



HOPPING MAD

Learning how kangaroos display dominance



GRADES 2-4

MATERIALS

- yarn

STANDARDS

- SCI.2.3.1
- SCI.4.3.3

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about kangaroo interactions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Kangaroos are among 100 types of marsupials found in Australia.
- Kangaroos come in many different shapes and sizes. Three examples of kangaroos are Doria's tree kangaroo, the Western gray kangaroo, and the red kangaroo. Inhabiting every niche, they include the wallabies, bettongs, pademelons, wallaroos, and tree kangaroos.
- Some, such as red kangaroos, are up to seven feet tall and weigh 200 pounds, while others, like the tree kangaroo, are as small as a rabbit.
- Kangaroo family groups include one dominant male, several females, and their joeys (young kangaroos).
- Male kangaroos display dominant behaviors such as fighting in order to maintain control of their group of females and offspring.
- If the dominant male is challenged by another male in the group, or from another group, the two will fight using the techniques outlined below to determine which one is more dominant.

PROCEDURE

- Create a circle with a piece of yarn.
- Have students demonstrate positions 1-3 outside of the circle. Positions are shown on the next page.
- Choose two students to stand within the circle.
- Have the chosen students lock forearms within the circle and try to push one another out using this method.
- For safety reasons, do not let students perform position 5.

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT

- Ensure student participation.



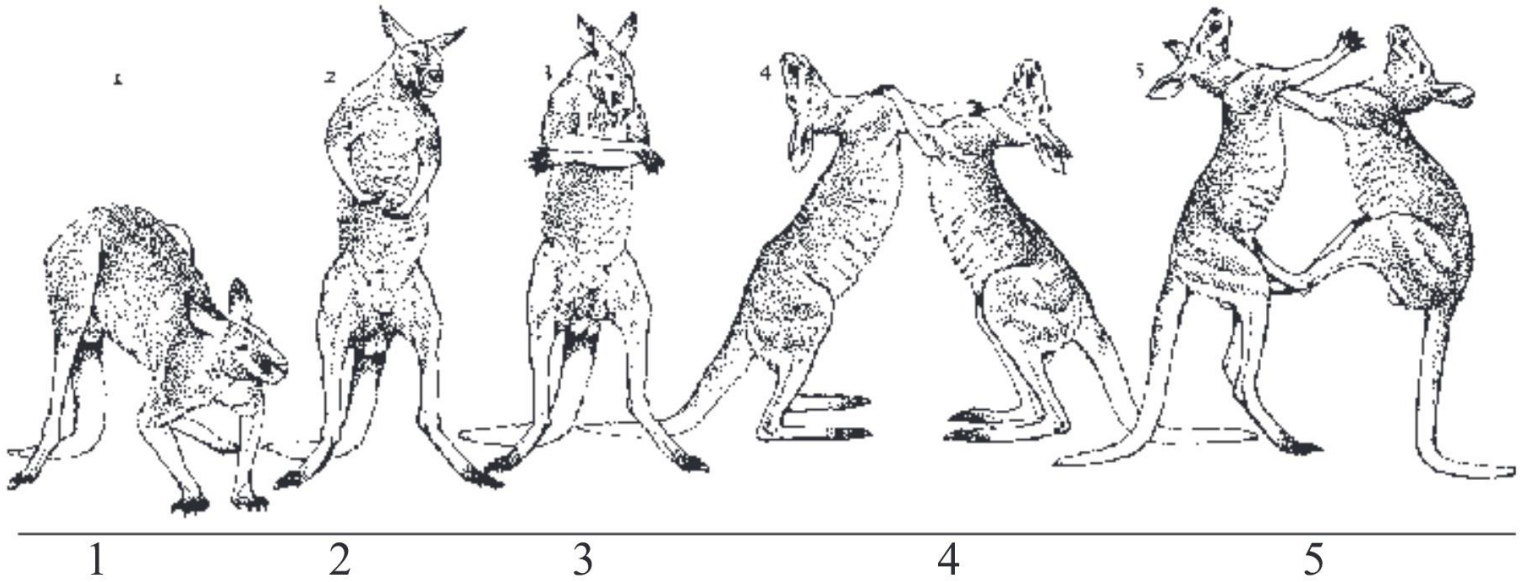


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Kangaroos usually live in groups with several females, their joeys, and one adult male, who is called the dominant male. Fights among kangaroos can begin when a male from outside the group challenges the dominant male.



Before a fight, two males may do a "stiff-legged walk" in front of another male (1); they then start scratching and grooming (2 and 3). The males then stand upright on their hind legs and lock forearms (4), then attempt to punch each other to the ground with powerful hind legs (5).

