

WALKING WITH THE WALLAROOS

Welcome to the Wallaroo Walkabout at the Louisville Zoo

By Steve Wing,
General Animal
Curator

Promotional
campaign
presented by

meijer

Located just past Lorikeet Landing, our newest interactive experience is set to open in June. The Zoo staff spent the winter enlarging and renovating our existing wallaroo habitat, creating a walk-through encounter for visitors and animals alike.

The Wallaroo Walkabout is designed to appear much like the natural habitat of wallaroos and wallabies. The Zoo's horticulture staff planted trees, shrubs, and bushes similar to those found in the wet and dry forests of eastern Australia, while taking into consideration the climate here in Louisville. Wallabies use the plant life for browse, as well as protection, so the plants used must be safe for consumption. The end result is a spacious, beautifully planted exhibit that takes the visitor to the eastern area of the Australian continent.

You Say Kangaroo, I say Wallaby

The term kangaroo and wallaby are essentially interchangeable, with kangaroo referring to the larger species in the family and wallaby referring to the smaller. To make things even more interesting, there are three species referred to as wallaroos, which are some of the larger species.

Pouch Life

One of the most interesting traits of marsupials (pouched mammals) is the extremely short gestation period, which is typically 34-38 days (humans average about 270 days and elephants, around 660 days!). The newborn "joey" exits the birth canal and travels up its mother's belly, climbs into her pouch, and attaches directly to a teat. The youngster will not come out of the pouch permanently until it is six and a half or seven months old. The "joey" will continue to stick its head back into the pouch to nurse and will be completely weaned at around 10 months.



Yellow-footed rock wallabies

(*Petrogale xanthopus*)

Description: One of the smaller wallabies. Gray with white underparts and cheek stripes.

Yellow patches on the ears, limbs, and tail.

Height: 24 inches.

Weight: 6-20 pounds (about the size of a housecat).

Diet: Grasses, bark and roots.

Range: Australia (eastern South Australia, SW Queensland, and NW New South Wales).

Habitat: Rocky outcrops in forest or grasslands.

Status: Endangered (USFWS).

Red-necked Wallaby*(macropus rufogriseus)*

Description: One of the larger wallabies. Grizzled, medium grey coat with a reddish wash across the shoulders. Black nose and paws with a white stripe on the upper lip.

Height: 30-36 inches.

Weight: 35-45 pounds.

Diet: Grasses.

Range: Eastern Australia and Tasmania.

Habitat: Coastal scrub and bushland.

Kookaburra*(dacelo novaeguineae)*

Description: The largest kingfisher in the world. Back and wings are dark brown with gray-blue spots. There is a dark stripe through the eye, and the under parts are white.

Height: 17 inches.

Weight: One pound.

Diet: Insects, fish, crustaceans, small reptiles, and birds.

Range: Eastern Australia.

Habitat: Woodlands and open forest.

**Wallaroo** *(macropus robustus)*

Description: One of the larger species of kangaroo. Shaggy, dark gray coat ranging to almost black in some males.

Height: Males are 40-56 inches, while females are 30-40 inches.

Weight: Males are 50-100 pounds, while females are 40-50 pounds.

Diet: Grasses and shrubs.

Range: Eastern Australia from Victoria to Queensland.

Habitat: Pastures and rocky outcrops.

Emu*(dromaius novaehollandiae)*

Description: The second largest bird in the world. Mostly brown but skin on head and neck often free of feathers and has a bluish tinge.

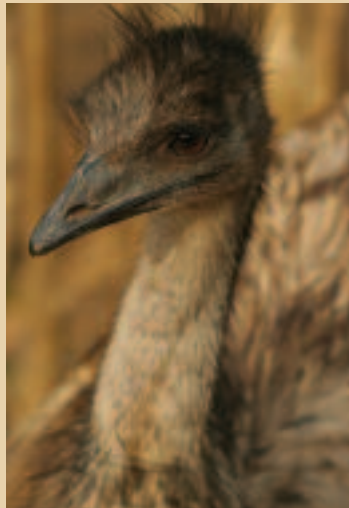
Height: 5-6 feet.

Weight: 90-120 pounds.

Diet: Grasses, herbs, and fruits.

Range: Australia.

Habitat: Grasslands.

**Tawny frogmouth***(podargus strigoides)*

Description: Soft, fluffy feathers resemble its nearest relatives, the owls. Have two color phases, gray and red.

Height: 19 inches.

Weight: One-two pounds.

Diet: Beetles, centipedes, scorpions, mice, and lizards.

Range: Eastern Australia from Queensland to Victoria, Tasmania.

Habitat: Forests.

Photo by Robert D. Kemnitz



While You're in the Australian Area, Don't Miss These Other Attractions

■ Billabong Playabout

Parents can stop and rest while the kids let off some energy in this new play area.

■ Walkabout Café

The perfect place for a delicious snack.

■ Lorikeet Landing

Colorful friendly birds are ready to eat special nectar right from your hand!

■ Australian Express Station

Catch the Zoo Train back to the Front Plaza from our newly renovated station.



Photo by Robert D. Kemnitz