

Case Study – Koalas:

New approaches to identifying and protecting koalas and their habitat in the draft Coastal IFOA



Current Threatened Species Licence conditions for koalas

Current IFOA provision	Limitations
North	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Koala mark-up searches’ and ‘star searches’ undertaken by FCNSW immediately ahead of operations to identify ‘koala high use areas’. • No requirement to look for koalas in a tree before felling. • Requirement to retain five koala feed trees per hectare in ‘koala intermediate use areas’. • Prohibits Australian Group Selection harvesting practices in ‘koala intermediate use areas’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdated and inefficient survey approach. • Very few ‘koala high use areas’ have been identified – about 14 hectares per year. • ‘Koala high use areas’ retained temporarily. • About 130,000 hectares have been identified as a ‘koala intermediate use area’ – resulting in limited protections for koalas.
South	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Transect’, ‘traverse’, ‘quadrat’ and ‘asterisk/star’ surveys undertaken by FCNSW to identify evidence of koalas. • Koala exclusion zones apply where multiple records of koalas are identified during ‘asterisk’ survey. • Requirement to retain 10 koala feed trees per hectare in compartments with evidence of koalas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of significance for southern koalas were transferred to flora reserve in 2016. • In remaining areas, survey effort has been high but no areas have been identified for koala exclusion zones. • Few compartments required koala tree retention. • Overdue for review, conditions are rigid and do not adequately consider the significance of koala populations in southern NSW.

The case for change

Current koala conditions are costly to implement, utilise outdated survey techniques and are reliant on FCNSW being in the right place at the right time to find evidence of koalas.

They have not delivered an adequate level of protection for koalas.

New koala mapping and approaches to koala management could offer better outcomes for koalas and their habitat in areas subject to native forestry.

Protections should apply based on the potential for koalas and koala habitat to occur – regardless of koalas being present.



Use of maps as a basis for koala conditions in northern coastal IFOA areas

The NSW EPA commissioned koala mapping for north eastern NSW – this mapping was completed in June 2016.

[Koala likelihood map](#)

- Identifies if koalas are likely to occur in an area
- Uses grid of either 5 km or 10 km depending on density of records
- Prepared by the Office of Environment and Heritage

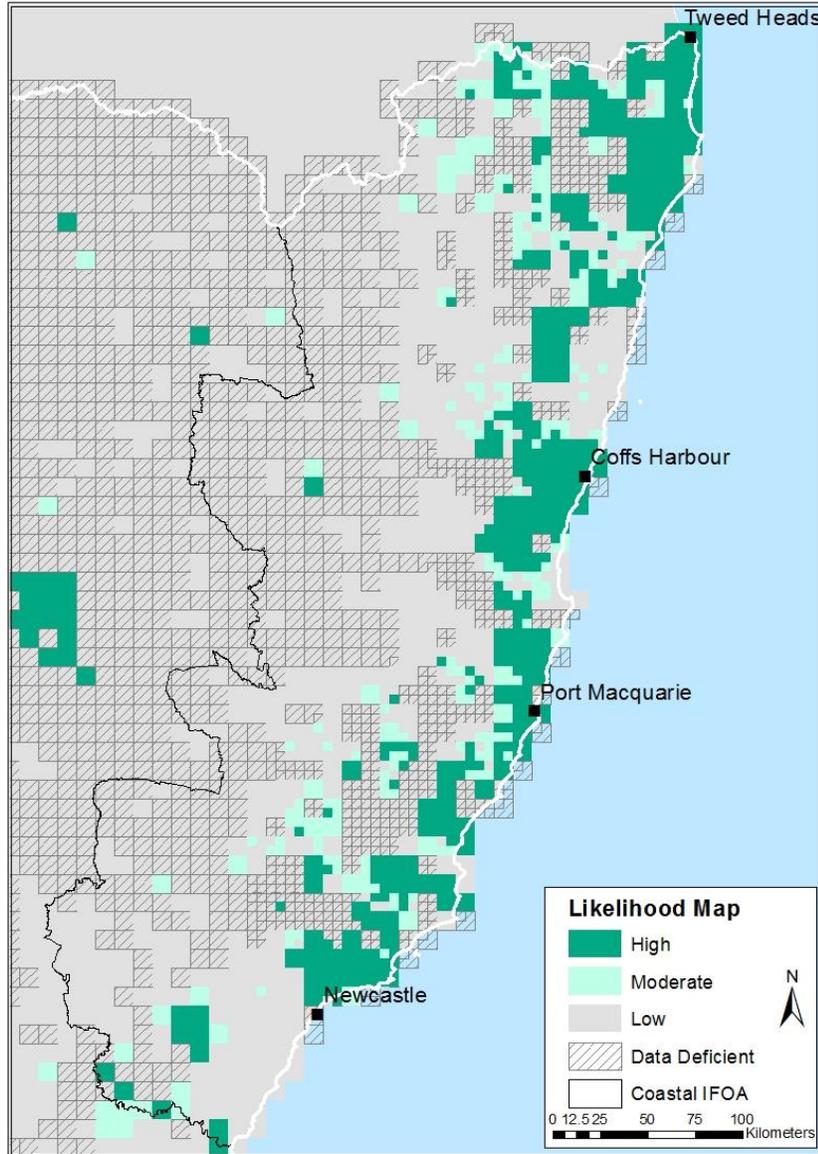
[Koala habitat model](#)

- Identifies the likely quality of koala habitat
- Uses grid of 250 metres
- Prepared by the Department of Primary Industries

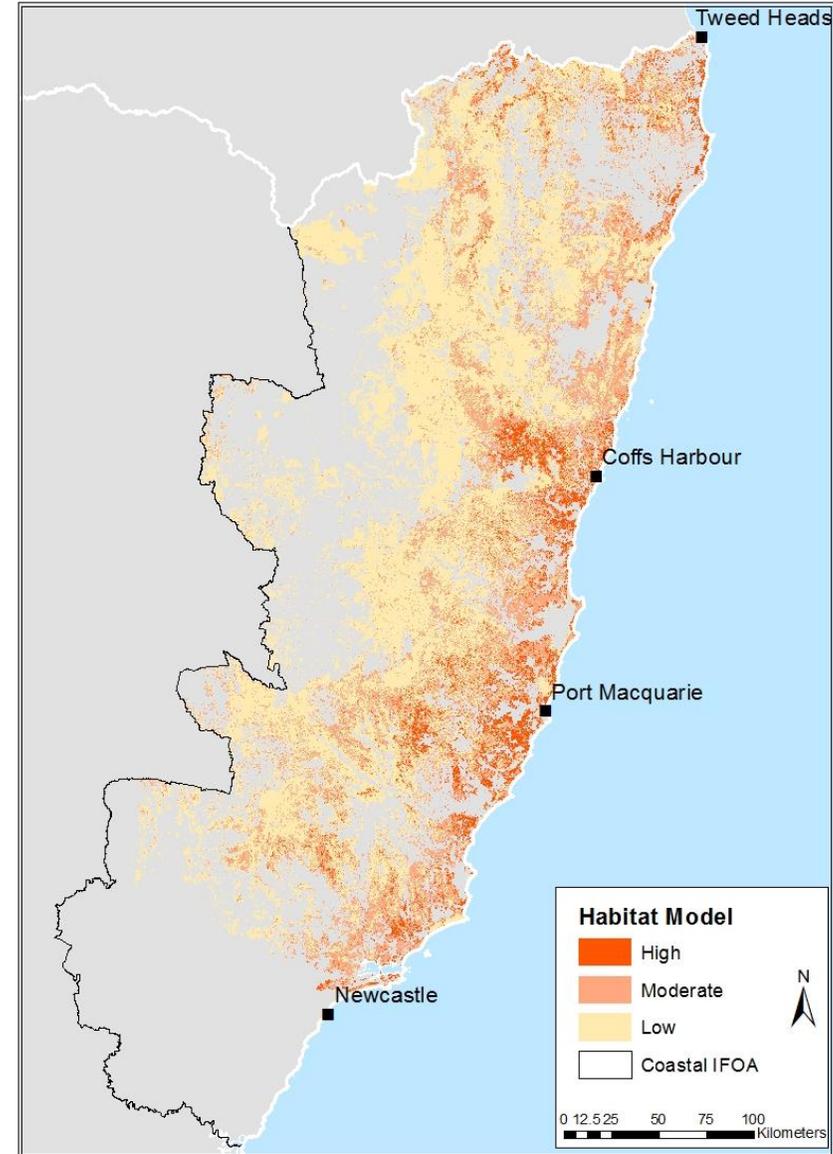
The combination of these two maps provide a good basis to identify the prescriptions required to protect koalas and their habitat.



Koala likelihood map



Koala habitat model



Proposed new koala conditions (north coast)

- The draft Coastal IFOA uses the two koala maps to set protections for koalas.
- Different tree retention rates are prescribed based on the quality of habitat likely to occur.

Koala browse prescription 1:

- At least 10 koala feed trees must be retained per hectare.
- Applies in areas where both the koala habitat model and the koala likelihood map record a **high value**.

Koala browse prescription 2:

- At least 5 koala browse trees must be retained per hectare.
- Applies to a compartment with 25% or more of the harvest area having a combination of **moderate value** for both the koala likelihood map and koala habitat model.
- Applies to all other compartments with contemporary koala records.



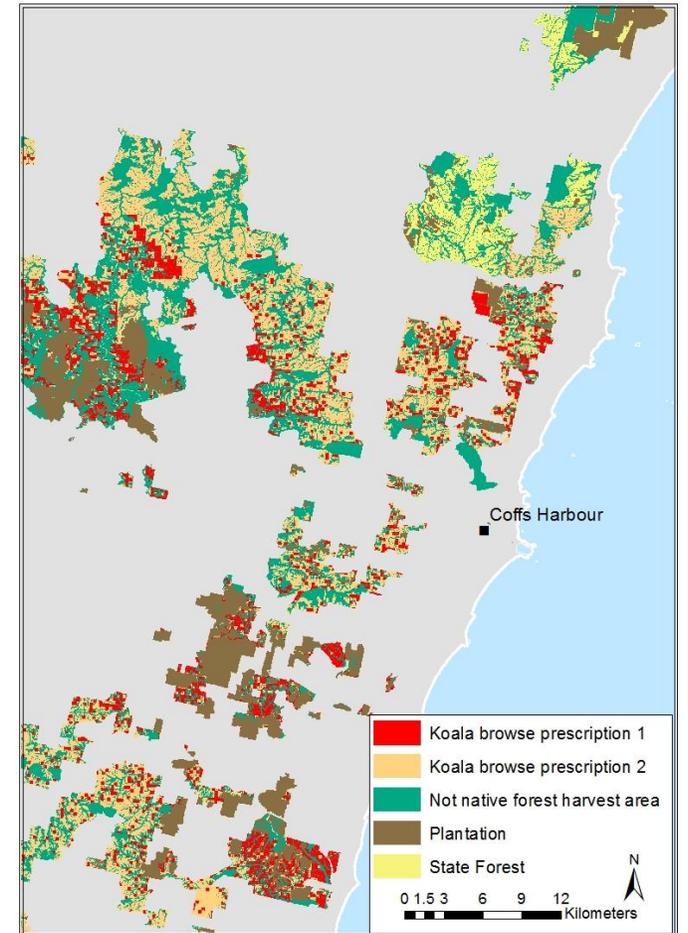
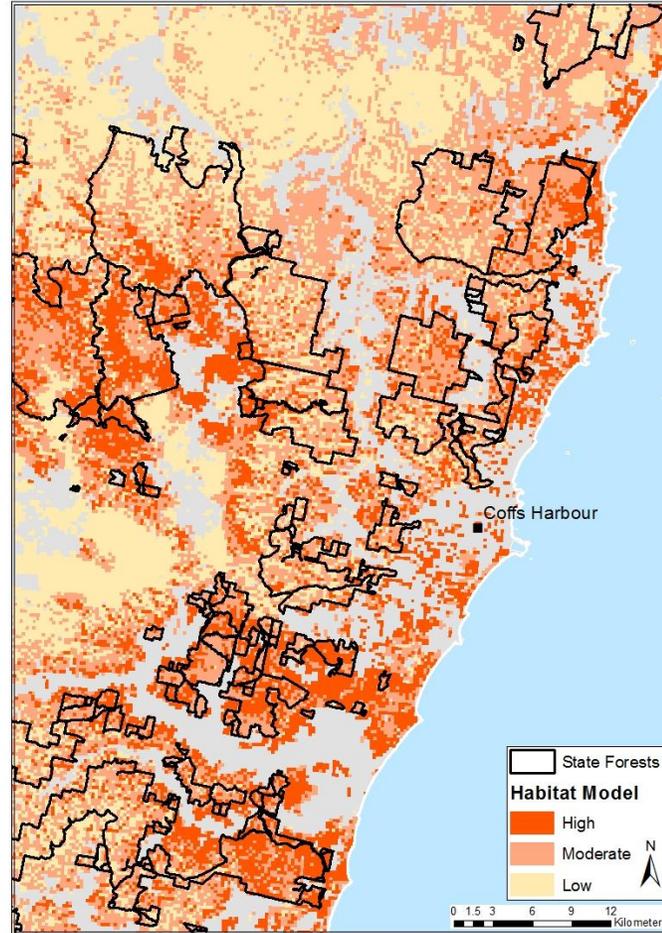
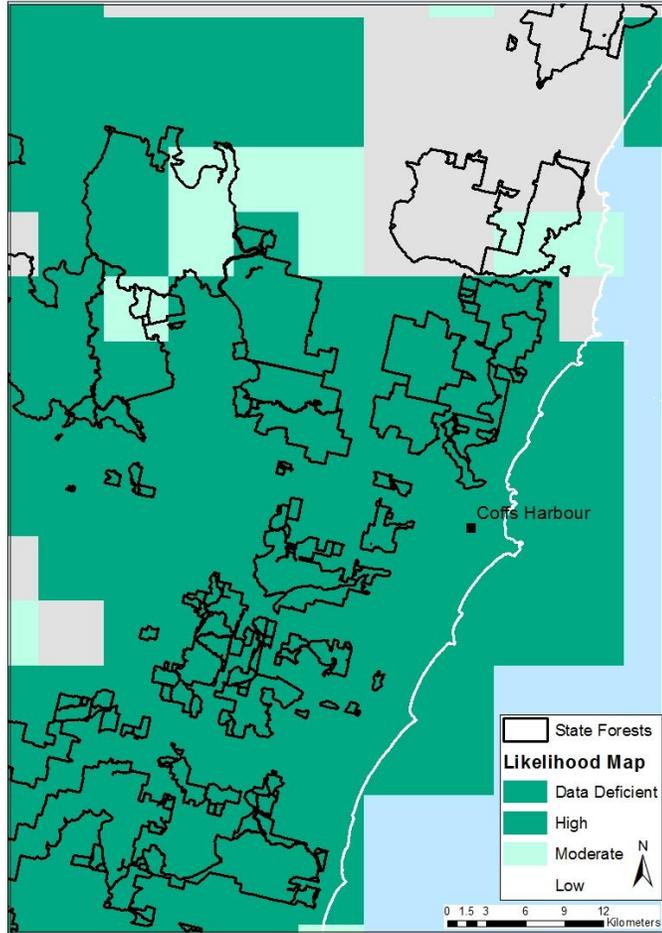
Koala
likelihood map

+

Koala
habitat model



Used to identify
koala browse tree
retention rates



Coffs Harbour area

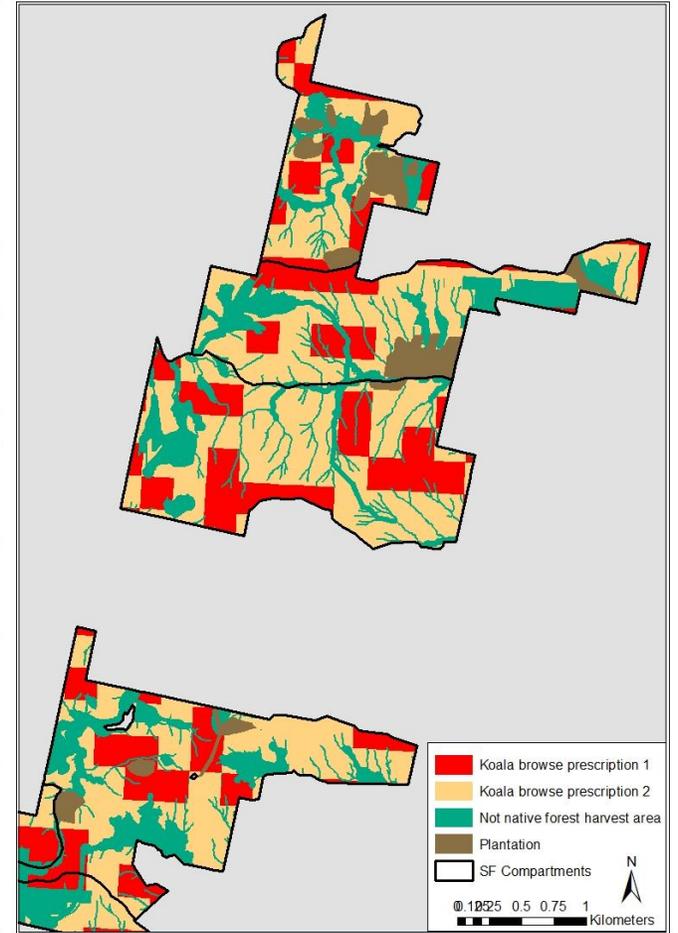
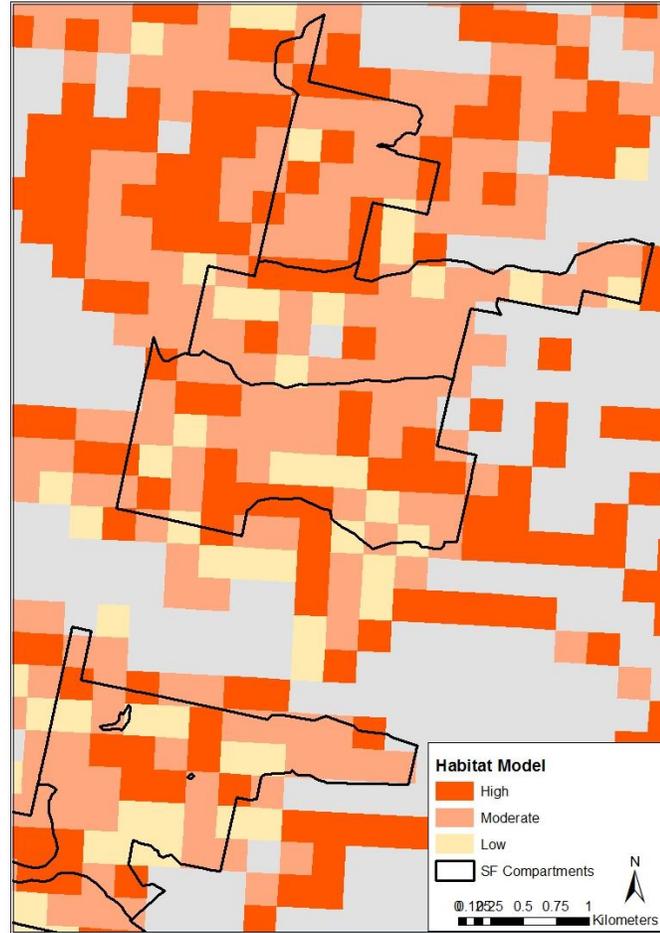
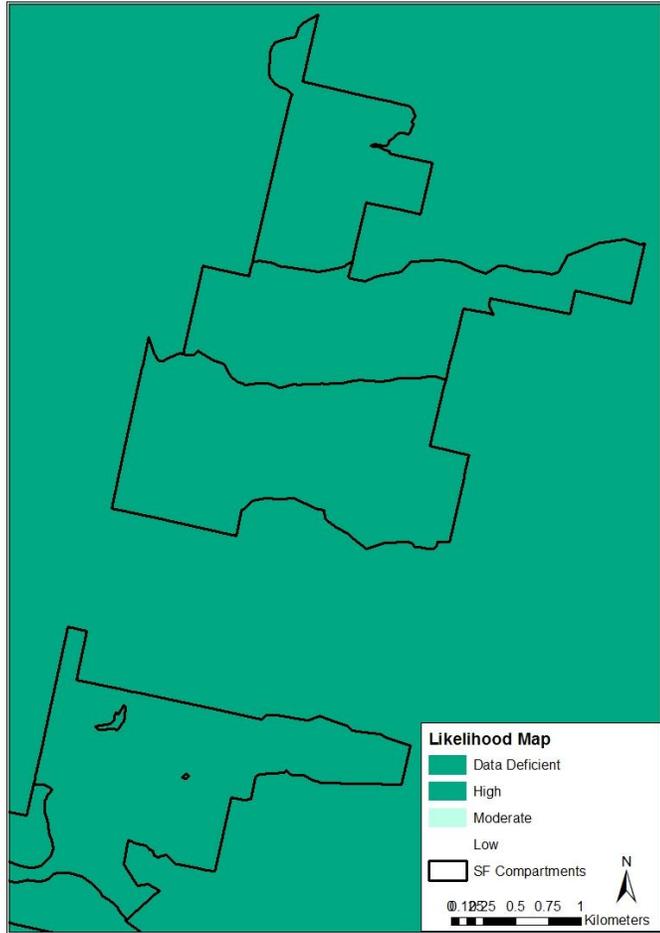
Koala
likelihood map

+

Koala
habitat model



Used to identify
koala browse tree
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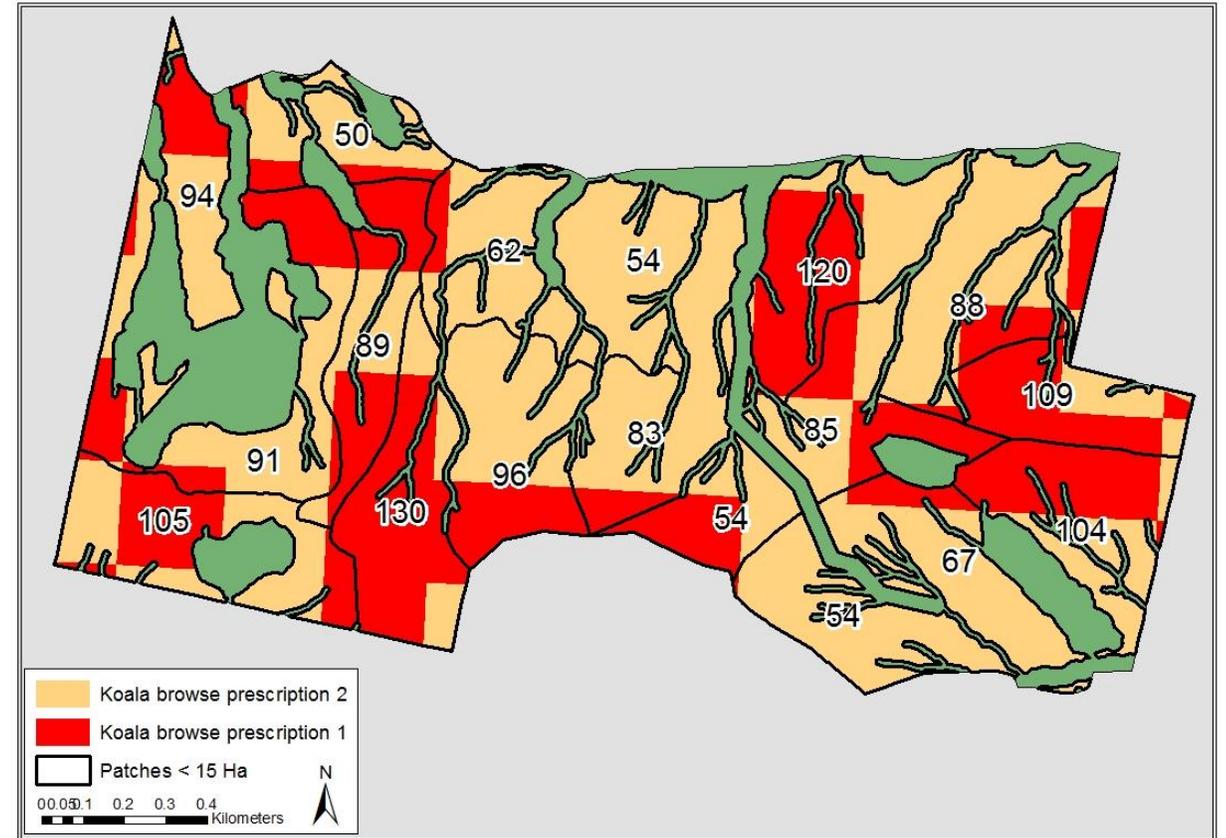
Boambee State Forest

Browse tree retention applies pro rata across 'patches'

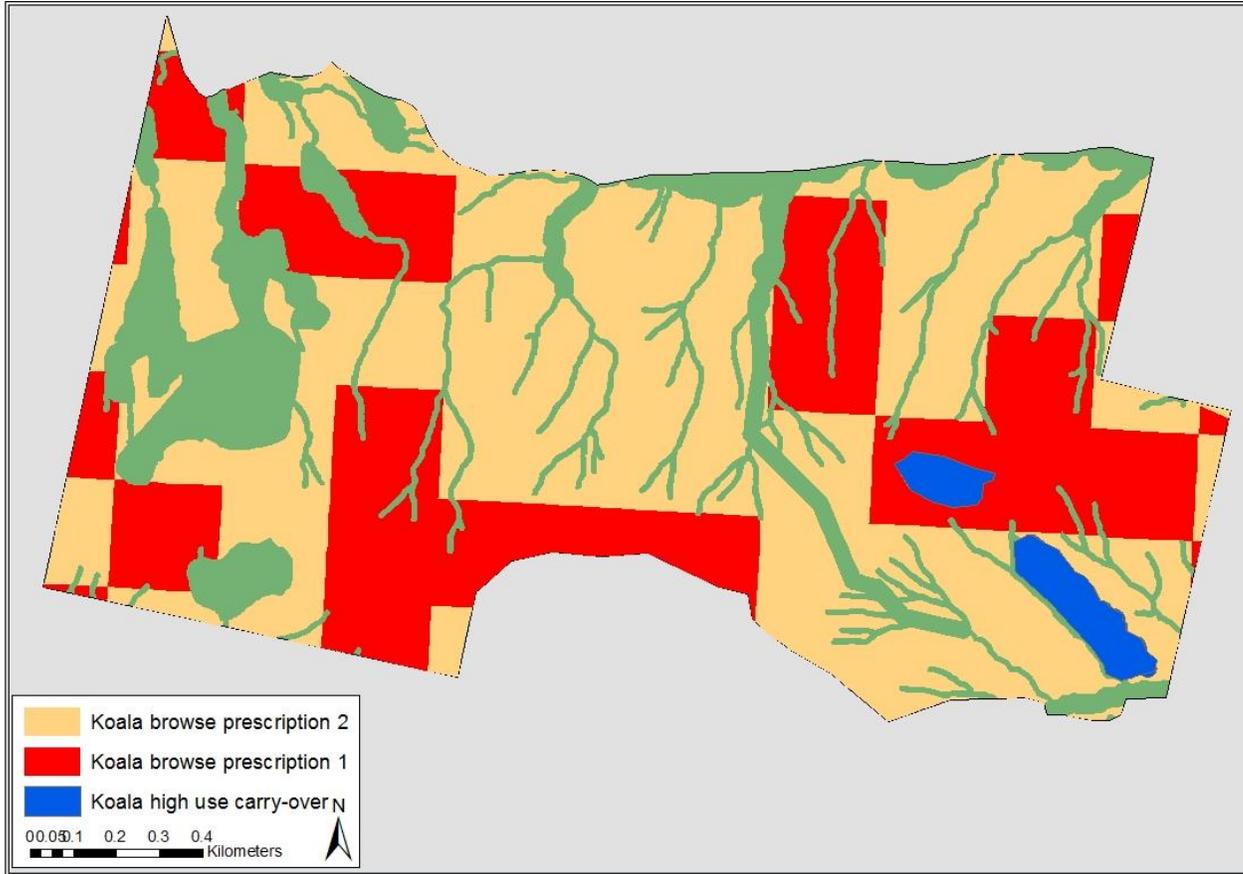
In applying koala tree retention, the harvest area is divided into 'patches' of up to 15 hectares in size.

- All tree retention requirements are applied at the 15 ha 'patch' scale.
- Koala tree retention rates are required to be met as the average across each 'patch'.
- This example records the number of koala trees required in each 'patch'.

Boambee State Forest compartment 602



Carry over exclusion zones



Boambee State Forest compartment 602

Where koala high use areas have previously been applied – these exclusion zones will be ‘carried over’ in future forestry operations.

This example shows a ‘carried over’ koala high use area.

In addition, the draft Coastal IFOA proposes wildlife habitat clumps and tree retention clumps consider koala habitat.

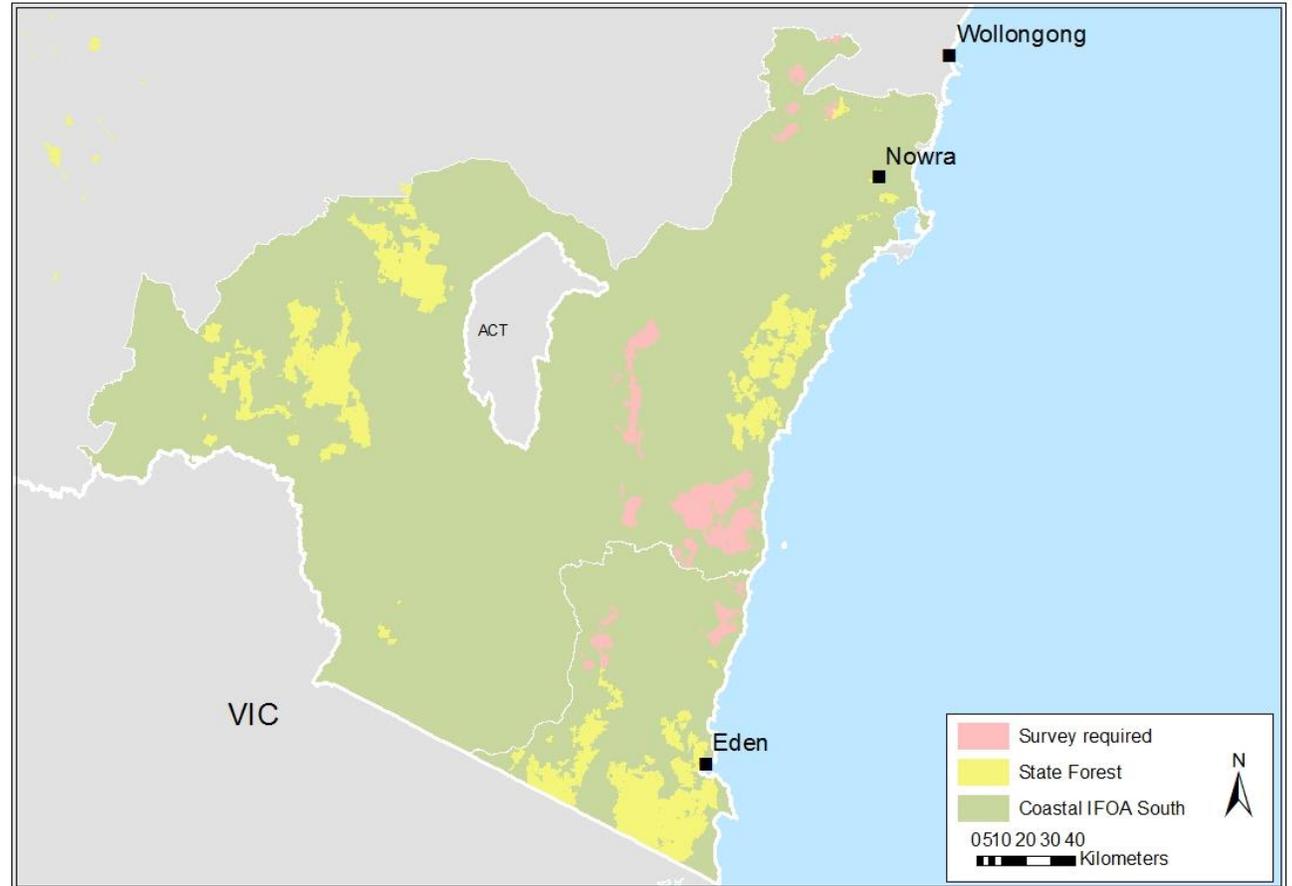
Proposed new koala conditions (southern)

Surveys are required where:

- forests are identified as having likely koala populations (see map); or
- koalas were recorded within 2 km within the preceding 10 years.

Contemporary koala surveys methods are prescribed.

The EPA will develop specific koala conditions appropriate for that site if koalas are found.



Temporary koala exclusion zones



In all forestry operations where northern koala prescriptions apply or where a koala has been recorded in the previous 10 years in the southern subregions:

- Trees must be searched for koalas before they are felled.
- Searching must be done by suitably experienced people.
- A temporary 25 metre exclusion zone applies around any tree while a koala is in it.



Have your say

ON TOMORROW'S FORESTS TODAY



Key dates

- 15 May – consultation opened
- 29 June – consultation closes

Have Your Say – Lodge your submissions online

<https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/forests>

Questions

ifoa.remake@epa.nsw.gov.au

Or upload your question to “Have Your Say”

