



# The EU must stop imports of kangaroo products to save this iconic species

Briefing

October 2022

### 3 reasons why the EU must act NOW to protect kangaroos, biodiversity and EU consumers

The killing of kangaroos is the largest slaughter of terrestrial wildlife for commercial purposes, and raises concerns about animal welfare, conservation, and public health. The EU should address these concerns by introducing an import ban.

#### A very cruel hunt for adult kangaroos and their joeys



An average of 1.6 million adult kangaroos are killed every year to fuel the trade of kangaroo products. As nocturnal species, **kangaroos are shot at night in remote areas with up to 40% of kangaroos not killed with fatal shots.** 10% of all commercially killed kangaroos in 2019 were female. The National Code of Practice calls on shooters to “crush the skull and destroy the brain” of young kangaroos, also called joeys, that could be left in the female pouch. This is mostly done by swinging their heads against a vehicle. If they do not endure this cruel and violent death, most dependent at-foot joeys

are left in the field to suffer exposure, starvation, or predation. **It is estimated that 400,000 joeys are additional collateral victims of this hunt each year.**

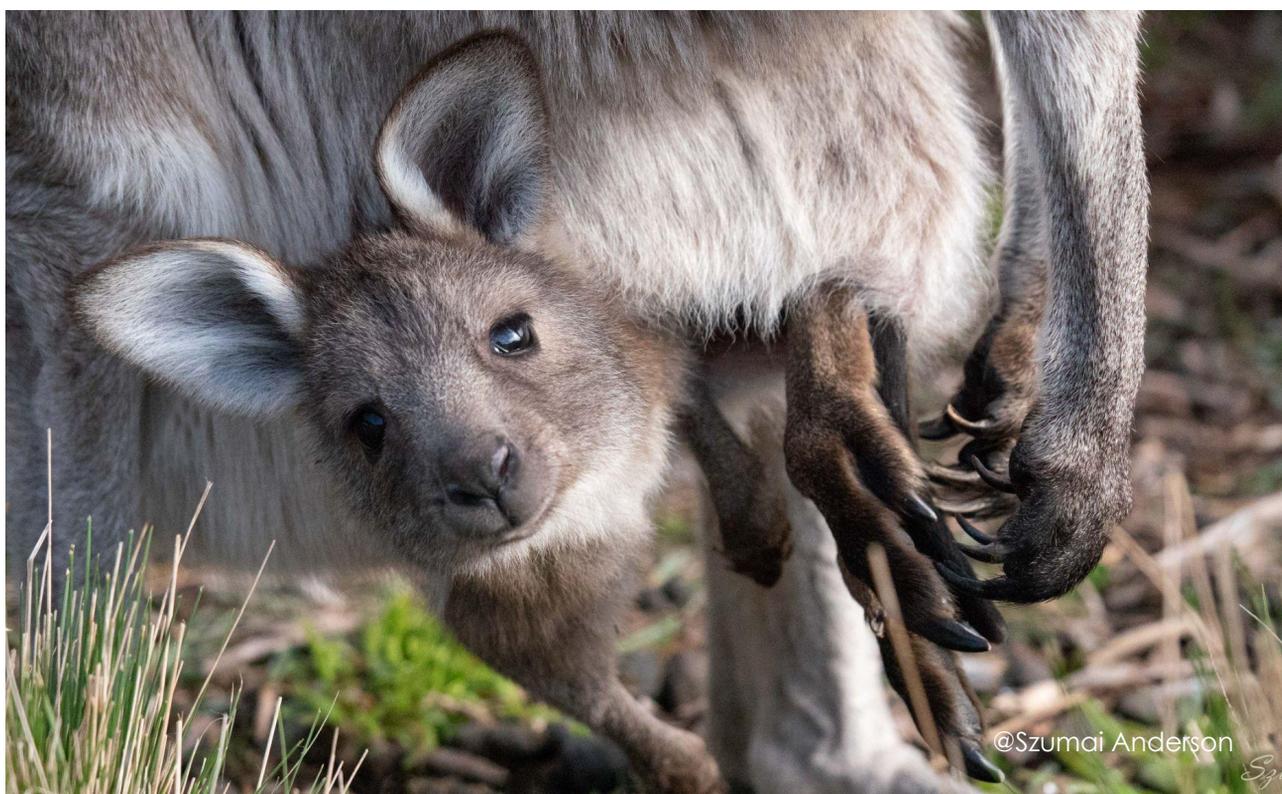
#### A threat to kangaroo populations and the survival of the species

[An inquiry of the New South Wales government](#) demonstrates that **there are flaws in the survey methods used by the government to assess kangaroo species' populations and establish commercial harvest quotas.** Kangaroo populations are counted with aerial surveys, which have several shortcomings and lead to questionable results. In addition, Australia is highly vulnerable to impacts of climate change with multiple droughts, bushfires and floods killing thousands of kangaroos. As the EU is paving the way for sustainability, implementing the Green Deal and championing solutions against the climate and biodiversity crisis, it must stop imports for the EU market of wild animals whose populations are already threatened, such as kangaroos.

#### A potential source of zoonotic diseases raising sanitary concerns

60-75 % of human disease comes from wildlife disease transmitted to humans, in part by the wildlife trade and consumption. After they are shot in remote areas, the carcasses of kangaroos are eviscerated and transported in unrefrigerated open trucks, sometimes all night long, and under very high temperatures. **In order to tentatively prevent Salmonella and E.coli contaminations, the carcasses are washed with lactic acid, although this isn't an allowed practice for fresh game meat in the EU and does not fully eliminate contami-**

**nation risks.** Lead poisoning from the bullets is another health concern, also posing a serious environmental risk, as highlighted by recent ECHA reports on the restriction of lead ammunition in the EU.



### **The role of the EU**

The EU is **the biggest importer of Australian kangaroo meat and skins**, accounting for 65% of this trade. Their meat is sold in European supermarkets or used in pet food and their skin is used for luxury sports equipment such as shoes. Between 2016 and 2019, EU imports of kangaroo skins almost doubled in quantity, and kangaroo meat increased by 11%. The EU has a very important role to play in stopping the cruel and unnecessary commercial hunting of kangaroos in Australia to safeguard this iconic species.

**[Read the report "Kangaroo: From Australian icon to meat and luxury leather for the EU"](#)**



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