

TKMG Presidents Report August 2004

by Tania Simmons

I would like to especially acknowledge the TKMG 2004 committee. I felt we made a good team. considering the extra parental pressures from home with the additions of Sophie to Sue's family, Sinead to Jack Grant's, Kiah to Tania's, Ziggy to Larry's, and most recently the special addition of Amber to Wendy's crew. Special congratulations also to Lars who will marry Sarah in September 2004.

Sue arranged a new insurance cover through the Department of Natural Resources so that we have FREE insurance for all our members and volunteers. This represents a significant annual saving of more than \$1000. Lars organized some great market stalls and other information displays. He is a dedicated Tree-kangaroo researcher and ready friend – thankyou Lars. Larry prepared some great quarterly Mammal Mail newsletters and has been excellent in his dual role as project coordinator for the TKMG Hypsi project. Rhonda has enjoyed a growing role in public relations for the group and will be writing more articles for the local press to promote the groups aims. Margit has played her usual tireless role as local wildlife carer, in this year has hosted the recently formed Tree Kangaroo Carer's Group, now meeting quarterly. Many hours have been contributed over the past 12 months for our bi-monthly committee meetings. My personal thanks also to Ernie Raymont, Syb Bresolin, Joan Wright, Tony Irvine, and John Winter for their advice. I also acknowledge the recent passing of two admirable conservation workers Geoff Tracey and Doug Clague.

Membership numbers for 2004 have remained steady at about 80. The TKMG is always looking for support from new members. Please encourage your friends to join.

TKMG has continued to work for conservation of TK habitat through it's role on the Mabi Forest Recovery Team. We also sit on the regional revegetation group - Southern Atherton Tablelands Revegetation Alliance and the Wet Tropics Conservation Sector Liaison Group. In 2004, TKMG prepared lengthy contributions for the current drafting of the Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management Plan.

In recognition of the TKMG primary objective, "promoting tree kangaroos and other mammals:" we have invested in the taxidermy of an adult Tree-kangaroo specimen. The specimen is mounted in a natural pose, decorated with specially freeze-dried local plant specimens and will be on permanent display in Malanda.

In October 2003 the TKMG continued its three way educational exchange between students from Australia, United States and Papua New Guinea. The Tree-kangaroo conservation program from Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence Rhode Island funds this unique educational program that links children across the world for a conservation cause. We look forward to working again with the students from Herberton State School in more conservation based educational experiences for our local kids.

The TKMG has enjoyed an astounding range of very informative speakers and presentations in our regular bimonthly talks at the Malanda Hotel. All our guest speakers volunteer their time and knowledge and many travel long distances. The Bat Forum held in May 2004 was a particular success, discussing the vexed issue of managing flying foxes in the agricultural/ecological interface. Special thanks are extended to the English family for their ongoing support supplying our meeting venue.

Projects

The Cape York Possums project, coordinated by John Winter, has turned up some interesting findings on possums in Cape York. There has been the reassuring repeated sightings of possums in most historical locations. In addition, some new locations were recorded and there were some, yet to be explained, apparent disappearances from the odd site. We look forward to the release of the Cape York Possum video set for release shortly.

The TKMG Hypsi project run by Larry has put Hypsi Forest on the agenda for a concerted education campaign. Hypsi Forest, like the now well known Mabi Forest, is a local endangered rain forest type threatened with extinction, primarily due to past clearing and current threats of declining remnant quality, weeds and so on. The Hypsi project community tree plantings have seen an incredible 7000 trees planted. Well done to the small but dedicated tree planting team and especially to our participating landholders.

Ashley Keunzi, a visiting School for International Training student from Cairns, received valuable assistance from Lars with her independent study project. Ashley was collecting information regarding plants used by Tree-kangaroos in remnant and replanted areas on Ross Chapman's farm.

A few final additional thank-yous:

1. Maureen, Editor of the Eacham Times for printing all our articles and photos.
2. QPWS for their contribution to the production of the newsletter
3. Malcolm and Rebel. for selling all our merchandise in the Fairy Shop over the years - t-shirts, bags, etc. Congratulations and best wishes for your new stores in Mareeba.
5. Jane and Alex from the Tree Kangaroo Café: for supporting our community education displays. Best wishes in your new ventures.

I welcome the new committee and ask them to continue their enthusiastic and energetic work towards a greater awareness of the amazing wildlife in our local area and the need to understand and conserve it.

With local wildlife and scenery ranking most highly as the reasons why tourists pay to visit north Queensland, there are more than ecological and environmental reasons for promoting and retaining habitat.

Enjoy some time with our local wildlife

Tania Simmons

