

Koala

Scientific Name:

Phascolarctos cinereus

Conservation Status in NSW:

Vulnerable

Photo: K Stepnell/DECC



SPECIAL NOTE: Reserves providing refuge for koalas are under threat from weed invasion and tree damage.

Description:

Koalas are large tree-dwelling marsupials. Males can weigh up to 12kg. They range in colour from pale grey to grey-brown. Koalas have large furry ears and no tail.

Habitat:

Koalas inhabit eucalypt forests and woodlands. Koalas spend approximately 20 hours a day sleeping and four hours eating. They are mostly active in the hours around dusk.

Koalas are fussy eaters and have a marked preference for *Eucalyptus haemastoma* (scribbly gum), *E. robusta* (swamp mahogany) and *E. punctata* (grey gum).

Threats:

Habitat degradation and destruction due to urban expansion, predation by dogs and road kills have all contributed to the Warringah koala community declining.

Trees that provide food and shelter for koalas are being damaged by water polluted with petroleum products, septic tank effluent, detergents, fertilisers, pool chemicals and paint brush washings.

Community Action:

Local reserves can provide a safe refuge for koalas. These reserves are under threat from weed invasion and tree damage. Weed invasion is often a result of dumped garden clippings.

Residents can plant eucalypts (species listed above) to provide habitat in the future and be aware of koalas on the roads, particularly at night. Residents should not let dogs roam bushland reserves.

(NPWS)