

Down Under Animals:

The Koala





The koala is an Australian mammal that lives in Australian trees.

Like the wombat and the kangaroo, it is a marsupial species.

The koala is not a bear at all, nor is it a kangaroo. Its closest relative is the wombat. A fact we know is true.



The koala is nocturnal, so it's active after dark. It eats mistletoe and box leaves and eucalyptus leaves and bark.

Most of the daylight hours will find koalas sound asleep.

They sleep up to sixteen hours each day, so you won't hear a peep.



The koala is mostly silent but mating males have a loud call.

Unless distressed or frightened, koalas make few sounds at all.

Koalas weigh up to 30 pounds. They're mostly small and round.

Near eucalyptus forests and woodlands is where koalas are found.



Koalas have soft, wool-like fur that's gray on top and white below.

When koalas are not sleeping, they move about quite slow.

Koalas have five fingers on each foot to help them grip and climb.

They actually have fingerprints much like yours and mine.



Baby koalas are called joeys. They are born earless, hairless, and blind.

About six months a joey will stay in its mother's pouch confined.

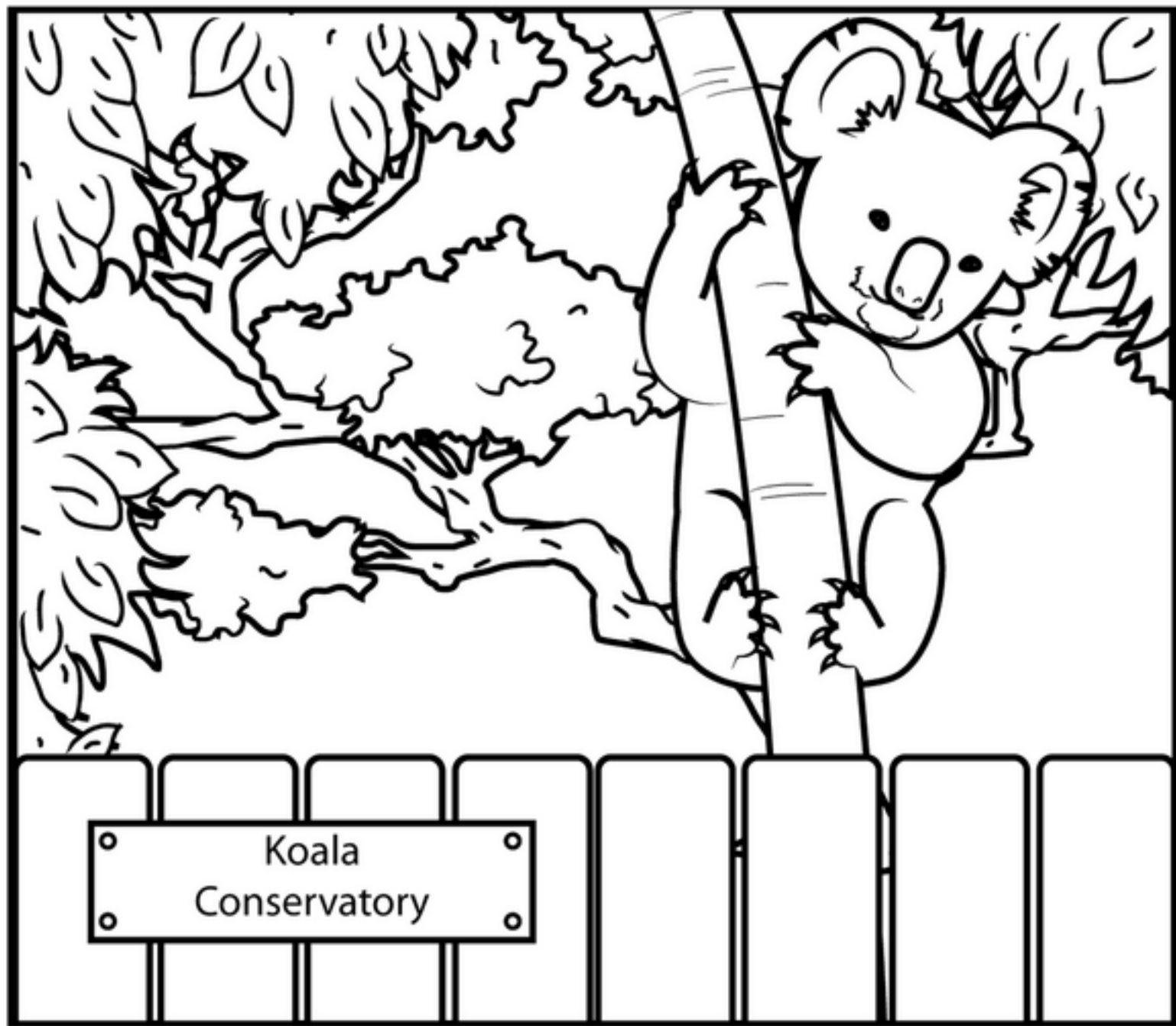
The joey feeds on mother's "pap," which is from her digested food.

Then he/she rides around on mother's back when mommy's in the mood.



Southern koalas are bigger than their northern family.
There are different kinds of koalas. Their subspecies
numbers three.

Koalas were once killed for their fur that was used to
trade
for other goods and services, until new laws were
made.



Koalas can live up to 18 years. Their main predator is man.

The Australian Koala Foundation has prepared a conservation plan.

Although koalas once were threatened, their status still causes some concern.

There are always lessons from the past that conservationists can learn.

1. What kind of mammal is the koala?

2. What does the koala eat?

- a. eucalyptus leaves
- b. pine needles
- c. moss and insects
- d. fish

Answer: _____

3. What does a koala have that is like a human?

4. What are baby koalas called?

- a. johnnys
- b. puppies
- c. kittens
- d. joeys

Answer: _____

5. Where do joeys live for the first six months?

6. Why were koalas once killed?

- a. for their meat
- b. for their tails
- c. for their ears
- d. for their fur

Answer: _____