***  
**Media negotiation.**

**URGENT**

**ATTENTION .....**

10/7/2002

Dear .....

I have been searching for the Tasmanian tiger for the past four years, living in remote areas for much of that time. Three days ago I filmed a live thylacine in detail. This and other evidence was viewed today by Dr. Eric Guiler (recognised leading authority on the thylacine), Nat. Parks & Wildlife Service officer Nick Mooney, and also by Tasmanian Greens Senator Bob Brown, who spent part of his life searching for the tiger. All of these men have signed a document confirming the evidence to be authentic, impossible to hoax, and sufficient to prove continued existence.

In other words the Tasmanian tiger has been rediscovered after nearly seventy years of presumed extinction. Rather than release the information carelessly I intend to use it to help the species as much as possible. With that in mind I will licence use of the film and initial interviews to one media company only. That company will be free to use the information in Australia, and to sub-licence it throughout the world. I will negotiate a single price for this licence, and set aside all of that money in a trust fund, to be used solely for recovery of the Tasmanian tiger.

The fact the species still persists in the wild is the greatest survival story we have ever known. I offer you the opportunity to work with me to break this news to the world - in a responsible way that benefits the thylacine as much as possible.

This is offered to you before any other party, however I will not wait. If you are interested please contact me personally by phone on ..... ASAP so we can arrange a meeting.

Regards,

.....

**LICENCE CONTRACT;**  
***Use of Video Tape Confirming  
Existence of the Tasmanian Tiger  
(Thylacinus cynocephalus)***

**THIS AGREEMENT** made the                      day of                      2002  
**BETWEEN** ..... at .....("Licensor")  
**AND** ..... at .....("Licensee")

**BACKGROUND:**

- A. The Licensor owns genuine original video tape which proves continued existence of the thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*) to this day. This video tape has been confirmed authentic by leading authorities.
- B. The Licensee wishes to acquire the right to use this video tape for News Purposes and the Licensor has agreed to grant the Licensee a right to use this video tape on the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement.

**THE PARTIES AGREE:**

**1 Interpretation**

In this Agreement (including the background above), unless the context otherwise requires:

**1.1 Definitions**

"**This video tape**" means and includes video images recorded ..... 2002, which show a live wild thylacine in unmistakable detail.

"**News purposes**" exclusively means the use of this video tape in television, newspaper, Internet or magazine public information formats, including current affairs television format. This does not include any use of this video tape, or parts thereof in motion pictures, television documentaries, or any form of advertising.

"**Commencement Date**" means the Commencement Date specified in Item I of the Schedule.

"**Address to the Nation**" refers to text of a document written by the Licensor to accompany this video tape.

"**Licence**" means the Licence granted by the Licensor to the Licensee under this Agreement to use this video tape for the specified purpose.

"**Licence Premium**" means the Licence Premium specified in Item 2 of the Schedule.

"**Term**" means the term of this Agreement as specified in Item 3 of the Schedule.

"**Territory**" means the area specified in Item 4 of the Schedule.

"**Sub-Licensee**" means a permitted Sub-Licensee of the Licensee in accordance with clause 8.

**1.2 Headings**

Clauses and other headings are for ease of reference only and shall not be deemed to form any part of the context or to affect the interpretation of this Agreement.

**1.3 Persons**

Words importing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa and words importing persons shall include bodies corporate and unincorporated and vice versa.

**1.4 Clauses and Schedules**

References to clauses and schedules are references to clauses and schedules of this Agreement respectively, and the provisions and conditions contained in the schedules shall have the same effect as if set out in the body of this Agreement.

**1.5 Parties**

References to parties are references to parties to this Agreement.

**1.6 Obligations**

Any obligation not to do anything shall be deemed to include an obligation not to suffer, permit or cause that thing to be done.

**2 Grant of Licence**

2.1 The Licensor hereby grants to the Licensee the right to use and Sub-Licence this video tape throughout the territory during the term subject to the provisions of this Agreement.

**3 Term**

The Licence shall commence on the Commencement Date and, subject to the provisions of this Agreement, shall continue for the Term.

**4 Payment**

In consideration of the grant of the Licence, the Licensee shall pay to the Licensor the Licence Premium referred to in the schedule at the commencement date, in the form of a valid cheque made out to "Thylacine Recovery Trust Fund".

**5 Licensor's Obligations**

5.1 The Licensor shall provide the Licensee with the original copy of this video tape in Panasonic handycam form, as well as an adapter for VHS format. The Licensor will also provide the Licensee with a transcript of the "Address to the Nation" document written by the Licensor.

5.2 The Licensor shall allow the Licensee to film plaster cast footprints and thylacine hair and thylacine scat samples owned by the Licensor - provided that these images are used under the same terms and conditions as this video tape.

5.3 The Licensor shall provide the Licensee with four television interviews. One of these may be of the format for use in a current affairs program.

5.4 The Licensor shall provide the Licensee with one radio interview.

5.5 The Licensor shall provide the Licensee with one magazine interview.

5.6 The Licensor shall not offer or show this video tape or any copy to any other party for a period of 21 days after the commencement date.

5.7 The Licensor shall not offer any interviews, or discuss this video tape or any copy with any party for a period of four days after the commencement date.

**6 Licensee's Obligations**

6.1 Where possible the Licensee shall provide the Licensor with copies of all newspapers or magazines in which images from this video tape are used or mentioned, or any mention is made of the Licensor, within two weeks of these things being made public, for a period of one year after the commencement date.

6.2 Where possible the Licensee shall provide the Licensor with copies in DVD format of all television articles or current affairs shows in which this video tape is used or mentioned, or any mention is made of the Licensor, within two weeks of these things being made public, for a period of one year after the commencement date.

6.3 Within one week of initial public use of this video tape, the Licensee shall run a full page newspaper story in consultation with the Licensor, which displays a complete transcript of the Licensor's "Address to the Nation". The Licensee will do this in every newspaper over which it has control.

6.4 The Licensee shall allow the "Weekend Australian" newspaper to run at least one full page story similar to 6.3 if it is their choice to do so.

6.5 The Licensee shall not indulge in unethical conduct, and shall not be a party to any act, matter or thing by which ....., this video tape, or words written by ..... are misrepresented.

6.6 The Licensee shall not copyright any part of this video tape or words written by the Licensor. The Licensee will contractually prohibit sub-licensees or other business associates from doing so.

6.7 The Licensee will use this video tape, the "Address to the Nation" and all associated items strictly for News Purposes only. This material, or part thereof, will not be used by the licensee in motion pictures, documentaries or advertising at any time or in any way. The Licensee agrees and admits that all of this material is owned by ....., The Licensee will contractually prohibit Sub-Licensees or other associates from using this material, or part thereof, in motion pictures, documentaries or advertising at any time or in any way.

6.8 Upon receipt of the original copy of this video tape and VHS adapter, the Licensee shall transfer the contents to its own image store while the Licensor waits, then immediately return that original tape and VHS adapter to the Licensor.

**7 Freedom of the Licensor.**

7.1 The Licensor shall be free to speak on any subject, to any party at any time, under any conditions including for payment, after a period of four days from the commencement date.

7.2 The Licensor shall be free to use this video tape in any way after a period of 21 days from the commencement date. This includes Licensing or sale for payment to any party so long as such activity does not infringe on the Licensee's rights in this Agreement.

7.3 The Licensor shall not be liable in any way for any loss direct or consequential arising from the use of this video tape or words written by the Licensor, sustained by the Licensee or any Sub-Licensee, associate or customer of the Licensee. The Licensee will incorporate such provisions in any Sub-Licence contract.

**8 Assignment or Transfer of Licence**

The Licensee shall be entitled to appoint Sub-Licensees to use this video tape and associated items covered by this Agreement, provided that such Sub-Licensees are strictly bound by clauses 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7.

**9 Non association**

The Licensee will use this video tape and the "Address to the Nation" text strictly in accordance with this Agreement. At no time will the Licensee portray the Licensor as an associate, partner, employee, or joint venturer of the Licensee unless by prior arrangement with the Licensee.

**10 Nonwaiver**

Failure by the Licensor at any time to enforce any provision of this Agreement shall in no way be considered to be a waiver of such provision or in any way to affect the validity of this Agreement.

**11**     Dispute Resolution

If any question of difference whatsoever shall arise between the parties (or their respective representatives) concerning this Agreement, or any provision, or construction of this Agreement, or as to any matter in any way connected with or arising out of use of this video tape and "Address to the Nation", or the rights, duties or liabilities of either party in connection with such use, which cannot be resolved amicably within one (1) month then and in every such case the matter in dispute shall be referred to arbitration.

**13**     Schedule

- 13.1 **Commencement Date:** .....
- 13.2 **Licence Premium:** ....., to be supplied in the form of a valid cheque made out to "Thylacine Recovery Trust Fund".
- 13.3 **Term:** 100 years
- 13.4 **Territory:** All countries and territories of the world

**14**     Signatures

**EXECUTED** by the parties as follows:

**SIGNED** by ..... (Licensor) \_\_\_\_\_

in the presence of: .....(Witness) \_\_\_\_\_

Address of witness: .....

**SIGNED** by ..... (Licensee) \_\_\_\_\_

Or by it's directors:

- .....) Signature of director: \_\_\_\_\_
- .....) Signature of director: \_\_\_\_\_
- .....) Signature of director: \_\_\_\_\_
- .....) Signature of director: \_\_\_\_\_

in the presence of: .....(Witness) \_\_\_\_\_

Address of witness: .....

\_\_\_\_\_ END \_\_\_\_\_