

## **Tasmanian devil facial tumour disease: the impact of the conservation effort on devil welfare**

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Devil facial tumour disease (DFTD) is a 100% fatal transmissible tumour that is spread from devil to devil by biting. The health and welfare issues of diseased devils are discussed as well as other factors affecting the decline of the devil population. These include traffic deaths (and the death of dependent joeys if a lactating mother is killed), and death by baiting, shooting or trapping (despite the devil's status as an endangered species). Land use changes can disrupt devil ecosystems and may have serious implications for devil welfare. The conservation effort of the Save the Tasmanian Devil program hinges on taking healthy devils from the wild into captivity for an intensive captive breeding program, and the trapping, monitoring and release of wild devils for devil population studies. The attitude towards veterinary intervention in wild monitoring of devils varies across the state. The lessons learned from the devil conservation effort may be able to be applied to the conservation of other species, including the spotted tail quoll - the devil's closest relative.