



Wolf Spiders *Lycosa* species

What do they look like? Small to medium size spiders, up to the size of a 50c piece. The cephalothorax (head) usually has a pale stripe down the centre and radiating bands coming off this. The abdomen (main body) has various symmetrical lines and blotches. Colour is usually brown, but local variants occur that may closely match the colour of the soil on which they live.

Where do they live? Extremely abundant but often unnoticed. Found in all habitat types. There are many species in the region.

What do they need to live, eat and breed? Feed mostly on other invertebrates, especially insects and other spiders. Wolf Spiders have been recorded eating vertebrates, including small fish, frogs and lizards. They are well named - a Wolf Spider is an aggressive predator capable of sustained attacks to bring down animals larger than itself. Specific needs of particular species of Wolf Spider are poorly known.

When might I see (or hear) them? Wolf Spiders are normally nocturnal, spending the day in a burrow or under logs and rocks. Some species roam widely at night, while others ambush from burrow entrance. The best tool for finding Wolf Spiders is a head torch. Wolf Spiders have a very bright 'eye-shine', but be warned - if you go out at night and start looking for them you'll soon realise how many thousands there are – not an activity for arachnophobes!

What management actions affect this species? Managing land to avoid soil compaction and maintain healthy populations of soil invertebrates may help Wolf Spider populations. Widespread use of pesticides to control insect pests is likely to have serious local effects on Wolf Spiders, and a host of other invertebrates.

How do they benefit the land I manage? Because of their high population densities, Wolf Spiders consume huge numbers of pest insects. They are also valuable as a food source for many other native animals such as dunnarts, frogs and lizards. Because of the sheer number of burrows, Wolf Spiders are likely to significantly help soil water infiltration and nutrient cycles.

