

Talk of the Tasmanian Devil

Sarcophilus harrisii

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AUSTRALIA is a world unto itself, which has forged biodiversity found nowhere else. This is a result of its long-standing geographic isolation from the rest of the world. Australia separated from Antarctica about 35 MYA and started moving northwards. This long-standing geographical isolation of Australia led to the creation of a highly endemic biodiversity. About 87% of Australian mammals are endemic.

What adds to the uniqueness of these mammals is that they represent a distinct stage in the evolution of mammals, a sort of connecting link, in the form of marsupials. Marsupials (metatherian mammals), unlike other placental mammals (eutherians), give birth to underdeveloped offspring that continue to develop in a mother's pouch, much like in the case of Kangaroos.