

## **Koalas**

### **- information about koalas**

Koalas in the wild face a series of threats to their continued survival mostly stemming from destruction of their habitat for human uses and associated threats like cars, dogs and disease.

The continued survival of the species depends on the retention and effective management of suitable habitat to support koalas in the wild. The long-term future of the species cannot be guaranteed in captivity.

Since white settlement of Australia over 80 percent of the koala's natural habitat has been destroyed and of the remaining 20 percent almost none is protected. In addition, most of the koala's remaining habitat occurs on privately owned land much of which is 'prime real estate'. Humans compete with koalas for land use throughout much of the koala's range.

Koalas are among the best known of the Australian mammals. Their grey and white woolly fur, fluffy ears and broad distinctive noses, make them appealing to Australians and tourists alike.

They are tree-dwelling marsupials and possess many adaptations for arboreal life. Their forelimbs are long and their hands are large and strong to help them hug the smooth bark of the trees.

Like possums, they can oppose the digits on their fore and hind limbs and have naked palms and long curved claws to improve grip. They have a short stumpy tail which is unusual for a tree-dwelling mammal.

