KOALAS IN LOGAN

The koala is arguably one of Australia’s best known and most appealing native animals. Queensland has one of the largest koala populations in Australia. Koala populations are facing increased pressures from habitat loss, disease, road kills and dog attacks. Research has shown that koala populations have declined by 50-90% since European settlement. Koalas can live in suburban areas provided safe habitat is available. Koalas live in large and small bushland areas, including individual trees in suburban backyards. This makes the koala vulnerable to dog attacks, which is the third most significant known cause of death behind car strikes and disease (related to habitat clearing).

In Logan, koalas are most frequently found in the eastern suburbs of the city such as Daisy Hill, Shailer Park, Springwood, and Cornubia. The large number of sightings in this part of the city most likely corresponds to the fact this area is more densely populated and therefore encounters with koalas are more common than the less populated parts of the city. Koala densities across the western parts of Logan are not as well understood, although sightings are common near Jimboomba and ‘hot-spots’ are thought to exist in some locations along Slacks Creek and Scrubby Creek, and in the Greenbank Military Training Area.

BEHAVIOUR

Koalas are nocturnal and spend only a few hours a day feeding. This means that koalas are more active at night. They may change trees two or more times a night. Koalas move slowly and deliberately, but are able to move quickly when threatened. Koala breeding generally occurs between late winter and late summer, so you can expect greater movement of koalas around this time.

DOG ATTACKS

On average, approximately 110 koalas are attacked and killed by dogs each year. Further, between 1997 and 2008, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection’s (EHP) Moggill Koala Hospital and the Australian Wildlife Hospital at Beerwah admitted around 1400 koalas that had been attacked by dogs.

Koalas are vulnerable to dog attacks when travelling along open ground to a new tree or between forested areas. Many dogs are curious by nature and even if they do not have a tendency to chase and catch wildlife, just pawing or mouthing a koala can cause serious injuries or death as koalas have thin skin thus their internal organs are easily punctured by canine teeth. Even a quick bite is enough to kill a koala. The most visible sign of a dog attack is wet matted fur from the dogs’ saliva and/or traces of blood on the koala’s body.

If you think a koala may have been injured (or is sick) please phone one of the Local Wildlife Rescue Groups listed on next page. When dealing with koala’s the services of registered and experienced wildlife carer should be sought to capture and remove the koala for appropriate treatment. Koala’s teeth and claws are sharp and dangerous so the handling should be left to the experts.
**YOU COULD BE FINED OR YOUR DOG IMPounded!**

It is an offence under Logan City Council’s Local Laws to permit an animal to attack or worry another animal. Under Local Laws, a council officer may direct a person to cease the conduct or activity and take action such as confining, restraining or tethering of the dog to prevent an attack on a koala.

If you fail to comply with a direction, you commit an offence against the local law and may receive an on-the-spot fine. The Council officer may also seize and impound the dog if it’s considered to be dangerous.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?**

The survival of the koala in Logan City is dependent upon the cooperation of private land owners to prevent domestic dogs attacking koalas. It should also be remembered that when defending themselves koalas are capable of causing deep wounds and any dog that attacks a koala may risk serious injury.

If you witness a koala being worried or attacked by a dog you should report it to one of the below listed Local Wildlife Rescue Groups who will quickly respond.

You can help reduce the risk to koalas by undertaking the following simple measures below on your property.

- **Keep your dog inside or appropriately restrained at night** - this is when koalas are most active and moving through backyards in search of food.

- **If a koala is up a tree or loose in the yard and therefore vulnerable to attack, you should confine, restrain or tether your dog out of the sight of the koala. This will give the koala a chance to move on.**

- **Give your dog its own play-area fenced off from the rest of the yard with Koala Exclusion Fencing.**

- **A great idea is to create a space, called a ‘den’, where your dog feels safe. Dogs like to have their own space, which is why you’ll often find your dog lies under the table, your bed or a chair. A den might be something like a laundry or enclosed space like a balcony where your pet has shelter and is comfortable. Dog kennels are another great option, however if you use a kennel tether your dog to the kennel at night so it is away from occupied or potential koala food trees, or place its kennel within a ‘koala-proof’ fenced enclosure. See the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection’s website www.ehp.qld.gov.au for more information on fencing.**

- **Consider obedience training to discourage your dog from chasing wildlife. Regular exercise will also use up your dog’s energy and make it less likely to chase wildlife.**

- **If you are thinking of getting a new dog and live near bushland, a smaller dog is less threatening to koalas.**

- **Further tips on how to make your dog and property koala-friendly see the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection’s website www.ehp.qld.gov.au**

**LOCAL WILDLIFE RESCUE GROUP CONTACTS**

- **Logan Wildlife Ambulance** - Call RSPCA on 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625) (24 hours / 7 days a week)

- **Daisy Hill Koala Ambulance** on 07 3299 1032 or 0412 429 898 (365 days a year, from 8am to 4.30pm)

- **Wildcare Australia** on 07 5527 2444 (24 hours / 7 days a week)

- **BARN Brisbane Area Rescue Network** on 0405 056 086

For more information
Phone 3412 3412
Visit www.logan.qld.gov.au
Email council@logan.qld.gov.au