

Living with Kangaroos (*Yonga*) Information Sheet



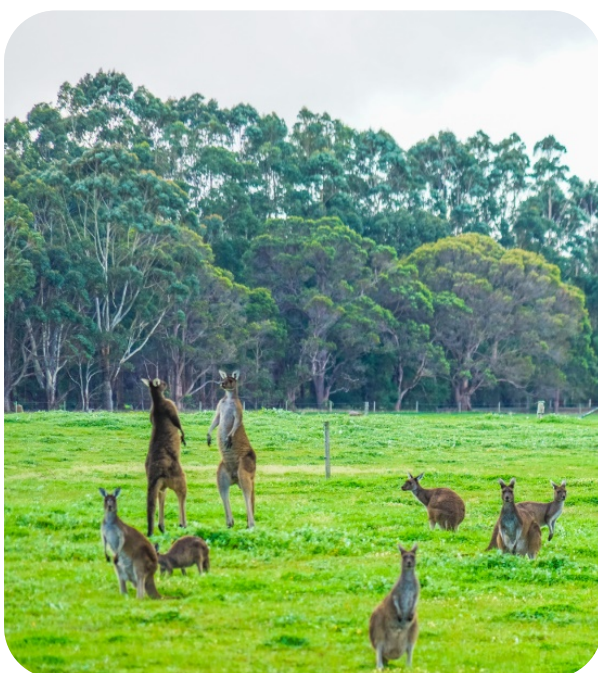
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Yonga is the traditional name for the western grey kangaroo of the Wadandi (saltwater people) of the Dworden wongie – Aboriginal people of the south west boodjara (country) in WA.

We are lucky to live in the south west and be surrounded by a diverse and unique natural environment. Margaret River falls within the Southwest Australia Ecoregion, which is one of 36 internationally recognised biodiversity hotspots and is one of only two in Australia. This recognises the high species diversity we have for both plants and animals in the south west, including within the Margaret River region. Take some time to observe and listen. Drive with care in order to avoid our native wildlife.

Kangaroos are our largest and most visible native animal in the region. They provide many benefits to local residents; they help to maintain grasses, they provide good fertiliser for gardens, and they help to maintain a healthy ecosystem. As Australian native wildlife, kangaroos are a protected species under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and associated regulations.

Living alongside kangaroos offers many important opportunities to experience native wildlife, but can sometimes cause problems too. This information sheet provides tips on co-existing with our local kangaroos.



Living with kangaroos

Local kangaroo populations have increased rapidly in some of our rural and rural residential areas, with lawns, water sources and shady areas providing ideal living conditions for kangaroos. Areas with large kangaroo populations can experience issues such as damage to gardens and fences, impacts to revegetated areas, vehicle collisions, and kangaroos becoming aggressive towards people and domestic pets.

Residents can take a number of actions to reduce the impacts of kangaroos on their property, while also helping to protect local kangaroo populations.

Fencing

Fencing around property boundaries can pose a risk to kangaroos by forcing kangaroos onto road verges, increasing the risk of vehicle collision, separating mothers and joeys, and limiting kangaroo movement and grazing space. In rural residential areas, planning approval is required to install any property boundary fences.

Where possible, it is preferable to fence the building envelope only (e.g. buildings, gardens, and newly planted areas). This allows free movement by kangaroos and other wildlife through grassed areas or vegetation corridors, allowing them access to neighbouring areas, natural water sources, and trees and shady areas. It also helps kangaroos to disperse and avoid mob-clustering, making living in harmony with kangaroos easier.

Fencing building envelopes rather than property boundaries also has the added benefit of improving accessibility for fire suppression activities.



Planting

Native trees and shrubs can be planted as an alternative to fencing as a way of defining your property boundaries, with many positive benefits. Native plants will enhance the local amenity, provide habitat and food for wildlife, and if planted around property perimeters can create wildlife corridors.

The use of bushfire retardant plants can provide protection closer to homes, and can be fenced to provide a yard to enclose the building envelope.

Local nurseries are well stocked with native species suitable for planting on your property, and have expert knowledge to draw on.

When planting young trees or shrubs, it is necessary to protect the plants with strong tree guards so that kangaroos are not tempted to feed on new growth. Kangaroos can easily knock over tree guards that are not well secured. Group and individual plantings can be temporarily fenced or netted. Some residents have chosen to establish netted orchards that protect fruit but allow wildlife movement around them. Talk with your local nursery suppliers, or your neighbours who have established plantings.

Staying safe around kangaroos

Kangaroos are mostly docile but can be unpredictable when they feel threatened. Do not walk directly towards a kangaroo, or go near kangaroos expressing dominating behaviour. Keep watch of your pets and try to keep dogs from approaching kangaroos. Never feed kangaroos, and limit any food and artificial water sources around your home.

If kangaroos pose a danger to humans or are causing economic damage to property, agricultural activity or infrastructure, further action may be necessary. Contact the Parks and Wildlife Service at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (Busselton Office) for assistance, on 9752 5555 or blackwood@dbca.wa.gov.au.

Driving

Be aware that kangaroos may cross roads at any time. Always be alert for wildlife feeding near the roadside and take particular care at dusk and dawn when kangaroos are active and lighting is poor.



Dealing with sick or injured kangaroos

The Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for the protection of native wildlife, including kangaroos.

Injured or sick kangaroos can be reported through the Wildcare Helpline (9474 9055) and where possible Parks and Wildlife Service or registered volunteers will be able to provide advice and may assist.

Please note that an animal that dies on your property is your responsibility for disposal; Parks and Wildlife Service and the Shire of Augusta Margaret River are not obliged to assist.

Other sick or injured wildlife assistance:

Wildcare Helpline provides advice for people who have found sick or injured native wildlife in WA. The helpline can be contacted on ph. 9474 9055. You can also download the Wildcare Helpline app for mobile phones.



FAWNA provides rescue and rehabilitation service for injured wildlife by registered volunteer rehabilitators, and can be contacted on ph. 0438 526 660, or at www.fawna.com.au.

Local vets can provide care for injured native wildlife if you are unable to contact the above organisations for advice. If you are able to safely and carefully capture and transport injured native wildlife to a local vets, they will be able to assist free of charge. The two local vet hospitals in Margaret River are Cape Creatures Vet Hospital on ph. 9757 9700, and Margaret River Vet Hospital on ph. 9757 2163.

Find out more about protecting local wildlife

Taking steps to protect local kangaroo populations has the added benefit of protecting our other local wildlife. Nature Conservation Margaret River Region has prepared a range of resources on how you can protect local wildlife and enhance habitat on your property. Go to the following links for further information on helping nature on your property and in your garden.

<https://www.natureconservation.org.au/get-involved/help-nature-on-your-property/>

<https://www.natureconservation.org.au/get-involved/help-nature-in-your-garden/>



Wadandi Traditional Information on Yonga

We acknowledge that this intellectual property belongs to Pibulmun Wadandi Yunungjarli Elder, Wayne Webb.

Yonga is the traditional name for the western grey kangaroo of the Wadandi (saltwater people) of the Dworden wongie (local dialect) – Aboriginal people of the south west boodjara (country) in WA.

Yonga is our dwordenup (totem).

It's our responsibility to protect and manage this animal as it is our moort (family). For this reason, we only take 2-year old yonga for food and its spirit is sung; thanking it for giving its life to provide our mob with food.

We don't usually eat our totem as it's our family, however we can provide to other families when we gather for ceremony or if it is offered to us in exchange for other merange (fruits/vegetables) or gilgit dartja (fish/meat).

Wadandi Terminology

General term for any kangaroo - *Yungore'e*

Male kangaroo - *Yonga/Yongaa/Yongka.*

Female kangaroo - *Woorra/ Worra.*

Joey - *Duttinge/Dutdinge.*

Kangaroo skin cloak/ clothing - *Booka/Bookah*

Men wear seven *Yonga moba/mobaa* (skins) sewn together.

Women wear five *Woorra moba* female kangaroo skins sewn together.

Kangaroo skin bag - *Koota/Kootah.*

Shoes (foot clothing) - *Djennabooka.*

Acknowledgements

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