

Cool koalas 萌酷的考拉

词汇: *wildlife* 野生动物

When you think of a cute, furry wild animal, you often picture a koala. These adorable-looking **creatures** appear docile and friendly, so it's no wonder people are concerned about the future of the **species** after the devastating **bushfires** that destroyed parts of Australia earlier this year. Luckily, many survived, which gives us a chance to continue to learn more about these **marsupials**.

Australia's native and unique wildlife such as **kangaroos**, **platypus** and koalas, are under constant threat from human activity and natural disasters. It's thought at least a billion animals lost their lives as a result of this year's bushfires. Recently, drones and thermal imaging technology have been used to **track** their movements to help them keep safe. Protecting these unique species is important because, as The Australian Koala Foundation estimates, there are now possibly as few as 43,000 koalas in the wild.

So, what is so special about koalas and what makes them so 'cool'? Maybe we envy their ability to sleep for up to 22 hours day! Or could it be their **laid-back** appearance due to the fact that they are **herbivores** and mainly feed on juicy **eucalyptus leaves**, which take a lot of time and energy to **digest**.

What is amazing is that because they often live in a dry and hot **environment**, they drink very little water. So, how do they survive? Well, scientists have discovered that these wild **mammals** lick running water off the smooth surface of a tree **trunk** when it is raining. This **phenomenon** is called "stemflow". Valentina Mella, the lead author of the research and an **ethnologist** from the University of Sydney, told the BBC: "I think the main message is that behavioural observations in the wild are very important to establish what is normal and what is unusual, and to truly understand what animals need. If we watch them carefully, they will tell us."

So, despite the word 'koala' meaning 'no drink' or 'no water' in the **Aboriginal** language, it seems that even these sleepy creatures do need a drink sometimes. And if we're to encourage them to **flourish**, we need to **conserve** their **habitat**.

词汇表

creature	动物
species	物种
bushfire	林火
marsupials	有袋（目）动物
kangaroo	袋鼠
platypus	鸭嘴兽
track	追踪
laid-back	悠闲的，懒散的
herbivore	食草动物
eucalyptus leaf	桉树叶
digest	消化
environment	环境
mammal	哺乳动物
trunk	树干
phenomenon	现象
ethnologist	民族学者，人种学家
Aboriginal	澳大利亚土著的
flourish	茁壮成长
conserve	保护
habitat	栖息地

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. What is it that has recently destroyed much of the koala's habitat in Australia?
2. True or false: *Animals such as koalas can only be found in Australia.*
3. Why does eating eucalyptus leaves make koalas laid-back and sleepy?
4. According to new research, how do koalas drink water?
5. Why should we protect the habitat koalas live in?

2. 选择意思恰当的单词或词组来完成下列句子。

1. When I was on an expedition in the Amazon rainforest, I was lucky enough to spot a rare _____ of bird.

creature	habitat	species	herbivore
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2. While crossing the desert, the team had to _____ water before they reached the next village.

flourish	conserve	track	digest
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3. The good quality soil in the garden means my plants are _____.

flourished	flourishing	flourish	flourishes
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4. Although I love eating freshly baked bread, I find it hard to _____.

digest	conserve	track	phenomenon
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5. My boyfriend is so _____ - he doesn't care the boiler is broken and we have no hot water!

back-laid	laid-backs	lay-back	laid-back
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答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. What is it that has recently destroyed much of koala's habitat in Australia?

It's thought at least a billion animals lost their lives as a result of these devastating bushfires.

2. True or false: *Animals such as koalas can only be found in Australia.*

True. Koalas are marsupials – types of animals that are unique to Australia.

3. Why does eating eucalyptus leaves make koalas laid-back and sleepy?

Feeding on juicy eucalyptus leaves takes a lot of time and energy for koalas to digest.

4. According to new research, how do koalas drink water?

Koalas lick running water off the smooth surface of a tree trunk when it is raining.

5. Why should we protect the habitat koalas live in?

We should conserve – or protect - their habitat to help them survive and flourish.

2. 选择意思恰当的单词或词组来完成下列句子。

1. When I was on an expedition in the Amazon rainforest, I was lucky enough to spot a rare **species** of bird.

2. While crossing the desert, the team had to **conserve** water before they reached the next village.

3. The good quality soil in the garden means my plants are **flourishing**.

4. Although I love eating freshly baked bread, I find it hard to **digest**.

5. My boyfriend is so **laid-back** - he doesn't care the boiler is broken and we have no hot water!