

Climbing Trees to Save Furry Animals

High in the branches of a tree, a koala quietly eats a eucalyptus leaf. Suddenly, she hears flapping near her head. Is it a bird? A rope gently loops around her neck. It pulls snug against her fur.

Don't worry, the koala is not being harmed. She is being saved. On Kangaroo Island, Australia, there are too many koalas. The animals are running out of food. A group called Koala Rescue is moving the koalas so they will not go hungry.

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A koala eats only eucalyptus leaves.



Rescuers on Kangaroo Island use poles to get the koalas safely down from their tree homes.



This koala is getting weighed. Scientists hope to keep track of the koalas over the next few years.

A HELPING HAND FOR KOALAS

During the 1920s, some people feared that Australia's koalas were disappearing. They wanted to help keep koalas safe. So 18 koalas were moved to Kangaroo Island. People thought the koalas might do better on the island, which had plenty of eucalyptus trees.

Since then, the number of koalas on Kangaroo Island has reached 5,000! That is good news. There is also bad news.

Koalas are picky eaters. They only eat eucalyptus leaves. Too many koalas in one spot **strip** the trees of leaves. The trees die. With no more leaves to eat, the koalas would **starve**.

CREATURES WITH SHARP CLAWS

To solve the problem, Koala Rescue first gets the koalas down from their tree homes. "It's not easy," says Drew Laslett of Koala Rescue. "They don't like being captured out of their trees."

Smile and say "Eucalyptus"! Five koalas line up to get their picture taken. They may be cute, but they are still wild animals with sharp claws.

