

MAMMAL MAIL

The Newsletter of the Tree-Kangaroo and Mammal Group

Volume 21 No 3 - June 2021



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

Thursday 01st July: 5.30pm Malanda Hotel
TKMG Committee Meeting – **All members' welcome**

Thursday 05th August: 5.30pm Malanda Hotel
TKMG Committee Meeting – **All members' welcome**

Thursday 5th August: 7.30pm Malanda Hotel
PUBLIC PRESENTATION by Tom Bruce (James Cook University)
The impact that cats have on local wildlife and forests.

Thursday 02nd September: 5.30pm Malanda Hotel
TKMG Committee Meeting – **All members' welcome**

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Yungaburra Markets - Tree Kangaroo & Mammal Group – **Assisting at market stall**
4th Saturday of the month (except Christmas Day/New Year)
Dates available here: <https://www.yungaburramarkets.com/when-where>

A MEMORIAL TO DAVE HUDSON

by Graham Harrington, and the Tree-kangaroo and Mammal Group

DAVE has been my next-door neighbour for thirty years. Mind you next door means we live over a km apart. Dave bought the property next door to our 63 ha. nature refuge, which is part of a 1000 ha rainforest remnant. The altitude is around 1000m, which means that we have all the wet tropics endemic birds as well as tree-kangaroos and other native mammals.

Dave bought this land because he was ardently concerned with the conservation of rainforest. At the time he was the director of the Cairns branch of Conservation Volunteers. He was immensely successful and well suited to the role. The volunteers worshipped him, because they were so committed and so was he. He and I hit it off together immediately when we met. Dave was sufficiently switched on to join me in a long-term study of the socio-biology of Tooth-billed and Golden Bowerbirds. While I was primarily interested in birds, he was interested in the whole ecosystem and became a committee member of the TREE-KANGAROO & MAMMAL Group, when it formed in 2004. He was avidly involved in the conservation activities undertaken by this group. Dave was a genius in finding and writing grant applications, which often involved pages and pages of answering questions and supplying information. He did this tirelessly and with great care and skill. Without his help, Tree-kangaroo and Mammal Group would not be the strong, highly regarded conservation group that it is today. He also participated in a series of experiments on his land, led by Professor Carla Catterall, which followed the post clearing recovery process in the rainforest and how recovery could be hastened. This is vital research for many rainforest animals, including the Southern cassowary and tree-kangaroos both species for which habitat is critically important. Dave also helped local wildlife carers by providing wonderful organic produce from his garden, harvested (and even delivered it), often not even having time for a cup of tea as he was between doctors' appointments.

However, it was Dave's genuine modesty which was his most endearing feature. He tried to refuse the 2019 William T. Cooper Award for Conservation of North Queensland Mammals, maintaining that he didn't deserve it! In spite of all the evidence and people saying to the contrary, he genuinely believed that he wasn't successful in his field even though his tireless efforts helped many important conservation projects succeed.

Dave died after a long battle with cancer. Three weeks before his death, he went to Brisbane for some final treatment, hoping that it would extend his life for an additional few months. He was in such pain that I asked him why he wanted three extra months? His reply was that he might get work finished on some of the projects he was working on! I think he valued all life so much and ensuring that some of the conservation projects he had worked on was really important to him.

My very last interaction with Dave was to fetch his Tree-kangaroo & Mammal group T-shirt from his house. I understood why he wanted it. He knew he was dying and he wanted to be wearing it when he died. For me that summarised Dave's life and values. In my 85 years on this wonderful earth, I have never known such a powerful and modest man.

Dave Hudson will be missed but not forgotten and his legacy in conservation of wildlife and habitat will live on.



'KIMBERLEY' – THE VIRTUAL REALITY TREE-KANGAROO EXPERIENCE MALANDA FALLS VISITOR CENTRE

The brainchild of Dave Hudson in collaboration with James Cook University

Saturday 24th July:

As per Dave Hudson's wishes, TREAT and TRC will be hosting a Field Day at Cloudland Nature Refuge, Seamark Road to showcase local efforts in revegetation.

This will also be an opportunity to celebrate Dave's contributions to conservation and his innovative approach to habitat restoration and wildlife protection.

More details will be provided via email and the TKMG Facebook page.



**** COVID SAFE PRACTICES WILL BE IN PLACE AT ALL EVENTS ****

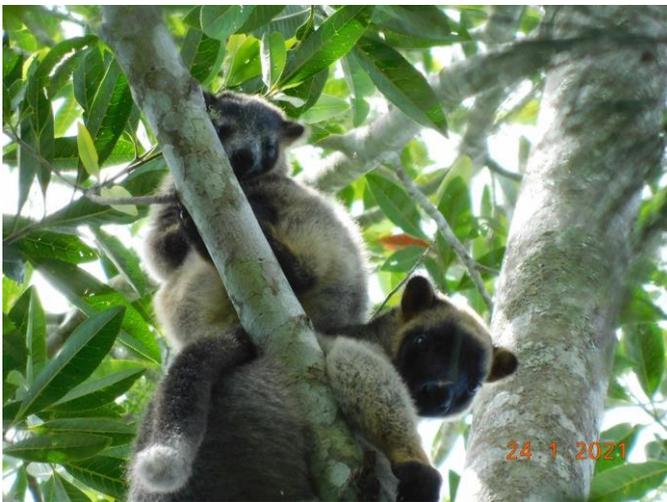
OUR WONDERFUL WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS

Contributed by Sharon Williams

How can we ever thank our wonderful wildlife photographers?

When we see images of wild animals we often feel like we are right there viewing the critter, even though we are often looking at the image from the comfort of our home. Many of us cannot get to wild places to see the animals we wish to see, so wonderful photographers bring them to us. They capture our imagination and usually teach a lot from what they **capture** through their lens.

Capturing the perfect shot is not just about luck; location, lighting and the animal placement need to be just right. Throw in a lot of talent, abundant patience, effort and a creative eye and you have yourself a wildlife photographer.



Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo (Dendrolagus lumholtzi)
Photo: Simon Burchill



© David White
Eastern tube-nosed bat (Nyctimene robinsoni)
Photo: David White

Wildlife photographers often study their subject to see how they move and what their habits are and how to best capture an image. The best of the best photographers are ethical and minimise any disturbance to the subject they are capturing. Photographing animals can also be useful for scientific studies and identifying individuals.

Photographing wildlife should be fun but it is often frustrating; the bird never sits still for moment, a leaf sits in front of the face of a possum or an animal just won't look your way. That's where patience comes in.

On many, many occasions I have stood next to a wildlife photographer with the same equipment and my photos look nothing like theirs. They just have a fabulous eye and know their subject. Some people get the most amazing shots with their phones, so it is not always about expensive equipment, but it is **fun** getting outdoors and trying to photograph your way though.

We thank the wildlife photographers for being patient, ethical, artistic and **very generous**. Without their inspiring images many of us wouldn't be able to appreciate the wonderful wildlife out there, including their habitats and habits. I think we are all extremely grateful that they share what they see and how they see it.

"A photographer went to a socialite party in New York. As he entered the front door, the host said "I love your pictures – they're wonderful; you must have a fantastic camera."

The photographer said nothing until dinner was finished, then:

"That was a wonderful dinner; you must have a terrific Stove." Sam Haskins

Our wonderful wildlife photographers, we **THANK YOU** for sharing your inspiring images and we whole-heartedly appreciate your contribution to Tree Kangaroo & Mammal Group. (Too many photographers to showcase, see more on Facebook).



Green ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirops archeri*)
Photo: Michael Williams/It's A Wildlife



Krefft's Glider (*Petaurus notatus*), subtle differences in individuals for tracking and scientific purposes.
Photos: Alan Gillanders

Thank you to everyone who has been reporting their tree-kangaroo sightings and traffic incidents. Unfortunately, we have limited signs left due to damage and theft so we're unable to respond to all signage requests. We are in the process of producing more signs so stay tuned for the new and improved designs. Until then, please continue to send in your reports to info@tree-kangaroo.net.au as these records go in to a database that can inform future wildlife protection measures.



GLIDER NEWS

Contributed by Amanda Kaiwi and Jan Bode

While little fieldwork has been undertaken in Tumoulin and Gilbey Forests of late due to ongoing rain and the shift in focus to the Windsor song meter project, group members have had a busy few months. Early on, key leaders of the project met with Mt Windsor Traditional Land Owners to outline the song meter project and establish understandings. In April, Amanda hosted Ladder Training day, supplying the ideal venue with her magnificent eucalypts. Chris, from Cairns Height Safety, presented an excellent workshop with patience, enthusiasm and professionalism. Further instruction was provided, in order for the nominated Mt Windsor tree climbers to gain practice safely securing the song meters and accompanying solar panels high up in trees. Also in April, Amanda, John and Jan met with Ecologist Don Franklin, who provided advice and expertise to draft a field data sheet for recording monitoring information in Tumoulin Forest.

May saw Rupert meet with QPWS to gain access permission and set protocols for the Mt Windsor song meter project. Mid-month, a group made a preliminary trip to inspect Piccaninny and Bettong Creek areas at Mt Windsor and set up song meter sites.



Volunteers and QPWS team surveying for song meter sites.

Within the Piccaninny location, eight song meter sites were chosen to be at least 300 metres apart, to cover a substantial area of known Yellow-bellied Glider distribution. Sites 1 to 6 occurred in what appeared to be prime habitat, based on the number of Red Mahogany (*Eucalyptus resinifera*) bearing glider sap cuts, many showing signs of recent use. North of site 6, numbers of tapped trees diminished substantially.

Two other species of trees were recorded: Rose Gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*), the larger ones being potential glider den trees, then north of site 8, White Stringybark (*Eucalyptus reducta*) was encountered, indicative of drier forest approaching the edge of glider distribution. Song meters will cover both prime and more marginal habitat, which is appropriate, as glider numbers in marginal habitat may fluctuate over the three years of the study.

June brought the completion of the first phase of the Mount Windsor project, placing song meters in a number of trees at the two sites of past Yellow Bellied Glider presence. Two teams of climbers and support personnel, all volunteers, worked over several days to secure the equipment. Later in the year the song meter data will be collected and analysed, to determine the presence, or absence, of gliders in this habitat. This process will then be repeated over the next two years.

Since the commencement of the Yellow-Bellied Glider Citizen Science project in 2010, renowned Ecologist Dr John Winter has coordinated the activities of the group in an exemplary manner. The YBG group, TKMG, gliders in particular and the environment in general, have benefited greatly from John's vast knowledge, wisdom, dedication and good humour. John is now stepping back a little from the management of the group, so he can concentrate on specific projects. Dr Alexander Watson is taking on the coordination role.



John Winter



Dr Alexander Watson

Dr Alexander Watson is an ecologist who recently moved to Cairns to work for the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC). As their regional ecologist, he manages eight ecologists who collectively work across 7 AWC sanctuaries and 2 other collaborative projects in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Prior to this, Alexander worked as the Kimberley Program Manager for WWF – Australia where he worked closely with Indigenous Rangers to protect some of the last populations of Australia's threatened fauna including night parrots, nabarlek and northern quolls. Combining a love for travel and birdwatching, and excitement for exploring new ecosystems and cultures, Alexander also works on Expedition Ships as an Expedition leader, guide and lecturer in the Kimberley, Antarctica, the sub-Antarctic Islands, Borneo and the Spice Islands among other regions.



Find us on Facebook at tree-kangaroo headquarters www.facebook.com/groups/tkmgqh



Please Post to:

Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group, Inc. (TKMG)

PO Box 1409, Atherton, QLD 4883

e-mail: info@tree-kangaroo.net

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

President: Peter Valentine peter.valentine@jcu.edu.au

Vice-President: Leanne Hales halesfnq@gmail.com

Treasurer: Simon Burchill 0407-091-347 sbburchill@gmail.com

Secretary: Amy Shima 0499-180-961 tkmg-secretary@tree-kangaroo.net

Newsletter Editor: tkmgnewsletter@gmail.com

Donations: <http://www.givenow.com.au/tkmgconservationfund>

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