



Mammal Mail

The Newsletter of the Tree-Kangaroo & Mammal Group

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What's Going On? Don't Miss These Upcoming Events

Thurs Dec 5th: TKMG Committee meeting 5:30pm, followed at 7:30 pm with a presentation by Roger Martin on the Conservation Status of Australian Tree Kangaroos; and informal discussion about the Community Action Plan.

Thur Jan 2nd? TKMG Committee meeting 5:30pm Malanda Hotel; Members welcome. Please note that this date may be changed due to the proximity to New Years. For information, please contact Simon Burchill.

Thur Feb 6th: TKMG Committee meeting 5:30pm, followed at 7:30pm by a presentation-speaker yet to be confirmed.

TKMG Committee for 2014

The Annual General Meeting of TKMG was held on October 10th at the Malanda Hotel. A new Executive Committee for Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group was elected as follows:

President: John Kanowski
Vice-President: Amy Shima
Secretary: Simon Burchill
Treasurer: Ilona Moerman

Committee members (returning)

Margit Cianelli
Dave Hudson
Ceinwen Edwards
Sigrid Heise-Pavlov

New Committee Members

Kate Dall
Leanne Hales
Evizel Seymour

The AGM was not particularly well attended by TKMG members but the presence of the SFS students helped fill the room. A delicious light supper was provided. The AGM was followed by a presentation by Dr. Miriam Goosem on impediments to wildlife movement particularly roads, and methods adopted to address breaks in connectivity such as wildlife underpasses, rope bridges and overpasses.

Profiles on the New President, Vice-President and Committee Members

Profile of TKMG President, John Kanowski

By John Kanowski

I've been involved with TKMG on-and-off since the group was formed. At the time I was living on the Tablelands, doing a PhD on the ecology of rainforest possums and Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo and based at CSIRO in Atherton. I spent some time helping Graeme Newell (also at CSIRO) who was studying the home range of Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo in a patch of Mabi forest near Yungaburra. The landowner decided to clear this patch—right in the middle of Graeme's study! I spent some time helping Graeme catch tree kangaroos he'd darted for the study and track the radio-collared animals around the scrub-before and after clearing. The sad fate of that patch of scrub and its tree-kangaroos was one of the triggers for the formation of TKMG. In subsequent years, I helped organize and write-up the TKMG community-based survey of tree-kangaroos on the Atherton Tablelands, did some work for TKMG surveying the presence of tree-kangaroos on farms and conducted a trial on the use of 'shelter poles' to assist tree-kangaroos disperse across cleared land.

After completing my PhD, I spent the best part of a decade in a collaborative research project led by Prof. Carla Catterall, looking at the biodiversity values of replanted rainforest. The team surveyed field sites in northern QLD and NSW, looking at plants, birds, and some invertebrate groups in different types of reforestation (rainforest timber plantations, restoration plantings and even hoop pine plantations).

Since 2008 I have worked for Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC), a private nature conservation organization. AWC currently owns 23 wildlife sanctuaries across Australia, collectively protecting over 3 million ha. In NE Australia, AWC owns several properties including Brooklyn (north of Mt. Molloy); Mt Zero-Taravale (west of Townsville) and Piccaninny Plains (Cape York Peninsula). These properties support many mammal species—Brooklyn supports Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo, Mt Zero-Taravale supports the southern-most known population of the Northern Bettong and Piccaninny Plains contains populations of Spotted Cuscus in gallery forest along the Archer and Wenlock Rivers.

I continue to be impressed by the work of TKMG in raising the profile of tree-kangaroos and nature conservation on the Tablelands. I'm looking forward to seeing the implementation of the TK Community Action Plan.

New Committee Member Profiles:

Amy Shima: Vice President and Newsletter Editor

By Amy Shima

I've been involved with TKMG since the Tree-kangaroo conference held here in 2005 where I presented a paper on veterinary considerations for fieldwork on tree kangaroos. At the time I was living in the US, continuing to pursue my chosen career as a wildlife and zoo veterinarian. My work brought me to Australia, (initially working on that other charismatic folivorous arboreal marsupial...the koala) and, after many years, led me to the Atherton Tablelands. My husband, Roger Martin, and I have lived here for the past few years. I have a small 'house-call' veterinary practice, do occasional locum work and partner with Roger in the pursuit of knowledge about tree-kangaroos. In 2011, I took on the task of Newsletter Editor for TKMG and will continue to get the newsletter out while also serving as Vice-President.

I am looking forward to working with John Kanowski, the rest of the Committee and TKMG members to see the group get more involved at fulfilling its aims, especially in gathering more information about tree-kangaroos and using this to increase awareness and appreciation for this species and the unique habitat that we share with them.

Leanne Hales: *By Leanne Hales*

My name is Leanne Hales and it is a real pleasure to be joining the ranks of the TKMG Committee. My husband, Paul, and I are relative newcomers to North Queensland but we are not new to conservation. A love of the Australian bush, its unique fauna and a passion for conservation land management led us both to careers with QPWS where we spent the best part of a decade working for Parks in Central QLD. In 2005 we took some leave from the regional office and 'went bush' with *Bush Heritage* Australia (BHA), a national, not-for-profit conservation organisation that acquires and manages properties to protect unique animals, plants and their habitats. As it turns out, we never went back to Parks and have been with BHA for 8 years now. We spent the first 3 of those managing Eurardy Reserve in WA. Eurardy is home to spectacular sandplain heath, rare ground orchids and York Gum woodlands and the nationally threatened Malleefowl.

In 2008, we came home to QLD (and rainfall!) to manage the newly acquired Yourka Station, tucked between the Herbert River and the Wet Tropics, approximately 40 km southwest of Innot Hot Springs. Yourka's conservation values include the riparian corridors of Sunday, Cameron, Oaky and Basalt Creeks and the associated alluvial flats. Our key management projects include landscape-scale fire management, weed control, feral animal and erosion control. Key species on the reserve include the Mareeba rock wallaby; sugar, squirrel and greater gliders and a number of rare plant species...and a recent sighting of a Lumholtz tree-kangaroo. There is no house on Yourka Reserve so, after 2 years of renting accommodation nearby, we decided it was time to 'settle down'. Although it meant a longer weekly 'commute' for Paul, we were drawn to Malanda and now feel extremely privileged to own a patch of rainforest in Figtree Close. We share that patch with tree kangaroos, green possums and abundant birdlife. Every day I feel blessed that we can offer our children the best of both worlds...a 'green hideaway' in town where we can be part of a vibrant regional community with weekends and school holidays spent exploring over 90,000 acres at Yourka.

Paul and I have admired the work of TKMG and its members since arriving on the Tablelands. Now that our children are settled into school, I am excited about getting involved to assist the advocacy and protection of the areas iconic mammal species. Paul and I look forward to supporting a range of projects to help TKMG realize the important objectives of the Community Action Plan and we appreciate the warm welcome afforded us by the existing hard-working TKMG team.

Kate Dall: *By Kate Dall*

Hi TKMG members,
I've been asked to introduce myself as a new member of your committee, so here goes. I've been living on the Tablelands for a couple of years now, have been regularly attending the excellent public talks hosted by TKMG, and want to contribute further to the great work the group does. I'm afraid I have very little scientific background, but I do have quite a bit of experience in community engagement as a long-term active member of the Australian Greens. By getting more involved in TKMG, I aim to learn more about the wildlife and ecosystems of the Tablelands, and help to share the group's impressive body of knowledge with the public. I look forward to working with you all over the coming year.

Evizel Seymour: *By Evizel Seymour*

Hi, My name is Evizel Seymour.

I am an Australian, and identify as an Australian, as I have moved around Australia and lived in most states at some time of my life. I grew up on a farm in western Victoria, where it was a major event if we saw a kangaroo; all the neighbours would venture out to look at it. I have always been interested in animals and complete an associate diploma in aquatic resource management, eventually returning to study to complete a Marine Biology degree. I have over 20 years' experience in aquaculture where I grew many watery beasts including; Murray cod, goldfish, axolotls, dolphin fish, sea cucumbers, green snails, giant clams and prawns. This has enabled me to travel Australia and the world and live in wonderful countries such as; the Solomon Islands and Hawaii.

My family and I moved to the Tablelands 6 years ago, which felt like returning home, as I used to hang out here in my late teens. I came here to work at the aquaculture centre at Walkamin, and then changed career paths into conservation with Barron Catchment Care. After Terrain's Organisational reshuffle I was fortunate enough to be employed as the Community Engagement Officer for the Atherton Tablelands. This job suits me well, as I can now officially sit down with you and have a chat about the wonderful area that we live in.

Progress Report: Current Survey on the Distribution of Bennett's Tree-kangaroo

By Roger Martin

After a slow start in 2012, much progress has been made with this survey in the past 12 months. We now have many records of Bennett's sightings, particularly in the coastal lowland rainforests between the Daintree and Bloomfield Rivers.

Data on new locations is now being collected by a combination of techniques including interviews with local residents, site visits to reported locations and the use of camera traps. For the latter, we are grateful to the South Cape York Catchments NRM. This approach has yielded a number of new records for Bennett's, particularly in the northern part of its range. We have now confirmed that they occur well beyond Mount Amos and extend up the Esk Valley, possibly to the south bank of the Annan River.



Camera trap photo courtesy of Jason Carroll, South Cape York Catchments NRM

Further inland, we recently obtained photographic evidence of a tree-kangaroo in gallery forest at the junction of Trevethan Creek and the Annan River and we are currently investigating the gallery forest further north, along Oaky Creek. Oaky Creek drains into the Annan from the west and tree-kangaroos have been reported from here. We are about to deploy camera traps to see if we can confirm a resident population. If successful, this will document the most northerly occurrence so far for Bennett's Tree-kangaroo.

Further south, we recently had a report of a tree-kangaroo sighting west of Lakeland Downs. If this is confirmed, it will be a significant range extension to the west for the species. Next dry season we intend to concentrate more on Bennett's westerly distribution with the gallery forests

of the Normanby catchment being a key focus. We would also like to resolve the southern limits of Bennett's distribution, particularly south of the Windsor Tablelands into the Mount Carbine Tablelands and in the rainforests south of the Daintree River. However, because of the possibility of either tree-kangaroo species (Bennett's or Lumholtz's) being present, this is problematic with current methodology. It may have to wait until JCU PhD student, Avril Underwood completes her project on species identification from faecal DNA.

Interesting Tree Kangaroo Sighting at Palm Cove

By Amy Shima

For most of us, when we hear "Palm Cove", images of beachfront resorts or (for those inclined to history) the hostile encounters between Dalrymple's Northeast Coast Expedition and the local Indigenous people come to mind. This image, taken by photographer Noel Castley-Wright, might cause us to re-examine how we look at Palm Cove.

About a month ago, in the early hours of the morning, Michele Castley-Wright ventured outside her house in Palm Cove to greet the dawn and "say g'day" to the resident brush turkeys. She heard a rustling sound in the gully and, with the sun just coming up, was able to make out a kangaroo-like shape. As the light got better, she realized that this was no ordinary kangaroo—it had rounded ears and muscular forearms! She quickly alerted the rest of her family and her photographer husband, Noel, was able to get this wonderful image of a robust male Lumholtz tree-kangaroo. Since the initial sighting, "Arnie" (as the family likes to think of him) has been heard several times rustling around in the trees



Roger Martin visited the site and it appears that the animal has been feeding on *Chionanthus ramiflora* (Northern Native Olive). The property, though in the middle of a suburban neighbourhood and only 52 m above sea level, backs onto lovely rainforest with rocky, dry gullies running down towards the main highway. The dry gully in which the animal was seen is habitat quite similar to that used by Bennett's tree kangaroos in the northern part of its range. Whether it was merely having a holiday at Palm Cove or the rainforest-suburban interface is part of this animal's home range is a question that remains unanswered.

ACTION ALERT: Help preserve and protect Yellow-bellied Glider habitat!

By Amy Shima

Check out the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/tnpvols>) of the Tablelands National Park Volunteers to learn about current issues and ACTIONS that you can take to help protect habitat critical to the yellow-bellied glider (YBG) in the Tumoulin Forest Reserve. The Tumoulin Forest Reserve is a rare and endangered ecosystem of which less than 10% remains unaffected by severe degradation from logging, weed and rainforest invasion. Tableland National Parks Volunteers have been active participants in a 3 year scientific research project to survey and map

essential habitat of the YBG. Their research findings show that logging in the Tumoulin Forest Reserve is incompatible with long-term habitat requirements of the YBG and other fauna; will result in a reduction of the available food sources for threatened species; will create environmental disturbance which leads to weed invasion and woody thickening and may endanger the survival of the Yellow-bellied Glider and cause local extinction. TNPV believes that prosperity through conservation and environmentally sound forest management is possible and that the development of a regional strategic vision for our State Forest Reserves can result in regional timber and local business interests being served while also benefitting community health and well-being and biodiversity interests. The survival of the endangered ecosystems of our State Forest Reserves DOES matter and you have the power to take action and make a difference. So—check out the TNPV Facebooks page and TAKE ACTION.

MABI GALLERY: Inspirational Images

The Mabi Gallery featuring the work of painter Daryl Dickson and photographer Martin Willis has opened at the Malanda Dairy Centre in Malanda. Award winning photographer, Steve Parish, will be on hand to officially open the gallery on November 15th. Both Daryl and Martin are long-time members and supporters of TKMG. Their passion for the environment and wildlife is reflected in the inspirational images they create. The gallery is a ‘must see’—locals and visitors alike will enjoy seeing Martin’s fabulous photographs and Daryl’s gorgeous paintings.

Volunteers Needed for TKMG Market Stall

By Amy Shima, Simon Burchill & Ceinwen Edwards

As many of you are aware, the Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group hosts a market stall every month at the Yungaburra Markets, held on the 4th Saturday of the month at Bruce Jones Park in Yungaburra. For the past few years, Simon Burchill and Ceinwen Edwards have been the “regulars”—setting up the marquee, putting out information pamphlets and merchandise and interacting with the public. We’d love it if a few more members would get involved and volunteer to help out with market day. If you can even spare an hour to stop in at the stall and give Simon & Ceinwen a break, it would be greatly appreciated. The market stall is a great way for TKMG to raise awareness about the tree-kangaroos (and raise a little money, too). It’s a fun morning (although it is an early start). You can usually take a break from your duties and explore the market for a while when things are quiet at the stall. Bring a folding chair to sit on, a smiling face and friendly demeanor—it’s easy and fun. For more information, or to volunteer, please contact Simon Burchill (0407-091-347 or sbburchill@gmail.com) or Ceinwen Edwards (4097-6572)

Australian Geographic Society 2013 Conservationists of the Year

By Amy Shima

Jim and Jean Thomas of the Tenkile Conservation Alliance were recently named Australian Geographic Society’s 2013 Conservationists of the Year for their work protecting tree-kangaroos

in PNG. Jim Thomas was a guest speaker at the August 1st TKMG meeting where he gave a wonderful talk on the work he and Jean have been doing to protect and preserve the critically endangered Tenkile (*Dendrolagus scottae*) and Weimang (*Dendrolagus pulcherrimus*) in the Torricelli Mountain region of NW Papua New Guinea. In the 10 years they have been working in the area, the number of Tenkile have increased dramatically and the local people have come to regard tree-kangaroos as something special and important that they should be proud of, not just something to be eaten. Congratulations from TKMG to Tenkile Conservation Alliance on this much-deserved award.

ATGIS Award Success

Tablelands Regional Council

Atherton Tablelands Geographic Information Services (ATGIS) first international contract, mapping the Tree Kangaroo conservation zones in the YUS landscape on the Huon Peninsula in Papua New Guinea has earned them first place in the Queensland Spatial Excellence Awards for both the Export and Environment and Sustainability categories.

Named for its three main rivers – the Yopno, Uruwa and Som of the Huon Peninsula – the YUS Conservation Area covers 76,000 hectares of tropical forest in a continuous stretch from northern coastal reefs to the 4,000-meter (13,000-foot) peaks of the western Saruwaged Mountains. PNG established YUS as its first national conservation area in 2009, after more than a decade of work on the ground. Woodland Park Zoos Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program (TKCP), worked with local landowners and the PNG government to establish the conservation area, which was the first to be declared under the PNG Conservation Areas Act of 1978.

ATGIS's contract involved collating map data and associated information from project participants and designing and producing a hardcopy zoning map product in PNG's local pidgin dialect. The entire project was a collaborative effort, with ATGIS contracted by the project manager Seattle Woodland Park Zoo (USA), who also heavily involved James Cook University researchers, Conservation International and the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program. The project was funded by the German development bank, KFW Entwicklungsbank.

The outcome of the broader YUS Project include ongoing conservation efforts between the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program, the PNG National Government and inhabitants of the 35 local indigenous villages within the YUS Conservation Area.

Atherton Tablelands GIS will now be representing the Queensland Spatial Industry in the above categories at the 2013 Asia-Pacific Spatial Excellence Awards, to be announced next April in Canberra.

Atherton Tablelands GIS provides geographic information services, including maps and aerial imagery, to industry, community and government, to stimulate local economies and improve community outcomes.

Editors Note: Thanks to the Tablelands Regional Council for this item. The Woodland Park Zoo (Seattle, WA, USA) Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program (TKCP) works in a different area (Huon Peninsula) than the Tenkile Conservation Alliance. Both groups do great work towards conservation of tree-kangaroos in PNG.



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<http://www.tree-kangaroo.net>

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