



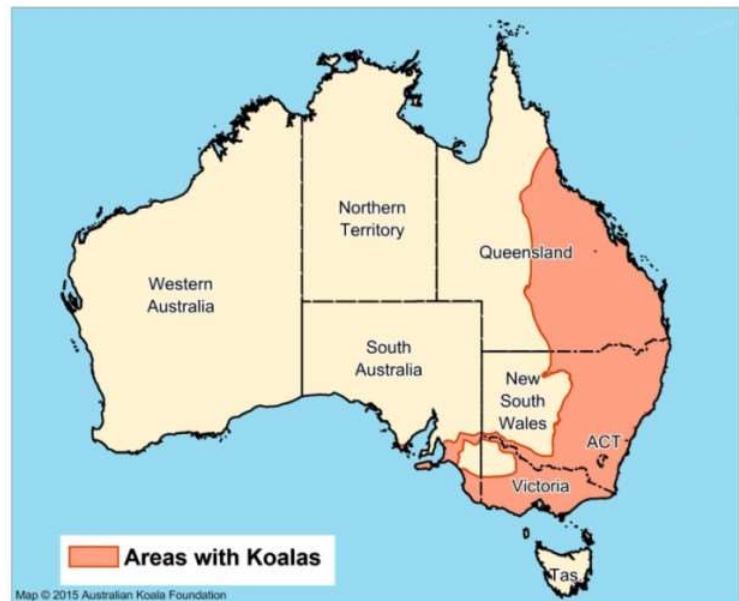
Fourth Crossing Wildlife factsheet



koala

Phascolarctos cinereus
"ash-coloured pouched-bear"

other names
Koala-Bear or Native Bear



www.savethekoala.com

Stocky body. Dark grey, pale grey or grey-brown fur with cream or white on underparts. Koala's in warmer climates have short fur and woollier fur in cooler areas. Large fluffy ears and a large naked rhinarium. Mainly arboreal, rarely coming to ground and only to move from tree to tree where canopy is discontinuous.

The koala can be found in fragmented areas down the eastern side of Australia, from the northern tip of Queensland to the southern end of Victoria and into the south eastern corner of South Australia. The colder weather along the backbone of the Great Dividing Range keeps the animal from that area, but it can be found on either side in the forests and coastal plains. It extends into the western areas of Queensland and NSW, following the River Red Gums that skirt the rivers in those areas. The koala is an arboreal animal and spends most of its day resting in the fork of a gum tree and is quite inactive for around 20 hours a day. Upon dusk it climbs to the canopy to feed on gum leaves of particular species, having favourite foliage in different regions. It is an accomplished climber, using opposable digits to grip branches. When moving between dispersed trees it walks on all fours and are quite vulnerable at this time to dogs and road traffic. The koala is a solitary animal with distinctive home territories, however in denser population ranges overlap. Males are not territorial but there is a dominance hierarchy and dominant males chase and attack subordinates if they are encountered. Most of this activity is during breeding season in the summer months. Females become sexually mature at two years of age, and healthy animals will produce one young a year until about fourteen years old. Females can live up to eighteen years, and a few years younger for males. A koala joey will stay in the pouch for about six months, becoming totally out of pouch at seven months old. It will stay with the mother, usually travelling on her back until it is weaned at twelve months of age. Young males will leave the territory at about two to three years old and the females often remain in the area and breed nearby.

www.fourthcrossingwildlife.com