

Kangaroos belong to the family of animals known as macropods, which means 'big foot'.

There are about 50 species of macropods, which include: kangaroos, wallabies, wallaroos, pademelons, tree-kangaroos, quokka, bettongs, potoroos and rat-kangaroos. The red kangaroo is the largest species.

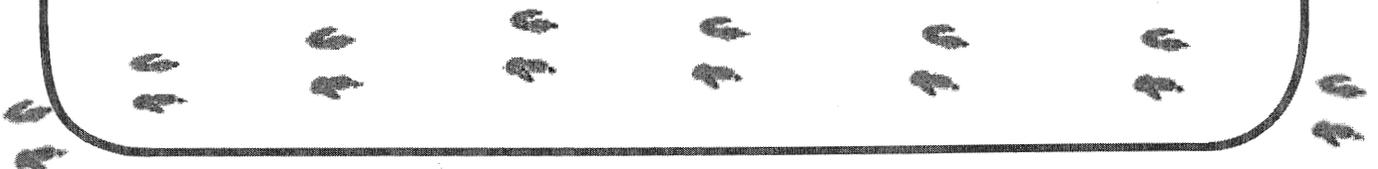
Macropods live in all parts of Australia and some species of tree-kangaroos and forest wallabies live north of Australia in Papua New Guinea.

What is a kangaroo? The word 'kangaroo' was first recorded in the journals of Captain Cook after meeting with the Guugu Yimithirr people at Endeavour River, Queensland in 1770. When a kangaroo bounded past he asked what it was. The answer, 'gangurru' was written as 'kangaroo'.

Kangaroos are mammals and marsupials with forward-facing pouches. They give birth to tiny young, which are raised in the pouch for several months. They vary in size and colour and live in different habitats but they all have features in common. They have long, powerful hind legs, long feet and short forearms. They also have a long muscular tail, which they use for balance when moving slowly.

### FAST FACTS

The word 'kangaroo' was first recorded in 1770 and comes from an Aboriginal word 'gangurru'.





## WHAT IS A KANGAROO? 2

Kangaroos have a strong sense of family bonds. They have been known to care for animals in the mob that are sick or hurt. An adult kangaroo was observed trying to encourage young animals through a hole in the fence to escape being killed.

The bond between a mother and her young is very strong. They communicate with coughs and croaks. A mother kangaroo will call her young if it strays away from her or a lost joey will communicate by making a coughing sound to alert its mother.

Kangaroos have very good sight and hearing. Even when they are eating they watch and listen for danger, their long ears constantly swivelling, picking up any sound that might signal danger. When danger threatens, they thump the ground to alert the mob.

Usually, kangaroos are active in the early morning and evening hours, resting during the heat of the day. They are herbivores, grazing and browsing on grasses and small shrubs. They need little water as they obtain moisture from the grasses they eat.

Kangaroos are unique to Australia.

### FAST FACTS

There are around 50 species of macropods. Six species have become extinct since European settlement and a number of species are threatened.

