



Koala

Phascolarctos cinereus

Lane Forsberg



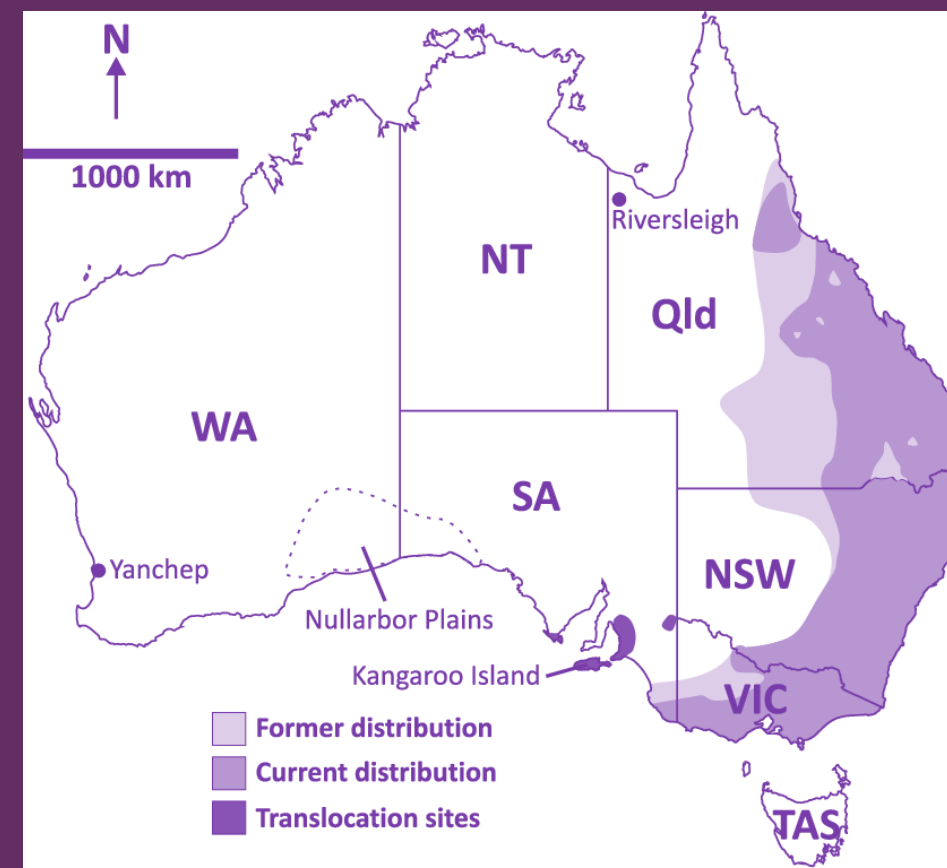
Taxonomy

Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)

- ❖ Order: Diprotodontia
- ❖ Suborder: Vombatiforme
- ❖ Family: Phascolarctidae

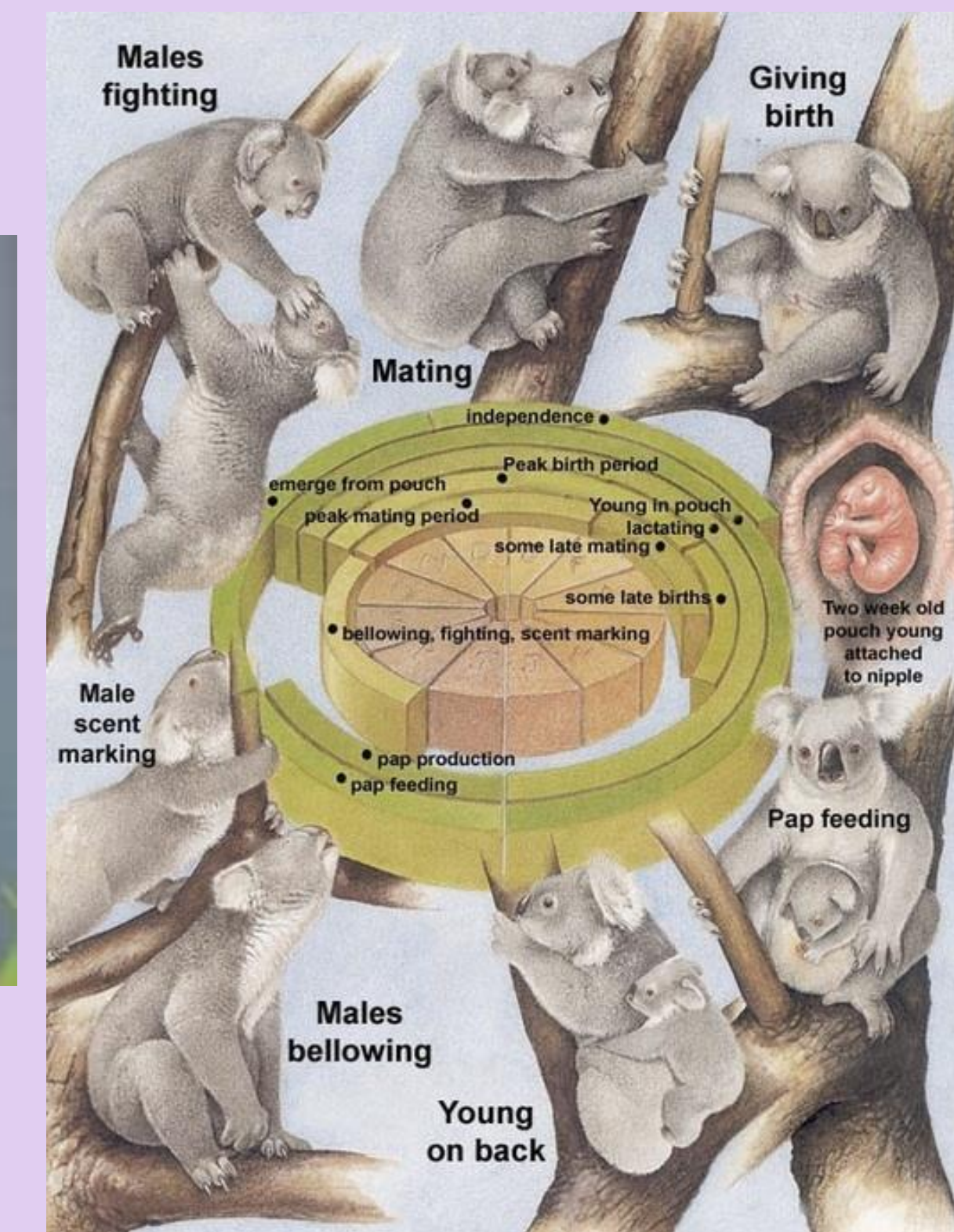
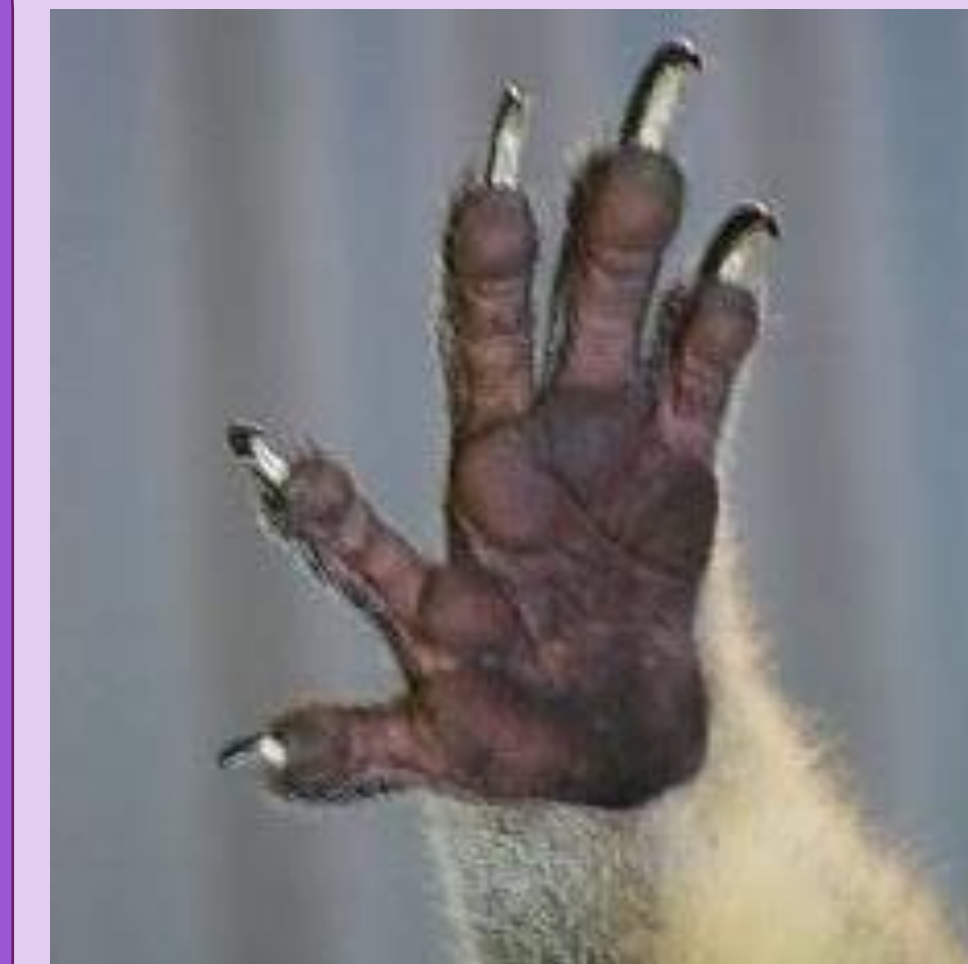
Distribution

- ❖ Endemic (native and restricted) to Australia, mainly Eastern
- ❖ Have suffered a 50-75% reduction in range due to settlement and loss of habitat



Adaptations

- ❖ Long limbs and strong gripping claws for scansorial locomotion
- ❖ Zygodactyly, 2 opposable digits on hands, and opposable hallux or “big toes”
- ❖ Development of the hindgut, colon, and caecum to combat high fiber or cellulose in their diet
- ❖ Tightly interlocking teeth cusps and curved blades to divide plant parts before the small intestine
- ❖ Microbial community in digestive tract breaks down toxic oils
- ❖ Kidney function to reduce urea in turn reducing urine and feces since water mainly comes from leaves
- ❖ Sternal scent glands for olfactory communication
- ❖ Vomeronasal organ to distinguish sex and female reproductive state in urine



Diet

- ❖ Browses Eucalyptus foliage
- ❖ Lipids and carbs are main source of energy
- ❖ Low in protein, high in indigestible fiber, potentially toxic, and has tannins reducing nutrient value



Status and Conservation

- ❖ Listed as a vulnerable species in 2012, but has now moved to endangered
- ❖ Major threats include habitat loss, fire, disease, vehicle deaths, dogs, and climate change
- ❖ Conservation requires different approaches in different regions
- ❖ Management includes a combination of habitat restoration and protection alongside strategies to reduce threats and deaths