

Why the Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

The following story is based on a traditional Aboriginal Dreamtime story of how the koala came to have a short, stumpy tail.

Long, long ago in the Dreamtime there lived Koala and Tree Kangaroo. They were the very best of friends. Back then, Koala had a very long, furry tail identical to his friend, Tree Kangaroo.



One year, there was an absence of rain. All of the streams, rivers and lakes were parched and no water was found anywhere. Even the leaves in the trees were dying. "What are we going to do?" asked Koala. "We are going to die if we don't get some water to drink!" Just then, Tree Kangaroo had a plan. He remembered back to the last dry season when his mother excavated a hole in a dry stream bed. "She dug for hours, until water began to fill the bottom of the dry hole," said Tree Kangaroo. "Let's try that!" exclaimed Koala.

So, Tree Kangaroo and Koala walked until they came to a dry stream bed. It was as arid as the desert. Koala said, "I am so thirsty and tired. Before I can start digging, I need to have a rest." So Koala climbed up the closest tree and left Tree Kangaroo to start digging for the water.

After lots of digging, Tree Kangaroo called out to Koala, "Hey Koala, come and help me dig!" Koala began to climb down from the tree until he let out a loud "Ouch!" Koala had got a thorn in his foot. He couldn't possibly dig with a sore foot, so Tree Kangaroo kept on digging and let Koala relax.

Tree Kangaroo was getting incredibly tired after all of his digging. "Koala!" he yelled. "I am so tired and I need a break. It is your turn to come and dig". Koala began to climb down the tree until he called out, "I am so dizzy. I need to rest longer." Tree Kangaroo was beginning to get very angry but he kept on digging regardless.

At last, some water began to appear in the dry hole. "Hooray, I can see water!" yelled Tree Kangaroo. Koala heard this and quickly jumped from the tree. He pushed Tree Kangaroo out of the way, stuck his head down the hole and began drinking all the water.



Why the Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

Tree Kangaroo was furious! "Save some for me," he shouted, but Koala just kept on drinking.

Tree Kangaroo grabbed Koala's tail to pull him out of the hole. He pulled ever so hard until Koala's tail broke off and this is why the koala has a short and stumpy tail.

