

Tassie roadkill toll nears 300,000

Animal carnage

MICHELLE PAINE

NEARLY 300,000 animals are killed on Tasmanian roads every year.

Among them, 4000 Tasmanian devils — about 5 per cent of a population already being ravaged by an infectious cancer.

"Pretty much everything that lives in Tasmania, we've seen dead on the road," said scientist Alistair Hobday, who has compiled the figures in one of the most extensive roadkill studies in the world.

Tasmania's roadkill is widely commented on by tourists, he said.

"We've estimated 294,000 animals are killed every year," Dr Hobday said.

"Of that, 70 per cent are hit in roadkill blackspots, which only exist on small sections of the road."

Black spots are only on 20 to 30 per cent of the state's major roads.

The study found the roadkill density was highest on Tasman Peninsula roads and lowest in the North.

The three-year survey covered 15,000km of road.

Dr Hobday has set up a website, roadkill.tas.com, to map roadkill statewide and give tips to drivers.

The study says a reduction in speed would be an effective way to reduce the death rate.

Slowing to 80km/h in black spots on just 10 per cent of roads would cut deaths by half and add three minutes to a Hobart to Launceston trip.

Dr Hobday said car GPS systems could be programmed to warn drivers of animal hotspots.



SAFE: Chloe Lucas with an orphaned wombat at Bonorong Wildlife Centre. Picture: SAM ROSEWARNE

The research features in a new documentary on the devil.

Filmmaker Chloe Lucas, a former BBC director, spent two years on a documentary showing the nocturnal journey of a devil and its often-fatal collisions with humans.

"Normally I'm paid to do films for other people

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STUDY: Alistair Hobday.

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JOURNEY'S END



Most common roadkill

- Unidentified mammals 38 per cent
- Brushtail possums 27 per cent
- Tasmanian pademelons 7 per cent
- Bennetts wallabies 7 per cent
- Rabbits 6 per cent
- Silver gulls 2.5 per cent
- Masked lapwings 2.3 per cent
- Forest ravens 2.1 per cent
- Tasmanian devils 1.5 per cent
- Domestic cats 1.5 per cent



Wildlife worker Vicki Silcock collects roadkill for injured eagles.

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Roadkill carnage

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but when I moved to Tasmania I was really shocked by the roadkill, it's so much more than elsewhere in Australia," Ms Lucas said.

Road safety campaigns are interested in using the film, *Tasmania: Your Roadkill State*.

Dr Hobday, a CSIRO scientist who studies the

wildlife issue "on the side", features in the film with work published in this week's *Wildlife Research* journal.

Tasmania: Your Roadkill State premieres at the State Cinema in North Hobart tonight.

The film is booked out but calls to 6234 3552 might prompt another screening.