

Keep koalas safe from dogs

When koalas leave trees to move locations they can sometimes be confronted by other animals, such as dogs. Although koalas have sharp claws and teeth to defend themselves, when they encounter a dog, the odds are often stacked against the koala.

Dog attacks on koalas increase during the koala breeding season between September and February. This is because male koalas become more mobile, and young koalas are moving away from their mother in search of their own territory.

Responsible dog ownership

Many dog owners may not realise that their dog can pose a threat to koalas. Even the most obedient dog may try to protect its territory from other animals, including koalas.

Dog owners are responsible for ensuring their pets don't injure or kill other animals, including protected wildlife.

Many dog attacks on koalas take place in the dog's backyard, which can be an unfamiliar and confined space for a koala. These attacks often result in the serious injury or death of koalas.

Keeping your dog under effective control, especially during the evening or at night when koalas are most active, will reduce the risk of injury to both your dog, and koalas.



How to keep koalas and your dog safe

- Keep your dog on a lead when walking in areas used by koalas.
- Monitor your dog when it's outside, especially if you live near koala habitat.
- Keep your dog inside or confined to an enclosed area at night, particularly during koala breeding season.
- Create a barrier, such as a fenced area, between your dog and the trees that koalas favour on your property.
- Make your fence koala friendly by leaning timber against the fence, planting climbable plants nearby, or using a design that allows a koala to grip and climb your fence to pass through your yard.
- Share information with friends and neighbours about the importance of keeping dogs away from wildlife.

Koalas are highly sensitive to stress; even if they appear to have only minor injuries from an attack, many still die from stress related illness.



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Climbing a fence that isn't koala-friendly. Photo: Holden Ward.

How to help injured koalas

If you find a koala that you think needs help, it is important to involve someone with the right skills and experience.

- 1. Ensure your safety** - be aware of your surroundings and only approach the koala if it is safe to do so.
- 2. Keep the animal calm and safe** - stay quiet, keep dogs and children away and refrain from touching the koala.
- 3. Seek assistance** - search the internet for your local wildlife rescue organisation for advice. If the animal is in a National Parks and Wildlife reserve, call the local office or the after-hours regional duty officer.
- 4. Take to a vet** - there may be circumstances where an experienced wildlife rescuer isn't available to help. If you feel safe and you are capable, use towels or blankets to move the koala into a secure box and take the koala to your nearest veterinarian.

Other ways to help koalas

- Protect and advocate for native habitat - koalas rely on eucalypt trees for food and shelter, including those in our urban areas.
- Plant koala friendly tree species on your property - do some research on the best eucalyptus species for your local area.
- Drive carefully at night when koalas are most active and pay attention to areas marked with koala signs.
- Protect koalas during heatwaves - koalas may choose a shady, cool spot on the ground during hot weather, keep pets and children away. You may wish to leave water nearby, but do not directly offer the koala water and keep any water points clean so as not to spread disease.
- Swimming pool owners should leave a means for koalas or other wildlife to climb out of a pool they may get in.
- Appreciate koalas from a safe distance while visiting your local parks and reserves. Touching or trying to get a koala's attention may cause them stress.
- Volunteer with your local community conservation group – such as a 'Friends of Parks' group or other environmental organisation.

More information

Contact your local National Parks and Wildlife Service office.

www.environment.sa.gov.au

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