

## Koala put on endangered species list

14th February, 2022



The koala is regarded as the epitome of cuddliness. However, animal lovers will be saddened to hear that this lovable marsupial has been moved to the endangered species list. The Australian Koala Foundation estimates there are somewhere

between 43,000-100,000 koalas left in the wild. Their numbers have been dwindling rapidly due to disease, loss of habitat, bushfires, being hit by cars, and other threats. Stuart Blanch from the World Wildlife Fund in Australia said: "Koalas have gone from no listing to vulnerable to endangered within a decade. That is a shockingly fast decline." He added that koalas risk "sliding toward extinction" unless there are "stronger laws...to protect their forest homes".

The koala has huge cultural significance for Australia. Wikipedia writes: "The koala is well known worldwide and is a major draw for Australian zoos and wildlife parks. It has been featured in advertisements, games, cartoons, and as soft toys. It benefited the national tourism industry by over an estimated billion Australian dollars in 1998, a figure that has since grown." Despite this, efforts to protect the koala have been failing. Australia's Environment Minister Sussan Ley said there have been "many pressures on the koala," and that it is "vulnerable to climate change and to disease". She said the 2019-2020 bushfires, which killed at least 6,400 of the animals, were "a tipping point".

Sources: [canberrattimes.com](http://canberrattimes.com) / [nypost.com](http://nypost.com) / [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)

### Writing

The whole world should act to save the koala. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

koala / epitome / cuddliness / marsupial / endangered / in the wild / disease / forest / Australia / worldwide / zoos / wildlife / cartoons / soft toys / vulnerable / bushfires

### True / False

- 1) The article says koala epitomise cuddliness. T / F
- 2) There could be as few as 143,000 koalas left in the wild. T / F
- 3) Traffic accidents are one reason for the decline in koala numbers. T / F
- 4) The WWF says Australia needs stronger laws to protect koalas. T / F
- 5) Wikipedia says koalas can draw things. T / F
- 6) Koalas were worth a billion dollars to Australia's economy last year. T / F
- 7) An environment minister said protection efforts have been working. T / F
- 8) Deaths due to bushfires were a tipping point for the koala. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. <b>regarded</b>   | a. attraction |
| 2. <b>lovable</b>    | b. falling    |
| 3. <b>estimates</b>  | c. wiped out  |
| 4. <b>dwindling</b>  | d. reckons    |
| 5. <b>extinction</b> | e. boosted    |
| 6. <b>draw</b>       | f. adorable   |
| 7. <b>benefited</b>  | g. in danger  |
| 8. <b>pressures</b>  | h. dying out  |
| 9. <b>vulnerable</b> | i. considered |
| 10. <b>killed</b>    | j. strains    |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of koalas?
- c) What are the world's cuddliest creatures?
- d) What animals are culturally significant in your country?
- e) What do you think of zoos?
- f) What can you do to help protect koalas?
- g) What will the state of wildlife be in 50 years from now?
- h) What questions would you like to ask koala experts?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. The koala is regarded as the epitome | a. to endangered     |
| 2. animal lovers will be saddened       | b. to climate change |
| 3. Their numbers have been dwindling    | c. toward extinction |
| 4. gone from no listing to vulnerable   | d. industry          |
| 5. koalas risk sliding                  | e. of cuddliness     |
| 6. cultural                             | f. Australian zoos   |
| 7. a major draw for                     | g. rapidly           |
| 8. It benefited the national tourism    | h. point             |
| 9. it is vulnerable                     | i. to hear that      |
| 10. a tipping                           | j. significance      |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about koalas?
- What do you know about other Australian marsupials?
- How cuddly do you think koalas are?
- How can we save the koala?
- Why are so many animals on endangered species lists?
- What three adjectives best describe this story?
- How would you feel if the koala became extinct?
- What laws are needed to protect koalas?

## Spelling

- regarded as the oipeemt of cuddliness
- this lovable uasilmpar
- Their numbers have been igdnln dwi
- due to disease, loss of tbaiath, bushfires...
- valerulneb to endangered
- koalas risk sliding toward totniexicn
- huge cultural sceigiafnnci
- It has been rfeudeta in advertisements
- It beeefntid the national tourism industry
- an estmdatie billion Australian dollars
- many useepssrr on the koala
- a iigppnt point

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. i	2. f	3. d	4. b	5. h
6. a	7. e	8. j	9. g	10. c

## Role Play

### Role A – Koala

You think a koala is the cuddliest creature. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their creatures aren't as cuddly. Also, tell the others which is the least cuddly of these (and why): rabbit, a dolphin or a horse.

### Role B – Rabbit

You think a rabbit is the cuddliest creature. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their creatures aren't as cuddly. Also, tell the others which is the least cuddly of these (and why): koala, a dolphin or a horse.

### Role C – Dolphin

You think a dolphin is the cuddliest creature. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their creatures aren't as cuddly. Also, tell the others which is the least cuddly of these (and why): rabbit, koala or a horse.

### Role D – Horse

You think a horse is the cuddliest creature. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their creatures aren't as cuddly. Also, tell the others which is the least cuddly of these (and why): rabbit, a dolphin or koala.

## Speaking – Cuddly creatures

Rank these with your partner. Put the cuddliest creatures at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| • Koala      | • Dog     |
| • Polar bear | • Cat     |
| • Rabbit     | • Dolphin |
| • Baby       | • Horse   |

### Answers – True False

1 T	2 F	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 F	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.