

Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group Inc.

PO Box 1409
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2001/2002

Another year has whizzed by and at times I think nothing much has happened. But on further reflection it is surprising what our small group of about 60 members has achieved. Our greatest achievement has been to raise the awareness of landholders in the importance of remnant wildlife habitat on their properties if we are to keep wildlife as part of the Atherton Tablelands landscape. This we have done by using the tree-kangaroo, Spot-tailed Quoll and Yellow-bellied Glider as our flag species and through a number of high profile projects. More importantly we now have a group of people – our members - who are informed and can discuss these issues with the general community. It is this one-to-one involvement that is most likely to change people's attitudes to wildlife conservation. Another achievement we can partly claim is the increase in the number of large underpasses Main Roads incorporated in the design of the new East Evelyn road up Gentle Annie. I urge people to stop and have a sticky beak at the finished tunnels which are being monitored for animal activity by a James Cook University team which includes Jonathan Munro.

Our major projects for the year include:

"Living with Quolls"

Protecting Spot-tailed Quolls on the Atherton Tablelands

Scott Burnett with the aid of Beth Stirn and TKMG volunteers - 15 is Scott's estimate - have driven this project funded by the Threatened Species Network and World Wide Fund for Animals to the tune of \$12 000. The quoll team has distributed half a kilometre of chicken wire to landholders in the Ravenshoe and Millaa Millaa areas to construct quoll-proof chook pens; monitored for Spot-tail Quolls at nine sites along the eastern edge of the Atherton Tableland; trialled effective quoll proof wild dog baits - those presently used are a danger to quolls and other wildlife; distributed two brochures; presented 16 talks to schools, community and scientific groups; and established a web site.

Well done.

"Case Study Project"

Conservation of Remnant Vegetation on Private Property on the Atherton Tableland

Towards the end of 2001 a field day was held at Mt Quinkin Crater Resort and Jungle Tours properties in conjunction with the Land for Wildlife project. At least 50 people attended and judging from the remarks of some participants, the day changed how some land owners view wildlife and its care on their properties. The first stage of this Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) project ended early in 2002 with the presentation to the four landholders involved with property signs and a folder containing a wildlife habitat assessment. Emphasis was on ways of enhancing wildlife habitat on their land without detracting from the ability to pursue their business activities on the property. I want to thank Sue Mathams, who we employed to run the project, for the excellent job she performed. Sue learnt that face-to-face contact and the ability to drink tea at the drop of a hat are the most effective means of communication with landholders

We have obtained a second year of funding from NHT of \$30 000 which enables us to conduct wildlife audits on a further three properties. The emphasis this time is on beef and mixed farming with property size ranging from 20 ha to 137 ha, including one in the often neglected Millaa Millaa area. Sue is job sharing with Kylie Freebody and Larry Cook to run the project this year.

Anderson Road Landscape Linkage Project

Funding from the Threatened Species Network administered by TREAT and assistance from Ergon Energy, who supplied poles and erected them on site, enabled the Group to construct four experimental three-kangaroo shelter poles on Mark and Peter Mappas property. The poles, reminiscent of oversized cocktail swizzle sticks, stand in a section of the Linkage Project unlikely to be forested in the near future in the hope that they provide convenient escape routes for tree-kangaroos crossing open paddocks. A team of TKMG volunteers - Rigel, Neil, Margit and Lars -and Tropical Forest Restoration staff spent three days in the hot sun just before Christmas erecting the poles under the watchful eye of John Kanowski. "It would be a lot easier and more effective in the long run to plant a single tree in a paddock, farmer permitting, than to plant another pole" was John's concluding remark. However, we are waiting to see if the tree-kangaroos will use the poles. John and Nigel Tucker published a paper in the journal Ecological Management and Restoration on the poles.

I would like to acknowledge Margit Cianelli's dedication to caring for tree-kangaroos, the knowledge of which she shared with us one evening. We have seen her persist in her efforts to raise young ones through to maturity despite heartbreaking set backs. She has spent considerable amounts of her own funds to building a special tree-kangaroo enclosure, one in which we hope to trial the effectiveness of fencing to exclude tree-kangaroos from main roads. Queensland Department of Transport contributed in the construction of this enclosure by paying for the leveling of the site. I am pleased that our Group also contributed \$500 for materials and several members - Neil, Rigel and Lars - have helped build the structure.

As usual, I would like to thank the English family for their generous support to the Group in allowing us to use the premises of the Malanda Hotel gratis. I also wish to thank `the boys' who now run the 1911 Restaurant and who look after us on our monthly Thursday night meetings.

Finally, I am not renominating for the position of President. Not because of any dissatisfaction with the Group, but because I have been President for five years and it is time for a change. I believe it is beneficial for a small organisation such as ours to have change in the executive positions. All too often the same people stay in these positions, usually because it requires less effort just to vote in the same people year after year. But that can lead to stagnation of ideas and activities. To remain a dynamic group we need fresh ideas and approaches. So it is with goodwill to the new executive that I am looking forward to my time as a non-executive member of the Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group.

Thank you all for your support and kind words during my term as President.

John Winter
President

5 September 2002