

'New' footage of extinct Tasmanian tiger released by NFSA

20 May 2020



Credit: NFSA

A 21-second newsreel clip featuring the last known images of the extinct thylacine, filmed in 1935, has been digitised in 4K and released by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA).

The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia has released a 21-second clip featuring Benjamin, the last known [thylacine](#) (or Tasmanian Tiger). Taken from the travelogue *Tasmania The Wonderland*, the images (shot in 1935) are thought to be the last ever filmed of Benjamin, months before his death in 1936. It is available at www.nfsa.gov.au/hobart.

The newly released vision, unseen for the last 85 years, features Benjamin calmly pacing within his enclosure. At one point, two men can be seen rattling his cage at far right of frame, attempting to cajole some action or perhaps one of the marsupial's famous threat-yawns.

" [The Tasmanian Tiger] is now very rare, being forced out of its [natural habitat](#) by the march of civilization," says the film's narrator.

Benjamin was the last known surviving thylacine in captivity; the London Zoo's specimen had passed away in 1931. Benjamin was acquired by Hobart's Beaumaris Zoo in 1931 and passed away on 7 September 1936, a day which is now commemorated as National Threatened Species Day.

The most recently confirmed footage of Benjamin was filmed in December 1933, making this 1935 clip the last known moving images of a thylacine.

NFSA Curator Simon Smith said: "The scarcity of thylacine footage makes every second of moving image really precious. We're very excited to make this newly-digitised footage available to everyone online."

The recently rediscovered footage is one of less than a dozen surviving films of the thylacine, all of which were recorded at either Beaumaris Zoo or London Zoo. Combined, little more than three minutes of black and white film of the carnivorous marsupial are known to exist. No known colour [footage](#) or sound recordings of the thylacine have ever emerged.

Tasmania The Wonderland was believed to be filmed by Brisbane-based filmmaker and exhibitor Sidney Cook (1873-1937). The travelogue shows some of Hobart's main attractions including Sandy Bay Beach and the Lady Franklin Museum, Australia's only double decker tram system, and Beaumaris Zoo, home to lions, [polar bears](#) and native Tasmanian species.

Provided by NFSA

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