

Koalas rescued from path of raging bushfire

December 17 2019



Rescuers scaled trees this week to retrieve three adult males, five adult females and four joeys

A dozen koalas have been rescued from the path of bushfires raging near Sydney, conservationists said Tuesday, as devastating blazes increasingly encroach on critical habitat.

Rescuers scaled trees this week to retrieve three [adult males](#), five [adult females](#) and four joeys, whose habitat is under threat from a fire burning across 140,000 hectares in the Blue Mountains.

The koalas have been relocated to Sydney's Taronga Zoo until it is safe to return them back into the wild.

"We are committed to caring for these important koalas to ensure some of this vital genetic diversity from the Blue Mountains can be preserved and that the future of this iconic species is secured," said the zoo's conservation society director Nick Boyle.

At least three million hectares (7.4 million acres) of land burned this bushfire season, with huge swathes of the creature's habitat destroyed.

Dozens of koalas have been rescued in the past few months but hundreds more of the animals are feared to have died in the fires.

Three out of five areas that support "significant numbers of koalas" have been hit by bushfires in the Blue Mountains, conservation group Science for Wildlife said.

"These koalas are hard to find and catch, we wish could have saved more but we're glad we could rescue this group," Science for Wildlife director Kellie Leigh said.

The temperature is forecast to heat up this week on Australia's east coast, combining with increased gusts of winds to worsen fire conditions.



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