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Amazing Animals
Fact sheets

Kangaroos

Kangaroos are the largest marsupial surviving on earth today. They are well known for their style of movement; hopping on their hind legs whilst using their large, muscular tail for balance. Kangaroos use their tail like an extra leg when they are manoeuvring around, or standing still. Kangaroos are one of the only animals that are not able to move backwards easily, and this is why they are used on the Australian national emblem.
Kangaroos graze on plant matter such as grass, heath plants and young shoots and are well adapted for arid environments obtaining most of the water they require from the food they eat. Kangaroos have good eyesight and excellent hearing and they use their large ears to pick up even the slightest sounds. Kangaroos live in social groups, called "mobs".

Eastern Grey Kangaroo

The Eastern Grey Kangaroo's fur is woolly and grey-brown in colour, and they have a small head with big ears. Their tail can grow up to 4 feet long which is very helpful for balancing and standing up straight. An Eastern Grey Kangaroo can live anywhere from 15-20 years of age in the wild. A big male can measure up to 2.8 meters from his nose to the tip of his tail, and can weigh up to 66kg. Females are much smaller only reaching approximately 32kg.

Habitat

Eastern Grey Kangaroos can be found living on the open grassland, open woodland and forested coastal areas of eastern Australia and Tasmania.

Diet

Eastern Grey Kangaroos are herbivores and predominately a grazing animal eating mainly shrubs and grass. They feed mostly at night and early in the morning. During the day, Eastern Grey Kangaroos lie under shaded trees or in scrapes they have dug. This is also where they sleep.

Breeding

Breeding occurs throughout the year but more births occur in the warmer summer months. A baby kangaroo is called a joey. A joey is born 33-38 days after his/her parents mate. The tiny embryonic kangaroo emerges from its mother's body and slowly climbs up her abdomen and into her pouch. When the joey is first born it weighs under a gram and is as tiny as 15 millimetres. Once born the joey will stay in its Mum's pouch for up to 8 months. At this age the joey will begin to start exploring and go for very short little hops around out of Mum's pouch.
The joey will still be able to fit into its mothers pouch until it is around one year old, but will only try getting back in when he/she is cold or scared. When the joey finally does becomes too big for Mum's pouch she will refuse to let him in. By this stage, Mum may already have another little joey suckling on her teat.

Australia Zoo Eastern Grey Kangaroo profiles

Ivory

Here at Australia Zoo we have very special member in our Macropod family, Ivory. Ivory is an Eastern Grey Kangaroo and as you can see she isn't very grey at all, more white in colour!

The reason for this is that Ivory has a genetic trait known as 'leucism'. Leucism occurs due to a recessive gene found in animals' DNA that stops them from producing certain pigmentation in either their fur or skin. This condition can be found in most animal species and is extremely rare, with only 1 in every 10,000 being leucistic. Australia Zoo is lucky enough though to have three more leucistic animals; a Red Kangaroo named Hannah, a Saltwater Crocodile named Casper and a reticulated python named Jenny.

When you next visit Australia Zoo, come say G'day to Ivory, she isn't that hard to find!

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