

# Where's the Joey?

A Reading A-Z Level J Leveled Book

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Where's the Joey?



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Front cover: A female kangaroo checking on her baby

Back cover: A female red kangaroo and her growing joey

Title page: A female red-necked wallaby in Queensland, Australia

Table of contents: The opossum is the only marsupial that lives in North America.

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A two-week-old red kangaroo joey drinks milk while safe in its mom's pouch.

## What's a Joey?

A **joey** is a baby **marsupial** (mar-SOO-pee-ul). A marsupial is an unusual type of animal. Its babies are carried in a **pouch**, or pocket, on the mother's belly. As it grows, the little joey stays hidden inside the pouch.



A red-necked wallaby and her joey. Many wallabies are named for where they live, such as the brush or rock wallabies. Others are named for their color or markings.

Safe inside, the tiny joey drinks milk and grows while it is carried around. Even after it can walk, the joey may still ride in mom's pouch.



Australia is not connected to any other continent by land. Over time, many animals that live there became different from other animals in the world.

There are over three hundred types of marsupials. Most of them live in **Australia** (aw-STRAYL-yuh) and eat plants. Let's look at a few kinds of marsupials and their joeys.





## A Jumping Joey

This joey stays in its mother's pouch for eight months while it grows very tall. Its feet and tail grow very long, too. Can you guess what it is?



A female red kangaroo and her joey. Red kangaroos live across the vast plains of Australia.

It's a red kangaroo!

A red kangaroo is the largest marsupial. It can stand over six feet tall and weigh 200 lbs (91 kg). It can jump 30 feet (9 m) with each leap!



## A Joey That Lives in a Tree

When grown, this little joey will look like a furry teddy bear with big ears. It will live most of its life sitting in trees and eating leaves. Can you guess what it is?



Koalas do not make ground nests or burrows. They eat, sleep, and raise their families in trees.

It's a koala!

A koala lives, eats, and sleeps in eucalyptus (yoo-kuh-LIP-tus) trees. It is happy just to sit and eat lots of leaves every day. A koala usually only walks around at night.





## Joey the Screamer

This marsupial mom might carry three or four noisy joeys in her pouch at one time. Her little joeys can scream very loudly. What are they?



Tasmanian devils are in danger of dying off because of disease and hunters.

They are Tasmanian devils!

The Tasmanian devil gets its name from its loud screams, sharp teeth, bad smell, and wild look. It is a meat-eater, and lives only on the island of **Tasmania** (taz-MAY-nee-uh).



Eastern gray kangaroo



Common wombat

### Do You Know?

All marsupial pouches are not the same. A kangaroo's pouch opens sideways across the front of its mother. Digging marsupials, such as wombats, koalas, and Tasmanian devils, all have pouches that open towards the rear of the mother. The rear-facing pouch protects the baby from flying dirt or tree bark when the mother is digging.



This model shows what a Tasmanian tiger looked like. The last known Tasmanian tiger died in a zoo in 1936.

## Protecting the Marsupials

Most marsupials eat plants, and many, like the koala, live quietly in forests. When those forests are cut down, their homes, food, and safety are lost. Other marsupials have lost their sources of food to herds of grazing cows or growing cities.





## Marsupials Are Special Animals

Most marsupials and their joeys live in only one place on Earth. We need to protect their special **habitats** and food sources—so we will always know where the joeys are.

### Learn More About Marsupials

Australian marsupials look different from most animals—and they have unusual names, too.

Bandicoot	Bilby	Numbat	Quokka
Bettong	Dibbler	Quoll	Sugar Glider

## Glossary

- Australia** (*n.*) an island country and continent in the South Pacific Ocean (p. 6)
- habitat** (*n.*) the natural environment of a plant or animal (p. 15)
- joey** (*n.*) a young marsupial such as a kangaroo, wallaby, koala, or opossum (p. 4)
- marsupial** (*n.*) a mammal whose young are born very immature and continue to develop in the mother's pouch (p. 4)
- pouch** (*n.*) an area of an animal's body, shaped like a pocket, for carrying something (p. 4)
- Tasmania** (*n.*) a state of Australia made up of many islands; an island southeast of the continent of Australia (p. 12)