

Edinburgh Zoo weighs their tiny koala – with the help of a furry friend

When keepers at Edinburgh Zoo wanted to weigh one of their tiny residents they had to get a furry koala toy to help them. The tiny joey Toorie then clung on to the soft fur and he was weighed in at 688g.

Born on 31 January, the youngest addition has now fully emerged and keepers have named him Toorie, an Aboriginal word meaning 'heat'.

✘ The name is particularly fitting with mum Alinga's name meaning 'sun'. Young Toorie has already been playing up to his name, which is also an old Scottish word meaning 'hat', with keepers often seeing him clambering up to sit on her head.

After they are born joeys stay in their mother's pouch for up to nine months to allow them to develop and adapt before exploring the outside world.





Lucy Petrie, Senior Animal Keeper at RZSS Edinburgh Zoo said: "Toorie is doing great and can be seen out of Alinga's pouch most of the time now. He's getting a bit too big to fit in comfortably anymore."

"As Alinga is doing such a great job of raising him, we have been able to take a hands-off approach and let her do her job undisturbed. As he has become more active and independent, we are now able to conduct quick health checks to monitor his progress."

"Getting an accurate weight is important because it allows us to track his development and make sure he's growing steadily. In order to get an accurate weight, we place him onto a pre-weighed koala teddy so that he has a soft, steady surface he can cling on to, which is similar to his mother's hair. It is very exciting to be able to watch him grow and start to become more adventurous."

Alinga will carry the joey around on her back until he is around twelve months old and once he reaches sexual maturity Toorie will become part of the European breeding programme. RZSS Edinburgh Zoo is the only zoo in the UK to have koalas and this new arrival is testament to the Zoo's animal husbandry expertise.

As members of the European Breeding Programme for Queensland Koalas, RZSS Edinburgh Zoo makes regular contributions that support conservation projects in Australia that help to rehabilitate and release sick and injured koalas back into their natural habitat.

Koalas are native to eastern Australia and are currently classified as vulnerable by the IUCN Red List. The main threats facing koala populations are habitat loss, wildfires and climate change.

Photos courtesy of RZSS/Siân Addison.