

# SAVE THE KOALAS!

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A koala's habitat in eastern Australia seems peaceful. Tall, eucalyptus trees tower above the surface, balmy breezes gently swirl the leaves around, while a koala rests in between two branches. It seems perfectly fine.

Actually, there is a BIG problem... At this very moment, the koala's habitat is in danger! Ever since the European settlement, about 80% of a koala's habitat has been cleared. Almost none of the remaining 20% is protected. Some people are trying to clear the koalas' habitat for homes, factories, shops and mining. Since people are taking over most of a koalas' land, there are 45,000 to 80,000 koalas left in the wild! To you, it sounds like a lot of koalas, but to scientists, there aren't many koalas left. If we don't start helping koalas ourselves, we will have to pay a lot of money to create programs that could help save koalas.

## Simple Koala Facts

A koala eats about 1 kilogram of eucalyptus leaves per day. Since a koala's diet is extremely low, they need to rest a lot. Koalas live for around 20 years. Koalas sleep for 18-20 hours per every day. Koalas sleep in between two branches, or a forked branch. To you, it may seem uncomfortable. For koalas, it is very comfortable, because koalas have extra thick fur on their bottom, which acts as a cushion. Koalas are extraordinary creatures that have different ways of doing things than other animals.

## Threats To Koalas

Cars and dogs are killing around 4,000 koalas alone each year. Koalas' habitats are being destroyed for places we could live, work and shop in. Different animals are starting to live in the same habitat as koalas; these animals bring diseases that can

sicken and kill koalas. Around the 1920s through the 1940s, hunters killed koalas for their soft, amazing fur. Koalas are also threatened by climate change; these past years, the koalas' habitat has been having high temperatures and the air has been dry. Today, koalas are facing a lot of threats, but are staying strong.

Koalas only have 20% of their habitat remaining and hardly any of it is protected. David Burgess, Natural Areas Campaigner at the Total Environment Centre in Sydney warns, "Unless meaningful action is taken to protect the koala habitat, it may get to the point where the species relies on expensive captive breeding programs for its survival."

## Ways You Could Help

- Plant a eucalyptus tree in Harrold's forest. By doing this, you could help recover a koala's habitat.
- Make a donation. Even making the smallest donation could help start programs that could help save the koalas.

Tell your friends and family about what is happening to koalas and what you can do together to help save them. By doing this, you can make a big difference.