

TKMG President's Annual Report

by Tania Simmons, August 2005

Another year for the TKMG.....year 9! My thanks to the TKMG management committee, Vice-President John Winter, Secretary Sue Mathams, Treasurer Larry Crook (who took over from Wendy Bergen) and committee members Margit Cianelli, Rhonda Winger, Ceinwen Edwards and Lars Kazmeier (lately residing in Germany to complete his PhD). And my thanks to the TKMG membership for your continued support and interest in the group.

The TKMG continued our regular promotional activities over 2004/5. Many dedicated people have organized some great market stalls and other information displays. Special thanks to Alan Gillanders, Ceinwen, Larry, Rhonda and Sue for your regular assistance. This year we also marched in the Maize Festival along side the Tolga Bat Rescue.

Larry has continued to be a great asset for the group this year. He has continued to produce our quarterly Mammal Mail newsletters (and recently took over as treasurer, when Wendy needed to take time off from her TKMG duties). Thanks Wendy for your efforts with the group and your continuing support for sick and injured local wildlife. 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 and guidance. Special congratulations to Margit who received a Cassowary Award late last year.

Membership numbers for 2005 have remained steady at about

70. 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 its 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 2005, TKMG prepared comments and submissions for the Wet Tropics Plan Review, Forest Practice Code, and the Eacham Shire Plan.

After many months wait, the TKMG now has a stuffed and mounted tree-kangaroo and quoll. Both these animals will be on display at the Malanda Falls Visitor Centre to promote awareness of these species. The animals represent a significant financial investment for the TKMG and will form the basis of a larger permanent display which we will endeavour to attract funding for.

In October 2004 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 Herberston State School in more conservation based educational experiences for our local kids. Chris Doyle will be back for another year of the program in October 2005.

The TKMG has enjoyed a great 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. This year we enjoyed talks from John Winter; Rupert Russell; Shane Marsterton & students; Robyn Wilson; Bronwyn Robertson and Alan Gillanders

Special thanks are extended to the English family for their ongoing support supplying our meeting venue.

Projects

Larry Crook continued on as project officer in another year of the TKMG Hypsi project. Hypsi Forest, like the now well known Mabi Forest, is a local endangered rain forest type threatened with extinction. Only small isolated fragments of these forests remain due to past clearing and current threats of declining remnant quality, weeds and so on.

Another 5200 (7000 last year) trees were planted as part of the project this year consolidating efforts on the Waltham, Daley and Waller properties in the Millaa area. These trees build additional much needed habitat, and improve landscape connections between remnants. Well done to Larry and the small but dedicated tree planting team, Eacham Shire Community Revegetation Unit, and especially to our participating landholders.

A few additional thankyou and congratulations:

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. Paul English for his continued sponsorship of the Malanda Show Art Competition.

4. To all our supporting businesses who sell TKMG merchandise: Malanda Falls Visitor Centre; Yungaburra Visitor Centre; Eacham Medical Centre; Quincan Cottage; Atherton Visitor Centre. With thanks to Sue and Rhonda for organizing all this.

Congratulations to Dr Karen Coombes on the successful completion of her PhD studies focusing on tree-kangaroos.

The year ahead has some fantastic highlights, not the least of which is the international Tree-kangaroo conference to be held at the Genazzano Centre, Lake Barrine in November 2005. The fact that we can host such a conference is testimony to our maturity and achievements as a community conservation group. Special thanks to Karen Coombes, Lee Curtis, Lisa Dabek, James Cook University and the CRC for their efforts and support in putting the conference together. All members are encouraged to attend all or part of the conference, at a special discounted rate, for a rare opportunity to hear all about Tree-kangaroo research and meet Tree-kangaroo enthusiasts from around the world. Special funding has been received to host three students from Papua New Guinea at the conference.

The TKMG will continue to play a role in pressing for further habitat protection and growth through its involvement in the Mabi Forest Recovery Team. It is hoped that further endangered local rainforest types (notably Tracey types 1b and 5a) will be nominated and recognized under the federal Environmental Protection, Biodiversity and Conservation Act, and attract the attention that Mabi forest does.

After many years on the committee, both John Winter and I are stepping aside from our formal duties as Vice-president and President. We've seen the group grow steadily over the years with a long list of achievements. One of our first projects was the Malanda Tree-kangaroo survey in 1997. This project was self funded and served as a pilot to a larger Tablelands survey with funding support from NHT, which culminated in the published report "Habitat protection on the Atherton Tablelands" in 2000. Since then the group has undertaken projects on habitat protection and tree planting through the "Case Studies" and Hypsi Forest projects, with further projects on Yellow-bellied Gliders, Spotted-tail quolls, and Cape York Possums. We have expended over \$300,000 of conservation funding. Some great achievements indeed and further inspiration to continue.

I welcome those newly elected to the committee and challenge them to continue the group's enthusiastic and energetic work towards a greater awareness of the amazing wildlife in our local area, and the need to understand and conserve them and their habitat.

In a time when much of our attention is drawn to economic concerns or human conflicts, I urge those of us with a firm conservation ethic to continue to make time to promote nature conservation in your local communities. Make sure you take the time to recharge your batteries by taking a walk in the forest and spot yourself a Tree-kangaroo or Musky Rat Kangaroo.

