

Koala search guide for farm forestry

This factsheet provides guidance for landholders with Private Native Forestry (PNF) plans and forest operators to assist with searching for and protecting koalas.

Managing koalas in forestry operations

The NSW Private Native Forestry Codes of Practice (PNF Codes) contain important protections for koala habitat and populations. All landowners and harvest operators are required to understand the PNF Codes and how the koala prescriptions apply to their forestry operations. Where a record of a koala or mapped high suitability habitat occurs, or where scats are found under a primary or secondary feed tree consistent with the PNF Code, each tree must be visually checked for koalas before felling.

Koalas may be found in a variety of tree species and forest types so it is important that landholders and harvest operators are aware of how to search for a koala or signs of a koala before undertaking harvesting operations.

Search guide

If a koala or site evidence is found (such as scats or recent scratches on trees), you must ensure the requirements of the PNF Codes of Practice are implemented as part of your forest operations, including any amendments to your Forest Management Plan.

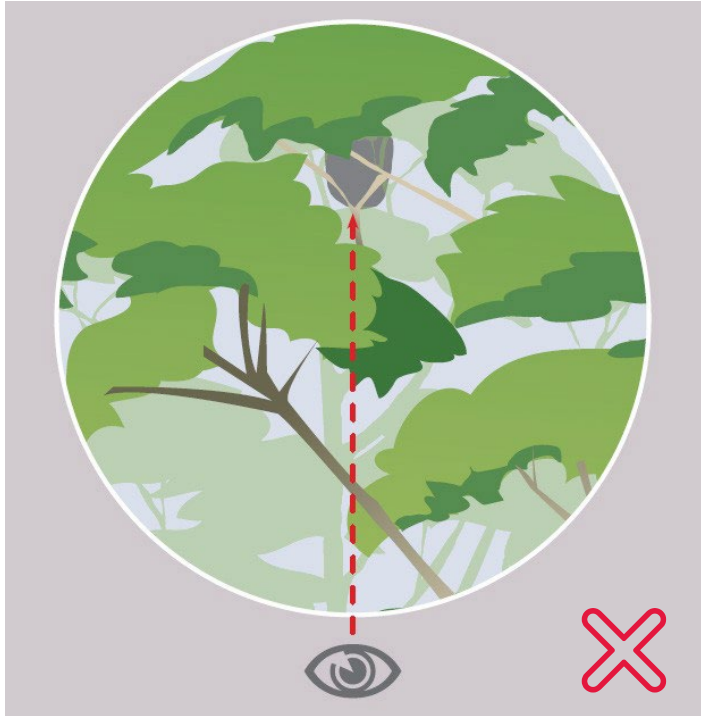
1. Conduct a thorough search, remembering that koalas are very difficult to spot.

Koalas can be difficult to see high in the canopy so continue to scan and search throughout operations.



2. Constantly scan surroundings. Don't concentrate just on the immediate tree

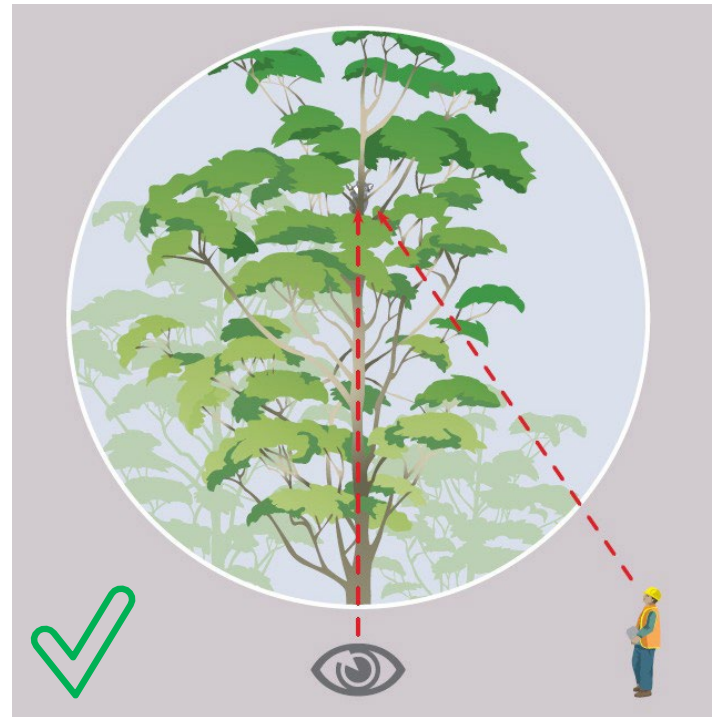
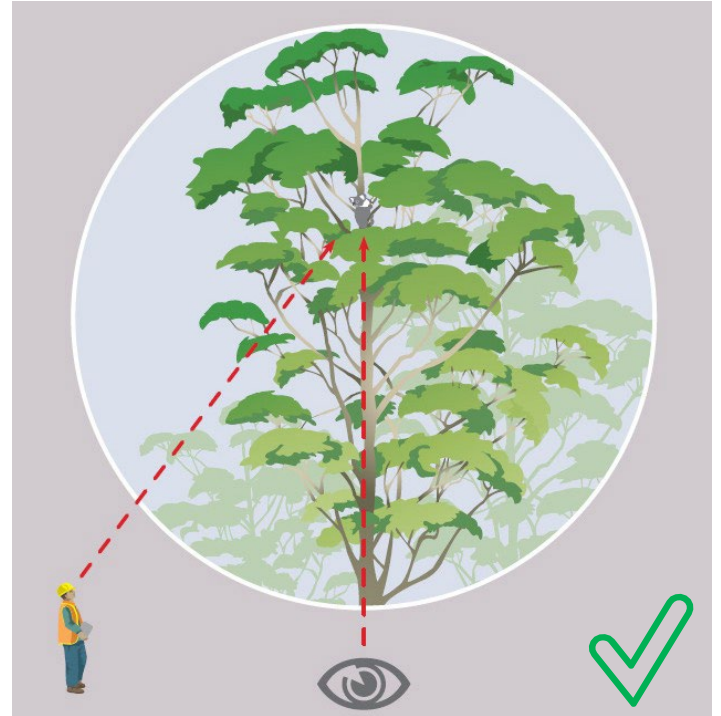
Visibility changes as you harvest trees and move through the forest. Constantly scan the canopy, forest floor and surrounds.



3. Check from a distance – better angle, less obscured

Koalas are harder to spot from directly below as there may be foliage below the koala.

It is often easier to spot koalas when you are looking at the canopy as you approach an area of forest or from a distance.



4. Look down, as well as up

Look down at the ground and at the trunks of the trees whilst walking through the forest. Check at the base of trees for scats, and check the trunks of the tree for recent scratches which indicate that a koala is or has been using the tree.

5. Where koalas are found

If you find a koala, koala scats or recent koala scratches on a tree during your koala search, refer to the relevant PNF Code to determine the appropriate exclusion zone required around that tree.

Don't forget to record any new koala sighting or site evidence within your Forest Management Plan.

We're here to help

Find us online: www.lls.nsw.gov.au

Call us: 1300 795 299 and ask for an officer to advise you on farm forestry.

Email us: pnf.info@nsw.gov.au

See us: drop into your nearest Local Land Services office.



Caption: koala scats (first image) and recent koala scratches (second and third image) are signs that a koala is or has been using a tree.

Note: This factsheet is a guide only and does not replace the Koala prescriptions outlined in the PNF Code under Appendix A: Listed species ecological prescriptions.

Koala care response plan

Triage

If you see a koala at any time:

STOP operations near the koala.

PROTECT the koala by establishing an exclusion zone around the koala. Do not attempt to move the koala.

ASSESS the koala to determine if it needs veterinary assistance.

RECORD the koala sighting in your Forest Management Plan.

SEARCH the exclusion zone and immediate area beyond the exclusion zone for any further koalas or evidence of koalas such as scats and recent scratches.

Assessing the koala

If the koala:

- has no visible injuries
- is moving around normally
- is small cat sized or bigger.

It does not need assistance

If the koala:

- has weeping eyes
- has a brown stain on bottom
- is not placing weight on limb(s)
- is in poor body condition
- is displaying unusual behaviour (e.g. restricted movement, unusual posture)
- is smaller than 6-week old kitten.

It needs assistance. Follow the koala care response plan to assist in obtaining immediate veterinary care.

Caring for and transporting sick or injured koala

Step 1

If a koala needs assistance, immediately call your nearest wildlife care organisation or koala hospital.

Step 2

Follow care group guidance for the management of the koala.

If directed to transport a koala, the following may assist:

- place a blanket over the koala.
- if available, prepare a holding container that has adequate ventilation, allows easy access to get the koala in and out, and has enough space so the koala can sit up.
- line the bottom of the container with towels or blanket
- move the koala into the container and place gum leaves in with it to reduce stress.
- keep the area quiet and shaded.
- transport the koala directly to a koala care group or veterinary hospital.
- do not show the koala to other people as this is stressful for the animal.

