



Koala: A Historical Biography (Australian Natural History Series)

Ann Moyal

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The koala is both an Australian icon and an animal that has attained 'flagship' status around the world. Yet its history tells a different story. While the koala figured prominently in Aboriginal Dreaming and Creation stories, its presence was not recorded in Australia until 15 years after white settlement. Then it would figure as a scientific oddity, despatched to museums in Britain and Europe, a native animal driven increasingly from its habitat by tree felling and human settlement, and a subject of relentless hunting by trappers for its valuable fur. It was not until the late 1920s that slowly emerging protective legislation and the enterprise of private protectors came to its aid.

This book surveys the koala's fascinating history, its evolutionary survival in Australia for over 30 million years, its strikingly adaptive physiognomy, its private life, and the strong cultural impact it has had through its rich fertilisation of Australian literature. The work also focuses on the complex problems of Australia's national wildlife and conservation policies and the challenges surrounding the environmental, economic and social questions concerning koala management.

Koala embraces the story of this famous marsupial in an engaging historical narrative, extensively illustrated from widely sourced pictorial material.



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