

Red Kangaroo

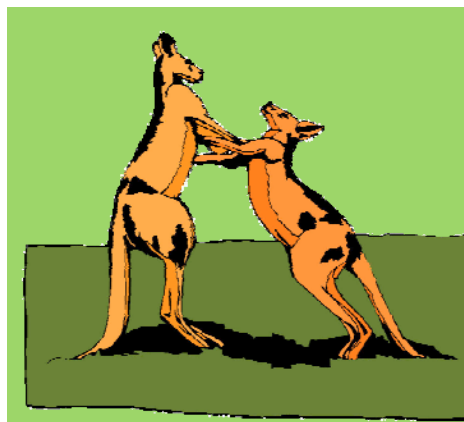
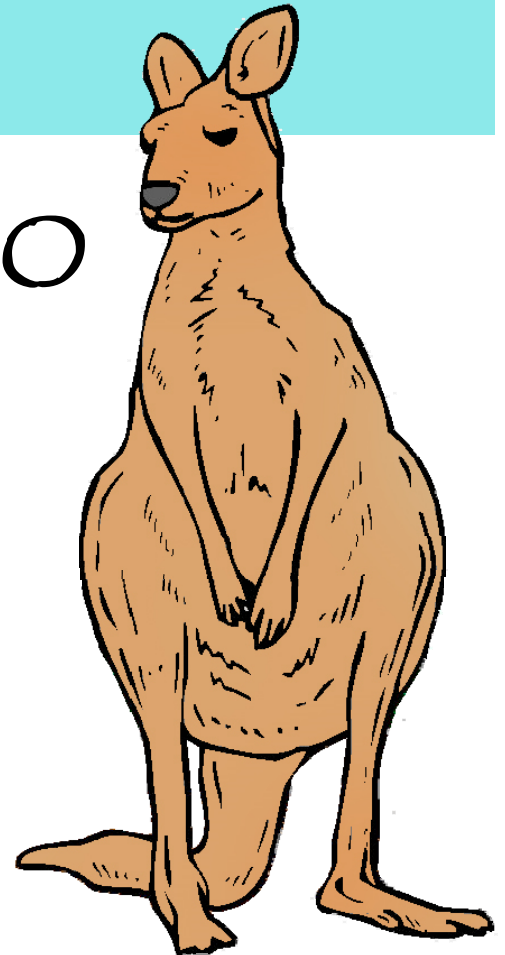
English Name: Red Kangaroo

Scientific Name: *Macropus rufus*

Irish Name: Cangarú rua

Kangaroos are considered a pest by many in Australia, where they are hunted for their meat and skin. Their only predators are humans and dingos, a type of wild dog. They live in groups of 2-10 but can be seen in larger groups at waterholes. They belong to a large family of animals, which includes kangaroos, wallabies and rat kangaroos.

Kangaroos forage at night and will move up to 200 km from their usual grazing area to find water. They have great sense of smell which they use for detecting water. Of all the species of kangaroo, the Red Kangaroo is the largest and is also Australia's largest land mammal. Having a very long powerful tail and large hind legs and feet, makes the rest of the kangaroo's body look small. Its forelegs are small in comparison and it has a thin neck and small head, with upright ears. All of its body is covered in a furry coat.



Fighting Fit

The scientific name for a kangaroo gives a clue to one of its features. *Macropus* means "big foot". It is the largest animal to hop on both feet.

Kangaroos stand on their powerful hind legs when they play or fight with other kangaroos. They also have a powerful kick.

Family

The kangaroo is a marsupial. A marsupial is a type of mammal that is not completely developed when born, so the mother will carry it in a special pouch on her body until it can survive on its own.



Female kangaroos only have young when they know there will be enough water to produce enough food.

The baby kangaroo is about the size of a jellybean when born. It will spend about 6 months in the pouch, where it will suckle and sleep, before venturing outside for short periods of times. When the joey eventually leaves the pouch for good, it will continue to suckle until it is about a year old.

A **male** is called a buck or boomer; a **female** is a doe or flyer and a **baby** is a joey.

A **group** of kangaroos is called a mob, troop or court.

FACT FILE

Height: 75—120 cm. Males can be twice the size of females.

Weight: 25-90 kg.

Colour: Males—orange-red; females—blue-grey.

Food: Grass shoots, herbs & leaves.

Habitat: Open savanna woodland.

Distribution: Throughout much of Australia.

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