

BELLO BIO BLOG

NO 4

KOALAS (Phascolarctos cinereus)

Koala populations in the Bellingen area are of state significance and their survival depends on our community's commitment to their protection.

The Koala is listed as a 'vulnerable' species under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act). Koalas are one of the umbrellas Species identified in Bellingen Shires Biodiversity Strategy. By protecting Koala habitat we will also protect many other species that make up the ecological community of its habitat.

Threats to Koalas

Koalas face many threats in an increasingly cleared, developed and fragmented landscape. These include:

- Loss of Koala food trees, including in regrowth areas
- Predation by wild and domestic dog.
- Vehicle strike - particularly during the breeding season
- Disease - During times of stress, koalas are prone to outbreaks of the disease Chlamydia. Chlamydia is a bacterial infection which weakens the immune system and causes various problems, including blindness and female infertility. In severe cases, it can cause death. For more information on chlamydia in Koalas, go to [Wildlife Health Australia](#)



Image: Koala Joey - S Ruming.

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Koala Habitat

Koalas tend to live in a home range as a part of a complex social structure. These home ranges often interconnect, so corridors of suitable vegetation are very important. Young animals will eventually leave the home range of their mother (especially males), and can often travel long distances looking for suitable habitat.

Koalas prefer some tree species for food and others for rest and shelter.

Koalas are fussy eaters and feed almost exclusively on the leaves of a small number of trees, mostly eucalypts. In the North Coast Koala Management Area 61 tree species are used, including 39 eucalypts and 22 non-eucalypts. However, in any one area only a few types of trees are favoured as the main food source and not all individuals of these tree types are eaten.

Primary Koala Habitat Trees in Bellingen Shire

- Tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*)
- Swamp Mahogany (*Eucalyptus robusta*)
- Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*)
- Small-fruited Grey Gum (*Eucalyptus propinqua*)
- Red mahogany (*Eucalyptus resinifera*)
- Grey ironbark (*Eucalyptus siderophloia*)
- White mahogany (*Eucalyptus acmenoides*)
- Blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*)

Secondary koala Habitat Trees in Bellingen Shire

- Flooded Gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*)
- Sydney Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*)
- Grey ironbark (*Eucalyptus siderophloia*)
- Pink bloodwood (*Corymbia intermedia*)
- Smooth-barked apple (*Angophera costata*)
- Brushbox (*Lophostemon confertus*)
- Swamp turpentine (*Lophostemon suaveolens*)
- Forest oak (*Allocasuarina torulosa*)
- Broad-leaved paperbark (*Melaleuca qinquinervia*)



Image: by J Turbill

Note: Flooded Gum & Blue Gum should be considered as Primary Food Trees where they occur as a co-dominant canopy species with Tallowwood.

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The Bellingen Shire Council Coastal Area Koala Management Strategy - January 2017

The Bellingen Shire Council Coastal Area Koala Management Strategy applies to land within the Bellingen Shire Coastal Area Koala Planning Area (KPA).

Areas within the Bellingen Local Government Area (LGA), but outside of the KPA remain subject to the individual koala habitat assessment statutory requirements of State Environmental Planning Policy 44 - Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44).

The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Manage the long-term sustainability and recovery of koalas and their habitat.
- Ensure that there is no net loss of preferred koala habitat (PKH) and, where appropriate, create, manage and/or restore koala habitat linkages to allow for safe koala movement across the landscape.
- Identify and list the preferred koala food tree species likely to be found in the Bellingen LGA and to map PKH.
- Minimise and manage threats affecting koalas and their habitat that are within Council's sphere of control and influence.
- Establish relationships with industry, landholders and the community to ensure the objectives of the plan are met in respect to koala long-term sustainability and recovery.
- Provide consistent assessment criteria for the processing of development applications, including guidelines for koala habitat assessment, food tree and koala habitat retention and, where appropriate, compensation for the loss of food trees and koala habitat.
- Promote koalas as an asset for Bellingen's economic development and tourism.
- Build upon the private land outcomes of the Plan by advocating for a landscape approach to management of koalas and their habitat, including establishment of koala habitat linkages across all land tenures.

Council looks forward to implementing the wide range of activities identified in the Strategy, in conjunction with the community, to ensure that koalas continue to exist and ultimately thrive across the landscape in Bellingen Shire.

If you are preparing a development application to develop land with core koala habitat, the Strategy outlines Council's requirements for addressing potential impacts on koalas, or their habitat, in your development application.

[Bellingen Shire Council Coastal Area Koala Management Strategy](#)



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What can you do to help Koalas?

- Plant Koala food or shelter trees on your property or as a part of a landcare group improving koala corridors
- When out driving be koala aware, especially at night and during breeding season (spring)
- Keep your dogs and cats under control - In addition to the danger of attack, koalas are very easily stressed by dogs. Keep dogs on leads and . inside at night
- If you have a swimming pool, place a sturdy rope into the pool attached to a tree or post at the edge, so that if koalas fall into your pool, they are able to climb out safely.
- Support community koala groups in the shire.
- Spotted a koala in your area? Record your sighting.....

Visit the [Koala Map](#) link to the Australian Koala Foundation

- Register
- Then when you see a koala you can log the sighting and we can begin to see what the koala population in North Bellingen might be.

Contacts and Further Information

Office of Environment and Heritage - 02 6651 5946

National Parks and Wildlife Service Coffs Coast Office - 6652 0900; Dorrigo Office - 6657 2309

Report injured animals to Wires : 1300 094 737 or 02 6652 7119

[Koala Habitat Mapping Spatial Data](#) - Bellingen

[NSW Koala Strategy](#)

[Koala tree use across NSW](#)

Fact Sheets

[Koalas in our Back Yard](#)
[Koalas and Dogs](#)



Image: Spot the Koala
Ringwood Creek - D Bennett