

When it comes to climbing the highest trees, the koalas are king!

# 10 Cool things about KOALAS

There's a lot more to these living 'teddy bears' than fluffy ears and a laid-back lifestyle. Check out ten surprising things about these wild, loud and loveable creatures from Australia...



"BURRP!"

## 1 WHAT A RACKET

Imagine a burp so loud it makes you jump, followed by a snore that rattles the rafters. That's what the typical **below** of a koala sounds like! "The noise they make is so loud that campers complain about koalas keeping them up all night" says **Deborah Tabart**, head of the **Australian Koala Foundation (AKF)**.

So why are they so noisy? Male koalas grunt with gusto to broadcast their whereabouts to distant females or to scare off rivals!

## 2 MEGA MUNCHERS

Koalas don't live in tall **eucalyptus trees** just to enjoy the view! They climb up the branches to munch leaves one at a time, eating up to a **kilogramme each day** – that's about ten small bags of salad! The leaves are actually **poisonous** to most creatures and are tough to digest, providing little nutrition. Luckily for koalas, they have a **specially adapted digestive system** that extracts every last drop of energy from the leaves while neutralising their toxins.

Image: Peter D'Amico/Blue Planet; Photos: iStockphoto.com; Photos: iStockphoto.com; Photos: iStockphoto.com

## 3 NIGHT SHIFT

Koalas often look sleepy when people see them during the day. That's because they're **nocturnal**, so they're usually only awake when it's dark. And all that eating is hard work so they need to save energy – amazingly, koalas can **sleep for 20 hours a day!** When they're snoozing, their extra-furry rumps provide a built-in cushion!



Snuggle up, it's nap time – again!

## 4 MISTAKEN IDENTITY

The Europeans who first settled in Australia mistook these tree dwellers for a type of bear, and the name **'koala bear'** stuck. However, like kangaroos, koalas are **marsupials** – mammals that look after their newborns in a pouch.

But the koala's closest cousin is actually the **wombat**, a marsupial that lives in burrows – and wouldn't look twice at a eucalyptus leaf!

A baby koala stays cosy in its mum's protective pouch

