

Kangaroos

Kangaroos are famous for hopping and can reach speeds of 60kph, clearing more than 8m in a single bound!

Kangaroos possess powerful hind legs, a long, strong tail, and small front legs. Kangaroos belong to the animal family Macropus, literally “big foot.” Thanks to their large feet, kangaroos can leap some 30 feet (9 meters) in a single bound, and travel more than 30 miles (48 kilometers) per hour.

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Family

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Female kangaroos sport a pouch on their belly, made by a fold in the skin, to cradle baby kangaroos called joeys. Newborn joeys are just one inch long (2.5 centimeters) at birth, or about the size of a grape. After birth, joeys travel, unassisted, through their mom’s thick fur to the comfort and safety of the pouch. A newborn joey can’t suckle or swallow, so the kangaroo mom uses her muscles to pump milk down its throat.

At around 4 months, the joey emerges from the pouch for short trips and to graze on grass and small shrubs. At 10 months, the joey is mature enough to leave the pouch for good.



Predators and Habitat

Besides humans and wild dogs called dingoes, kangaroos face few natural predators. Heat, drought, and hunger due to vanishing habitat are the biggest dangers kangaroos face. If threatened, kangaroos pound the ground with their strong feet in warning. Fighting kangaroos kick opponents, and sometimes bite.

Kangaroos are most active between dusk and dawn, as they search for their favorite foods: grass, as well as leaves, ferns, flowers, fruit and moss. Like cattle, they regurgitate their food, chewing it twice before it passes through their chambered stomach. Kangaroos need free water to survive; however, when desperate they’re known to dig holes a meter deep in search of water.

Did you Know?

- » Kangaroos Are the Largest Marsupials on Earth
- » They're Left Handed
- » They can use their tails as a left leg
- » They Sometimes Drown Their Enemies
- » They Eat Grass Like Cows but Burp Less Methane

- » There are more kangaroos in Australia than there are Australian people.
- » Kangaroos box each other
- » Kangaroos are great swimmers.
- » Kangaroos are unable to move backward.

