

## In Danger of Extinction

### Cross-Curricular Focus: Life Science



A species is the name for a group of animals that are alike, such as lions and tigers. If a species is endangered it means there are very few of those animals left in the world. If all the animals in a species die, the species becomes **extinct**. Those animals are gone forever.

Many species are protected. A protected species means governments have made laws against killing the animals.

The koala is close to being an endangered species. Interestingly, the koala is partly to blame for its decline. Koalas are too stubborn for their own good!

When you were younger, were you a picky eater? Did your parents have to force you to eat things that were good for you? Hopefully you listened to what they taught you and ate your dinner.

Koalas are picky eaters. They live in tall eucalyptus trees. Many of these trees are also called gum trees. Koalas eat the leaves of those trees. Since there are over 600 different types of eucalyptus trees, the koala should have no trouble finding food. But koalas are picky! They only want certain eucalyptus tree leaves to eat. Out of the 600 varieties of trees, koalas will only eat the leaves of about 120 kinds of eucalyptus tree. Some are even pickier than that. The koalas of a specific area will only eat about four or five kinds of eucalyptus leaves. They would rather starve than eat the other kinds. Now that's stubborn!

The biggest problem for koalas now is that the brush land in Australia is being cut down. Towns and cities are pushing farther into the brush. Since many koalas live there, they are losing their tree homes and the trees leaves that feed them.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

1) What does it mean when an animal is **extinct**?

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2) Imagine if you were like a koala and ate only one kind of food. What kind of food would it be?

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3) What is another name for many gum trees?

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4) Why do you think the koala is so picky?

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5) What would you tell people to get them to stop cutting down the brush land where koalas live?

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Name: Key

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

**Actual answers will vary.**

1) What does it mean when an animal is **extinct**?

**All the animals in a species die and they are gone forever.**

2) Imagine if you were like a koala and ate only one kind of food. What kind of food would it be?

**student's choice**

3) What is another name for many gum trees?

**eucalyptus tree**

4) Why do you think the koala is so picky?

**student's choice**

5) What would you tell people to get them to stop cutting down the brush land where koalas live?

**student's choice**