

Booribi | Koala



Scientific name:

Phascolarctos cinereus

Common name: Koala

Status: Vulnerable in NSW and Commonwealth, Koalas on the Tweed/ Brunswick Coast are an Endangered Population

Koalas are rapidly declining in NSW and Queensland, and are under extreme threat on the Tweed Coast. While threats vary widely across their geographical range, and past land clearing has reduced their available habitat, the biggest current threats on the Tweed Coast arise from bushfire, dogs, disease, and road strike by motor vehicles.

Koalas are very fussy eaters. In the Tweed they feed primarily on the leaves of only a select few gum (*Eucalyptus*) trees.

Although koalas are most often found in or near their feed trees, they also need other trees for resting, shelter, breeding and dispersal. Consequently, their preferred habitat includes most types of gum (*Eucalyptus*) and paperbark (*Melaleuca*) forest

Koalas are more active at night, descending from trees and traversing open ground to find food, shelter, and mates. In built up areas such as the Tweed Coast this means traversing hostile urban and cleared land where they are vulnerable to dog attack and cars. The establishment of strategically located vegetation corridors and road underpasses can help alleviate these threats.

The management of bushfire is also a very difficult issue as

koalas cannot easily flee and tend to remain in their trees. While fire occurs naturally in koala habitat, with such low numbers it needs to be very carefully managed to ensure koalas are not affected.

To provide a better future for koalas on the Tweed Coast, Tweed Shire Council has prepared the Tweed Coast Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management and is working hard with the community to minimise the full range of issues affecting koalas.

How you can help:

There are many ways to get involved and help the Tweed Coast koala population. The survival of koalas is now totally dependent on humans.

- Drive with care at night, especially in koala zones.
- Keep your dog away from koalas, keep your pets inside at night.
- Plant koala food and habitat trees on your property or join your local Landcare group.
- Join a local group working to help koalas.

Photographer Brad Mustow

To find out more visit Tweed Shire Council's website <https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/Koalas>