

It is five weeks since the koala was listed as vulnerable in Queensland, NSW and ACT.

In that five week period, more than 400 reports were added to [KoalaTracker.com.au](http://KoalaTracker.com.au), many of those are deaths and injuries dating back several months.

Vulnerable doesn't come close to describing the situation for the koala.

Victoria and South Australia, both deemed to have large populations, are witnessing an accelerated decline in numbers. The koala isn't vulnerable in Queensland; it is *endangered*. It is vulnerable in Victoria and South Australia, which are duplicating the circumstances and outcomes evident in Queensland for a while now.

In south east Queensland, according to hospital data reported to Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) 1997-to-May 2011, nearly 22,000 koalas were brought in for treatment. Of those, 14,634 were either dead or euthanised on arrival. Few koalas stand a chance when meeting cars or dogs.

Many are dead today because we have removed or fragmented habitat, such that they are on the ground too long looking for suitable food trees and crossing busy roads, or because they are sick and unable to get away to safety. The effect on the population is catastrophic. The table below shows the decline in the koala population between Brisbane and Gold Coast, across different habitat categories.

Stratum	Koala abundance 1996-1999 (a)	Koala abundance 2005-2006 (b)	Koala abundance 2008 (c)	% Loss between a and b	% Loss between b and c	Overall % Loss between a and c
Urban	1493	778	547	48	30	63
High density remnant bush	988	474	309	52	35	69
Low density remnant bush	626	191	135	70	29	78
High density bushland	2328	2282	891	2	61	62
Low density bushland	811	886	397	-	55	51
Other	0	0	0	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6246</b>	<b>4611</b>	<b>2279</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>64</b>

Estimated koala abundance per stratum for 1996-1999; 2005-2006; and 2008 survey periods. **From: Decline of the Koala Coast Koala Population: Population Status in 2008, DERM.** (Koala Coast is the coastal area between Brisbane and Gold Coast known for its once large population of koalas)

With some wildlife rescue groups in Queensland and South Australia now using [KoalaTracker.com.au](http://KoalaTracker.com.au) to map their sometimes gruesome work, we are building a national public record of population location intelligence and points of risk. Our new map is vivid in its graphic evidence of where, what, how.

You can search the database on keyword sckwr (to see the work of brothers Ray and Murray Chambers of Sunshine Coast Koala Wildlife Rescue), or fsa (to see the past year's effort by Fauna South Australia). Or just go straight to the map and click any of the red or yellow markers to learn more.

**It is through the mapping of this information that [KoalaTracker.com.au](http://KoalaTracker.com.au) empowers the community in koala conservation advocacy, showing the actual locations and causes of deaths and injuries.**

It is more important than ever that all sightings and especially death and injury data from rescue groups is added to the [KoalaTracker.com.au](http://KoalaTracker.com.au) database to prove specific impacts; to show koala movements across urban environments; to show habitat where the government believes there is none; to enable effective council and community risk mitigation; to better plan development; to know to look out for koalas on roads at night; to know volunteers are needed on the ground after bushfires, and to understand the damage we do.

While the map presents a disturbing pattern of red and yellow markers, reading the dispassionate record of "hit by car, euthanised", hides the heartbreak confronting rescuers at all hours of the day and night. These are the unsung heroes of koala conservation. *The only heroes.*

National Geographic caused a media stir with its image of a dozen dead koalas on a tarp - the death toll for the week in just one vet clinic. With National Geographic's permission, I have included this in a photo album now in the member zone of [KoalaTracker.com.au](http://KoalaTracker.com.au), created with the help of new member and Victorian wildlife rescuer, Manfred Zabinkas. This album, called Loss, shares just a little of what our wildlife rescuers see in the course of their work.

We need to see it too. Disease isn't the biggest killer of koalas. We are.

Log in to [www.koalatracker.com.au](http://www.koalatracker.com.au) from the home page (top right). On the Members page click View Photos. Click the single image to open the gallery.

**Please support your local koala or wildlife rescue organisation. Ask them to put their work on the public record at [KoalaTracker.com.au](http://KoalaTracker.com.au), Australia's national crowdsourced koala map.**

Every sighting counts. Tell your friends.

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