



## TREE KANGAROOS (Map Ref 38)



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There are only two types of tree kangaroos which are found in Australia. They are the Bennett's and the Lumholtz. They live in a small area of mountainous rainforest in North Queensland. The Goodfellow's Tree Kangaroo on display at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is native to New Guinea.

Tree Kangaroos are like their ground-dwelling cousins in many ways; they have a similar appearance, a pouch, long tails and they give birth to one Joey at a time. However, they are also very different in a number of ways. Tree kangaroo's limbs are almost the same length and they do not have the same elongated feet which other kangaroos have. Instead, they have short, wide feet with rough soles and sharp claws to enable them to grip tree branches. They still have a very long tail; however it is only used for balance, not for grip. Tree Kangaroos sleep during the day time high up in the tree tops where they are protected. As it gets dark, they become active, moving through the tree tops eating fruit, leaves, bark, flowers and vines.

One of the most unique things about Tree Kangaroos is their ability to move each of their limbs independently. This allows the Tree Kangaroo to be able to hop and walk along narrow branches, even walk backwards.

Tree-Kangaroos have very few predators and certainly none which also live in trees. The reason that these unique creatures are now endangered is simply because of people. Their natural habitat is being destroyed by land clearing and they have now been isolated to just a small range.

Q1

Do you think it would be better to live in trees or on the ground? Where would you rather live? Give reasons for your answers.

Q2

What types of adaptations do tree-dwelling animals need?

POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- A POUCH TO TRANSPORT DEPENDENT YOUNG
- LONG TAIL FOR BALANCE
- PREHENSILE TAIL FOR GRIP
- SHARP CLAWS FOR GRIP
- COLOURATION AND PATTERNING SIMILAR TO SURROUNDINGS
- AGILITY & FLEXIBILITY
- POWERFUL LEGS FOR CLIMBING & JUMPING
- OTHER SUGGESTIONS BY STUDENTS

Q2

Look at the 'whorl' down the tree kangaroo's back - the parting of fur. Why do you think they have this? Remember that they live in rainforests.

IT PROVIDES A CHANNEL FOR THE WATER TO RUN DOWN - KIND OF LIKE A BUILT IN DRAIN.

Q3

How can we best conserve these unique animals?

In New Guinea, the Goodfellow's Tree Kangaroo is under even more threat. Can you suggest ways of protecting these animals too?

CONSERVATION OF OUR RAINFORESTS IS REALLY IMPORTANT, SO IS EDUCATING PEOPLE ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF ENDANGERED SPECIES AND WAYS TO PROTECT THE RAINFOREST (USING RECYCLED PRODUCTS, USING RECYCLED TIMBER, PLANT NATIVE TREES ETC) BOTH IN AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS. IN MANY COUNTRIES ECOTOURISM IS NOW MAKING MORE MONEY BY HAVING PEOPLE VISIT ENDANGERED SPECIES IN THEIR OWN HABITAT RATHER THAN THE MONEY GAINED FROM CLEARING RAINFORESTS.