Who is a koala? The koala is a small bear-like, tree-dwelling, herbivorous which averages about 9kg in weight. Its fur is thick and usually ash grey with a tinge of brown in places. The koala is an ancient word meaning "no drink" because it receives over 90% of its hydration from the Eucalyptus leaves (also known as gum leaves) it eats, and only drinks when ill or times when there is not enough moisture in the leaves. ie during droughts etc. Each koala eats approximately 200 to 500 grams of leaves per day. The teeth are adapted to deal with for this.

The sharp front incisors nip the leaves from the branches and the molars (back teeth) are shaped to allow the koala to cut and shear the leaves rather than just crush them. Physiology The Koala is well suited to life in the trees. The koala has an excellent sense of balance and its body is lean and muscular and its quite long, strong limbs support its weight when climbing. The arms and legs are nearly equal in length and the koala's climbing strength comes from the thigh muscle joining the shin much lower than in other animals.

Climbing trees In the safety of their home trees, koalas assume a wide variety of sitting and sleeping postures, and they will move around the tree during the day and night to catch the sun or the breezes. On hot days it is common to see them with limbs dangling in an effort to keep cool, and during colder times, curled up in a ball to conserve body heat. Breeding The breeding season for koalas runs roughly from September to March.

This is a time of increased activity, and sound levels increase as males bellow more frequently. This is also when the young from the previous year are weaning from their mothers. Threats Since European settlement, approximately 80% of Australia's eucalypt forests have been decimated. Of the remaining 20% almost none is protected and most occurs on privately-owned land.