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List koalas as endangered species: Greens

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They spend their days looking half asleep while gorging on gum leaves.

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But the seemingly lazy ways of Australia's koalas need to be preserved under federal laws, the Australian Greens say.

Greens senator Larissa Waters will push for the marsupials to be listed as a nationally-threatened species in the Senate today.

"The koala is not listed as nationally threatened because there are clumps where there are quite a lot of them," she told reporters in Canberra.

"But there are areas where there are very few."

Such areas include Queensland's "koala coast", which encompasses the bayside portions of the Redland, Brisbane and Logan local government areas.

With fewer than 5000 koalas left in south-east Queensland, Senator Waters believes koalas along the koala coast may become extinct during the next 10 years.

"I don't know what they will call it if there are no koalas left," she said.

If the koala were listed as a nationally threatened species (under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act), it would be an offence to injure the creature.

"It also means that any development that is going to have a significant impact on koalas needs to get federal approval," Senator Waters said.

"So it basically brings in an extra layer of protection, that might mean a development has to be stopped, or there can be conditions."

Such conditions might include the retention of important habitat trees.

Loss of habitat was one of the greatest pressures driving species to extinction, Senator Waters said.

"If we're going to stop the decline on biodiversity we should put the brakes on development in the only areas (that) threatened species still exist."

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