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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/133/2021_2022__E8_B5_96_E4_B8_96_E9_9B_84_E9_c96_133237.htm Lesson 18 , Hot Animals Around the World : The Koala 世界热门动物：无尾熊 Why are all those people standing in line in the hot sun at the zoo ? Maybe the zoo just opened a koala exhibit. With the survival rate of native Australian koalas on the rise , more and more zoos around the world are adding a "koala house" or "koala exhibit" to their roster of special animals. And the people keep coming , whether merely to catch a glimpse of one or , if really lucky at zoos which permit it , to hold and be photographed with one. Why are koalas among the most beloved of all animals ? At times referred to as "koala bear" , this Australian marsupial is not a bear at all. It is one of the few tailless mammals beside the apes and man. Yet apes are not often considered cuddly ; indeed , they are often feared for being either too large or too naughty. This Australian real-life teddy bear , instead , is the best of all worlds : it is quiet , soft , neither too large nor too small (adults are usually 65 to 80 cm. long) , and really cuddly ! With its soft fur , leathery nose , rounded ears , and big eyes , most people seem to melt when near one. Its disposition is perfect for children and adults alike ; it rarely makes a fuss , even when being held. (Try that with a baby tiger !) No wonder the lines to see , hold , or just touch the koalas are always among the longest at zoos. One reason zoos today are able to keep koalas is the rise in the koala population in its native habitat , the eucalyptus forests of

southeastern Australia. This nation , famous for its unique fauna and flora , is now allowing applications for the professional export of its protected species to overseas zoological gardens. Once hunted for its fur , this arboreal leaf-eater is today protected by stringent laws and is making a slow but steady comeback. Indeed , everything about the koala seems slow. It sleeps more than 12 hours a day (often much more) , eats only choice leaves from eucalyptus trees (which can now be grown in many zoos to provide the more than one kilogram of leaves that each adult koala needs per day) , and rarely if at all descends to the ground because it is such a slow runner (from wild Australian dogs called dingoes or from human hunters) . As koalas are such a great draw for visitors , many zoos are trying to include them among their species. Mother koalas give birth to babies only every other year. These young ones , as with other marsupials , spend a period of time inside the mothers "pouch" before venturing out into the world. In the case of the koala , this pouch is located below and in back of the mother ; the small koalas can climb out directly from the pouch and onto the mothers back before learning to feed and fend for themselves. With all other marsupials , the pouch is located in the front , perhaps most famously with the kangaroo , where the "joey" can sometimes be seen popping its head out of its soft , warm pouch to survey the world about it safely. Until the 1980s , zoologists feared that the koala might go the way of some other rare marsupials. Just as their eucalyptus habitat was being destroyed to make room for the ever-increasing suburban Australians , diseases peculiar to koalas

began to take their toll. Combined with weak or non-existent laws against the hunting or poaching of this national treasure , the koala seemed doomed to extinction. Today , the koala has climbed back from the brink of extinction and is thriving again. Its main enemy today is forest fires. This slow-moving mammal cannot move quickly enough to escape the deadly fires which perennially ravage the land. With more land being set aside to protect this and other Australian species , however , the future of much of this special lands animal wealth seems secure. All animals deserve mans protection , but some animals seem to attract the attention they need. The koala , one of the symbols of the great Down Under , is one of these. Holding a koala is fun , educational , and inspiring. If Australians could cooperate to save this special species , mankind should be able to preven the extinction of all other animals , too. 100Test 下载频道开通 , 各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com