

Tweed Coast Koala Study 2015

Frequently asked questions

What were the outcomes of the 2015 Koala Study?

There has been ongoing decline in koala activity and occupancy levels throughout the northern part of the Tweed Coast, between Kingscliff and Koala Beach. The Pottsville Wetlands / Black Rocks koala population, in the southern part of the Tweed Coast, appears stable. Overall, the Tweed Coast koala population currently occupies substantially less of the available habitat than it did when surveys were carried out for the 2011 Koala Habitat Study.

What do the results mean for the future of koalas on the Tweed Coast?

The situation remains severe for koala populations on the Tweed Coast. The current trend means that the Tweed Coast koala population could be lost within the next 20 years unless the decline can be reversed through ongoing protection and habitat restoration initiatives. Population stability in the south is an encouraging sign, and suggests that recovery is still possible with substantial effort.

How many koalas are left on the Tweed Coast?

This study has not attempted to provide an estimate of population size. It is not possible or practical to count each koala in the Tweed Coast area, because of the large area covered by the study and resources available. The koala population is very small and as a result, any estimate of koala

numbers using standard survey methods has a large margin for error, which was the case with the estimated figure from the previous study in 2011.

However, the available survey tools and methods can effectively compare koala occupancy and activity levels over time. These comparisons provide better detail on the status of koalas throughout the Tweed Coast and are more informative for guiding future actions to protect the population.

Council is working with state government and research institutions to improve the accuracy and efficiency of survey methods for estimating koala population size, including the use of “drones” and detection dogs.

How will Council respond to the results of the study?

Reversing the trend of population decline will be a long-term process that could take more than 20 years. Council will continue to work on further reducing threats to koalas throughout the Tweed Coast. Survey results reiterate the need to maintain current koala habitat restoration works and to increase available habitat which will provide for future koala population expansion.

Council will continue to lead the koala recovery effort on the Tweed Coast by implementing the actions of the Tweed Coast Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management, finalising the Tweed Byron Koala Connections project and carrying out regular monitoring of the population.



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How was the study done?

Council staff used standard koala faecal pellet surveys at over 70 field sites on the Tweed Coast between Kingscliff and Billinudgel Nature Reserve to determine current koala activity levels in those locations. They revisited sites surveyed during the 2011 Habitat Study, as well as a number of additional sites. This year's survey used identical methodology to the previous Habitat Study, so the results of both studies could be effectively compared.

Who carried out the study?

The work was carried out by Council staff experienced in koala surveys. Tweed Shire Council is in a rare position of having the necessary expertise and resources to undertake this work entirely in-house.

When was the study done?

Survey work was carried out between June and September 2015.

What can I do to help?

Top 5 things you can do to help save Tweed Coast koalas

- 1 Call Friends of the Koala 6622 1233 if you see a koala**
 - Talk to Friends of the Koala to find out if the koala needs help
 - Friends of the Koala also run great workshops to help you identify koalas that need care
- 2 Drive with extra care at night, especially in koala zones**
 - Koalas come to the ground and will cross the road to move between trees
 - Any bushland area may have koalas and other wildlife moving across roads
- 3 Keep your dog away from koalas**
 - Never let your dog roam in bushland and keep them restrained if you are lucky enough to have koalas in your backyard
 - One bite from any size dog can be fatal to a koala
- 4 Plant koala trees on your property or with your local Landcare group**
 - Contact Council or Team Koala to find out about the new Koala Landcare group
 - Contact Council to get information on what koala trees to plant and where to plant these on your property
- 5 Get involved - join a local group working to help koalas**
 - Friends of the Koala, Team Koala and Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers
 - Become a koala ambassador and spread the message to your family, friends and neighbours



Contact details

Friends of the Koala	friendsofthekoala.org
Team Koala	teamkoala.com
Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers	tvwc.org.au
Tweed Shire Council	tweed.nsw.gov.au/koalas