

Read and React – Mammals – *The Herbivores*

Reading Page

Red Kangaroo
Macropus rufus

Eastern Gray Kangaroo
Macropus giganteus

Western Gray Kangaroo
Macropus fuliginosus

There are three species of large kangaroos. The red, eastern gray, and western gray kangaroos. They are found mostly in Australia, with small populations in Tasmania and New Guinea.

Red kangaroos live in dry grasslands in Central Australia. Eastern and western gray kangaroos live in forests and scrublands in eastern, southern and southwestern Australia, but do overlap into red kangaroo habitat.

Kangaroos can grow up to six feet tall. They can weigh up to 200 pounds, though most only weigh about 100 pounds. Females are smaller. As their names suggest, they have reddish, brown to gray coats of coarse, woolly hair. The red kangaroo is the largest. They all have very long, muscular tails.

They live in groups called “mobs.” Every mob is ruled by the biggest male. Kangaroos can travel at speeds up to 30 mph and can jump 30 feet. They use their tails as a counter balance when jumping. They are active mostly at night (nocturnal). This helps them avoid the extreme heat of much of their habitat.

Kangaroos are herbivores, eating mostly grass. They can survive a long time without water, getting the moisture they need from their food. They are ruminants, like cows, and chew their cud. This helps them get the most from their dry diet.

Kangaroos are marsupials – an unusual kind of reproduction. Females carry her baby or “joey” in a pouch on the front of her belly. They are only pregnant (gestation) for about a month.

They give birth to one very tiny baby weighing less than 1/10 of an ounce.

The newborn must crawl up into its mother’s pouch to nurse and grow. It will stay in her pouch for eight months to a year. Then it will leave for a few hours at a time to graze, coming back to the pouch to sleep and nurse. It will leave the pouch finally at about eighteen months.

Kangaroos can live for up to eight years in the wild, though often it is less. Their only predators are dingo and man, but life in the hot, dry outback can be very hard.



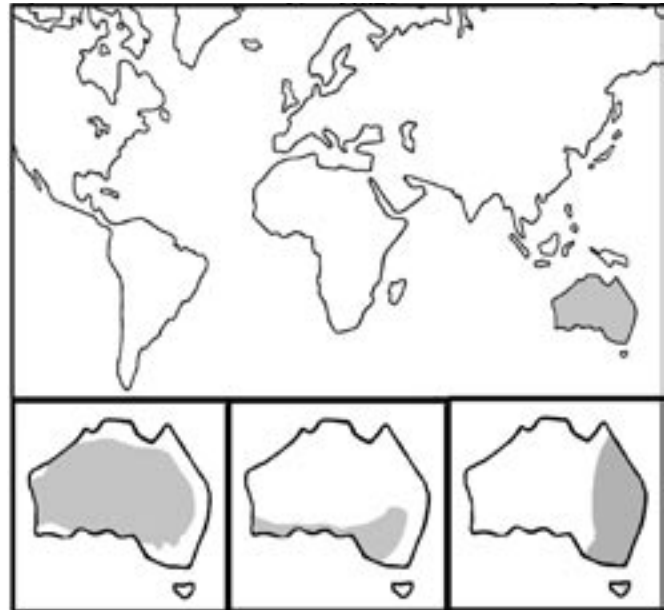
Reaction Page

The Kangaroos

Macropus

From your reading, label the range of each kangaroo and the the continent on which they live.

Answer 10 questions about kangaroos from your reading.



- 1) In which habitats are kangaroos found?
_____.
- 2) Which is larger, a male or a female? _____.
- 3) A group of kangaroos is called a _____.
- 4) Which of the kangaroos rules its group? _____.
- 6) How fast can a kangaroo jump? How high? _____.
- 7) What helps kangaroos get the most from their dry food? _____.
- 8) How long are kangaroos pregnant? _____.
- 9) How much do newborn kangaroos weigh? _____.
- 10) How old are they when they leave the pouch for good? _____.

Color and Label the Kangaroo

