Kangaroos and Kin: SE Queensland

Dr Ronda Green
Dr David Croft

Wildlife Tourism Australia

Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld Scenic Rim

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Kangaroo and potoroo families

- Marsupials – young born at very elementary stage, attach to a teat inside a pouch and continue developing there
- Elongated hind feet for “bipedal ricochet” (hopping)
- Most are crepuscular (active dawn and dusk)

The kangaroo family

There’s no sharp zoological division between kangaroos and wallabies.

The three (or sometimes four) largest species are called kangaroos. Most of the rest are wallabies. There’s also a few intermediate ones called wallaroos (seriously!)

The kangaroo family

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There’s approximately 50 species in Australia and over a dozen (but no actual kangaroos) in New Guinea

We have 10 species,including one kangaroo (eastern grey) in SEQ

The Potoroo family

About 10 species of small hopping marsupials related to the kangaroo family and thought to be similar to kangaroo ancestors

We have two species in SEQ

Some fun facts

A kangaroo or wallaby may have:

- a tiny joey firmly attached to a teat giving rich milk
- An older joey getting in and out of the pouch and feeding from the other teat with different milk
- A fertilized egg ready to grow when the young joey detaches or when conditions are right.

All at the same time

Some fun facts

Mum can control her pouch and abdominal muscles to let him in and out when he wants, or to actually pop him out or not let him back in if she needs to.

Some fun facts

They can look very deer-like when you don’t see the legs or tail. Their ears move individually while listening, just like a deer.

Some fun facts

At slow paces they use similar energy to deer or sheep, but at fast paces their hopping movement is more energy-efficient

Some fun facts

Kangaroos and large wallabies have intestines long enough to digest lots of grass.

Smaller wallabies eat relatively less grass and more leaves of other plants

Eastern Grey kangaroo

- Second largest kangaroo in Australia (*Macropus giganteus:* “gigantic bigfoot”)
- They live in social groups
- In SEQ many are well-accustomed to people, but not actually tame. Approach quietly, not too close, and please don’t feed them.

Eastern Grey kangaroo

Easily seen in the wild in several parts of SEQ

- Coombabah (west of Southport, Gold Coast)
- Kooralbyn (south of Beaudesert)
- The Outlook (north of Boonah)
- Noosa region (Sunshine Coast)
- Wivenhoe Dam
- other

Eastern Grey kangaroo

Please don’t disturb them: you may stop them from resting or feeding, or separate a mother from her joey .

Either keep your distance or get a bit closer by walking obviously past them, NOT directly towards them.

Eastern Grey kangaroo

Either keep your distance or get a bit closer by walking obviously past them, NOT directly towards them.

If one stares directly at you with ears pricked, move a bit further away.

Eastern Grey kangaroo

… and don’t get too close to a big male.

They are VERY powerful, and may see you as competition for their females!

Eastern Grey kangaroo

There are also many places to see them in captivity, e.g.

- Australia Zoo
- Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary
- David Fleay Wildlife Park
- Lone Pine
- Dreamworld

Common Wallaroo

NOT common in SEQ, although very common in many other regions

Smaller and darker than eastern grey kangaroo and usually more solitary and nocturnal

Not readily seen by visitors

(sorry, no photo)

Whiptail (“pretty-face”) wallaby

One of our largest and most graceful wallabies.

Usually in small groups.

Not as readily approached as the kangaroos

Whiptail (“pretty-face”) wallaby

Often seen at Kooralbyn and while driving up mountain towards O’Reilly’s.

Most active in early morning or late afternoon (as for most wallabies and kangaroos).

Whiptail (“pretty-face”) wallaby

Long thin tail, white spot on back of ear, dark narrow face with prominent white cheek stripe

Predominantly a northern species

Red-necked wallaby

Our most common wallaby

Shorter than whiptail, cheek stripe not as prominent

Primarily a southern species

Red-necked wallaby

Reddish-brown hair on back of neck

Common in wild in many areas (Sunshine Coast hinterland, Daisy Hill State Forest, Kooralbyn, Coombabah, valleys west of Lamington NP ...

Red-necked wallaby

- Reported to be one of the most playful of the wallabies (several here were chasing each other in circles through the mist)

Agile wallaby

- Very common in north Queensland
- Restricted to a couple of coastal areas south of Brisbane, and on some Moreton Bay Islands (eg Stradbroke)

- (sorry, no photo)

Rather similar to red-necked but no reddish colour on back of neck,and longer cheek stripe

Black-striped wallaby

- Rather similar to red-necked, but with black stripe down back
- Strictly nocturnal
- Not easily seen, because of nocturnal habitats and relative rarity

- (sorry, no photo)

Swamp wallaby

Usually alone and not far from dense vegetation

Small, dark, with dark hands and face and yellowish belly.

Swamp wallaby

Reasonably common

Daisy Hill State Forest, Mt French (near Boonah), Coombabah, other

Swamp wallaby

Only species in genus *Wallabia*, not closely related to other wallabies

Brush-tailed rock wallaby

Rocky, mountainous areas such as the Mt Barney / Mt Maroon region and Mt French, Not easily found.

Marvellous ability to bound up near-vertical slopes

Considered threatened.

Brush-tailed rock wallaby

One sign of their presence is their droppings, similar to most wallabies but a little twisted “tail” at one end.

Red-necked pademelon

Tiny wallaby of the rainforests.

Reddish-brown hair on back of neck

Red-necked pademelon

Often seen dusk or dawn at the edge of Lamington NP when they emerge to graze on grasses (they also eat many leaves in the rainforest)

Red-legged pademelon

Reddish-brown hair on legs

Mostly stays in forest but occasionally emerges to eat grass

Mary Caincross Reserve (Sunshine Coast), Lamington NP, other

Red-legged pademelon

Occasionally seen to nibble on leaves of stinging tree! (but careful to avoid contact with soft corners of lips)

Rufous bettong

Small. In the potoroo family, closely related to the kangaroo family

Fairly common in open forests of Kooralbyn, Wivenhoe etc, but strictly nocturnal

Long-nosed potoroo

Small.

Strictly nocturnal

Rare, considered vulnerable. Seldom seen except on motion-sensing cameras.

Long-nosed potoroo

An important disperser of the spores of mycorrhizal fungi, which are important to the health of many forest trees.

Next month:

Koalas in SEQ

3.00pm Monday 20 October 2025