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FACTSHEET

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

Habitat loss is the primary cause of biodiversity loss and extinction of native species in Australia and most parts of the world. Habitat fragmentation is a related process that is often associated with habitat loss. It occurs when remaining vegetation is broken up into small, isolated patches through clearing of land or the construction of barriers such as roads, fences or buildings.

What causes habitat loss?

Sadly, we are the major cause of habitat loss. Since the 19th century we have been clearing land at a rapid rate to develop new houses and infrastructure, build mines, create new farmland and obtain wood. Habitat can also be lost through environmental factors like fire or drought, but human driven habitat loss has had a far more devastating impact on our wildlife and plants.



How can we reverse these threats?

We can reverse some of the damage caused by habitat loss and fragmentation by planting new trees and shrubs. This also serves to reconnect patches of habitat, providing more homes for wildlife and allowing populations to move and expand into new areas.

Did you know?

Within NSW alone, there are approximately 360 threatened species and 25 threatened ecological communities under threat from habitat loss and fragmentation. One of these is the koala.

What's so bad about habitat fragmentation?

Habitat fragmentation results in populations of a species becoming isolated in small pockets of land, where they are more susceptible to inbreeding and the impacts of natural disasters like droughts and floods. Habitat that has been fragmented is also more susceptible to invasion by weeds and feral animals and the impacts of uncontrolled grazing. This can lead to the loss of species from some areas and the interruption of important ecosystem functions, such as pollination and food webs.

