



The “Koala Spotters’ Guide”



“Spotters’ Ethics” from Joel & Lolitta, Redlands Coast Koala Watchers

- Permission – if you’re not in a public space, like a reserve, first obtain permission to be there
- Sleeping & Eating - koalas spend much of their day sleeping while digesting eucalypt leaves, which is a slow process. If they’re sleeping or eating don’t interrupt them.
- Space - always keep your distance. If they are moving from tree to tree, stay back a respectable distance.

“Koala Spotting Tips” from Joel & Lolitta, Redlands Coast Koala Watchers

1. **Look Up** – koalas spend most of their time up in trees, often in eucalypts, but not exclusively.
2. **Investigate** - examine those lumps you see in the ‘Y’s’ or forks of the trees. It might be a koala! If you happen to see a joey, take a moment to look around & check to see if ‘mum’ is nearby.
3. **Listen & Look** – listen & watch for falling twigs or leaves that may indicate that a koala is overhead.
4. **Marks on Trunks** - scratches or claw marks on a tree could indicate the presence of koalas.
5. **Poop** – koala poop is dark green and about the size of a small olive. It will also smell of eucalyptus. Possum poop is smaller in size and darker in color.
6. **Grunts** – during mating season, from August to February, males make a deep guttural bellowing call to attract females. Their calls can be heard for hundreds of meters.
7. **Smell** – during breeding season males leave a pungent, musky scent on trees.
8. **Time of Day** – koalas are active during the night and at dawn or dusk.
9. **Other animals** – the presence of a koala is often given away by the activity of other animals like brush tail possums, pythons, owls, raptors, crows and of course Noisy miners.
10. **Regular & Familiar** – the more familiar you are with a piece of bush and the more regularly your visit it, the easier it will be for you to locate the koalas living there.

Redlands Coast Koala Watch has published eight information sheets about koalas. See this link
https://www.redland.qld.gov.au/info/20301/koala_conservation/1068/redlands_coast_koala_watch

Apps – Here we are using the **free** Department of Environment and Science **“QWildlife”** app to record & map local koala sightings. The maps on the app can also direct you to other places where koalas are regularly seen.
<https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/koalas/report-sightings> for [iOS](#) and [Android](#).

“Koala Identification” from Jaimee Blouse, RSPCA Wildlife Hospital

Hints to Identifying a Male Koala	Hints to Identifying a Female Koala
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mature males are generally larger • have a larger Roma style nose • a musty, stained scent patch on their chest • younger males have a bare patch instead • ear tags, if present, tags are typically in the koala’s left ear • testicles, which are often quite obvious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smaller body size • smaller nose • no chest patch • ear tags in their right ear [“Girls are always right”] • may show a pouch or joey ‘bulge’

“Which Trees Should We look At?” from Redlands Council & ‘A.C.E. Guide to Eucalypts’ by Rod Fensham

- Koalas are specialist leaf eaters, feeding mostly, but not exclusively, on eucalypt leaves.
- Home ranges have many different trees in them, each having a different purpose, like rooms in a house
- Koalas also use trees as protection from the weather, e.g. shade in summer or warming spots in winter
- trees form the boundaries of home ranges, which overlap, so neighbouring koalas often use the same trees.
- Koalas show a strong ‘taste’ preference for the species that grow in their local area.

Preferred Trees [Aboriginal names <u>underlined</u>]	Other Trees [Aboriginal names <u>underlined</u>]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tallowood or <u>dil</u> (<i>Eucalyptus microcorys</i>) – a nice shade tree with shorter leaves than most eucalyptus and suited to most soil types. • Grey Gum or <u>dambir</u> (<i>E. propinqua</i> & <i>E. major</i>) – the spongy bark of this species makes it easy to see how frequently wildlife is using them. • Scribbly gum or <u>gargar</u> (<i>E. racemosa</i>) – this attractive, smooth-barked tree which can grow to 30 metres, has little scribbles on the trunk caused by moth larvae. • Queensland Blue Gum or <u>mungarra</u> (<i>E. tereticornis</i>) – the best koala food tree of all, this very large tree (to 50 metres) is fast-growing and provides habitat for many wildlife species 	<p><i>Eucalypts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spotted gums or <u>gurrar</u> & <u>dambam</u> (<i>Corymbia citriodora</i> & <i>C. henryi</i>) • Pink Bloodwood or <u>boonah</u> (<i>C. intermedia</i>) • White Mahogany or <u>dibilpalam</u> & <u>turra</u> (<i>Eucalyptus carnea</i> & <i>E. helidonica</i>) • Grey & Narrow-leafed Ironbark or <u>jandurro</u> (<i>E. siderophloia</i> & <i>E. crebra</i>) • Narrow-leafed Red gum or <u>binempta</u> (<i>E. seeana</i>) <p><i>Non-eucalypts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxwoods (<i>Lophostemon</i> species) • Paperbarks (<i>Melaleuca</i> sp.) • Bottlebrushes (<i>Callistemon</i> sp.)

“Determining the Health of a Koala” from Jaimee Blouse, RSPCA Wildlife Hospital

A Healthy Koala...	An Unhealthy koala...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a thick grey coat • a clean, white rump • a full, round belly • has bright, clear eyes • responds to nearby noises and disturbances • is active & alert • may be seen moving between trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a brown, matted coat; may show signs of fur loss • a brown, rusty stained rump which may be wet [signs of cystitis or chlamydia] • skinny [under nourished] • swollen, red or crusted eyes [conjunctivitis] • is unresponsive to nearby noises • stays in the same tree for more than 48 hours • spends extended time on the ground, including sleeping • has difficulty climbing or moving

“What to Do?”

If you see a koala that is sick, injured, orphaned, in danger, lost/out of place or you are unsure **contact ...**

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