

# MAMMAL MAIL

*The Newsletter of the Tree-Kangaroo and Mammal Group*

Volume 22 No 3 – June 2022



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

**Thursday 05<sup>th</sup> August – Committee Meeting 5.30pm Malanda Hotel (Members Welcome)  
PUBLIC PRESENTATION 7.30pm: Subject to be advised**

**September: TKMG Committee Meeting  
\*\* Time, date and place to be confirmed**

**October-Early November – Annual General Meeting (Members Welcome)  
Tree-kangaroo and Mammal Group 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Celebration  
\*\*Details to follow**

\*\* If you are interested in attending, please email [tkmg-secretary@tree-kangaroo.net](mailto:tkmg-secretary@tree-kangaroo.net) for times and locations.

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### **DON'T FORGET!**

If you are financial member of Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group and live on the Atherton Tablelands you are eligible to borrow 'CRITTER CAMS' to see what is foraging around in your garden.

More information on our website: [www.tree-kangaroo.net](http://www.tree-kangaroo.net)



**Find us on Facebook at tree-kangaroo headquarters** [www.facebook.com/groups/tkmghq](https://www.facebook.com/groups/tkmghq)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Peter Valentine*

Perhaps the most exciting development since our last newsletter has been the change of Government at the National level. Gone is the Government of denial; the failed leadership in a time of global crisis and national disasters. And the many years of attack on our environment through failed legislation reform, failed investment and poor environmental decisions. It is now up to the new Government to start mending the situation – urgently tackling climate change impacts; bringing renewed focus on the biodiversity crisis; correcting the damage to the Federal Department of Water and Environment; providing much improved environmental protection for our biodiversity. With potential positive support from the new Greens members of Parliament and from the newly elected Teals, we might all expect much better awareness of our plight in Parliament and stronger action from the Government. There is already much material available to the Government, including from submissions like ours and others to previous inquiries. The elevation of importance of the Environment in Cabinet is evident from the appointment of Tanya Plibersek as the new Minister. This might signal a genuine change of priority. In the meantime, conservation work continues on the ground and throughout the nation.

Vice-President Leanne Hales and I drove up to Mt Molloy recently to farewell our wonderful volunteers who were heading off to the Windsor Tablelands to make the 2022 installation of song-meters to help monitor the population of Yellow-bellied Gliders. It was a pleasure to meet the volunteers and share their enthusiasm for the project. The outstanding field skills of Rupert Russell are much appreciated and it was good to see Amanda Kaiwi and Ceinwen Edwards (members of our Committee) as part of the team. Many thanks from us to the other members of the 2022 team, Rolley and Robyn Clarke and Peter Toft. We have three more field trips for this project; retrieving the song-meters later this year and then installing and retrieving in 2023. Watch out for the call for volunteers.

This week was World Environment Day and it is highly appropriate to consider the extent to which the global environment needs all of us to take action – and likewise the extent to which we absolutely depend on our beautiful Earth and its creatures to survive. Celebrate our fellow creatures and work for the survival of all seems a good starting point. On the weekend, I enjoyed some spotlighting to see some of our endemic animals including our Yellow-bellied Glider (Fluffy Glider) and a wonderful Striped Possum. Last night I took part in a delightful radio broadcast hosted by Funky Kids Radio (part of the Schools Broadcasting Network) and supported by the Community Radio Network. It was part of the global program run by kids across the world for Endangered Species week and last night's episode was focussed on butterflies. I am always delighted to engage with kids so aware of our natural world and enthusiastic to learn more. If you have children or grandchildren, why not introduce them to SBN and the Funky Kids Radio (there's a website and an app).





## GLIDER NEWS

Up until the present, the Yellow-bellied Glider, in our part of the country, has been referred to as an unnamed northern subspecies. Genetic testing was carried out some time back to determine definitively whether or not this is the case. Recently, YBG project members have engaged in a lively, online discussion around suggestions for a suitable common name to nominate in the future, if a separate subspecies is declared. Watch this space!

The most northern population of Yellow-bellied gliders occurs on the Mount Windsor Tableland between Mt Carbine and Lakeland. The National Park, known for its towering forests (open, sclerophyll and rainforest) is a conserved nature area closed to the general public. However, scientific studies are undertaken with special permits. Mount Windsor has been the focus of activity of late for the YBG group, as volunteers worked to erect song meters and accompanying solar panels, for the 2022 Glider monitoring program. Installation was successfully completed, with details to follow in the next newsletter.



Successful placement of song meters.



# TUMOULIN POWER LINE FAUNA CROSSING INSPECTION

Thursday 24 February 2022

Caroline Sandral (Senior Environment Advisor – North, Energy Queensland), Alan Reichardt (Contract Manager, Ergon), Nigel Tucker (Biotropica) TKMG volunteers: John Winter, Amanda Kaiwi, Ceinwen Edwards, Jan Bode.



The purpose of the inspection was to assess the maintenance of fauna crossings along the powerline corridor through Tumoulin Forest Reserve with Caroline Sandral and Alan Reichardt, who are responsible for maintaining them. Nigel Tucker was invited by Caroline to accompany us to provide advice, as Biotropica prepared the Environmental Management Plan for Ergon for Tumoulin State Forest in 2010.

We met in Ravenshoe at 9:0 am and had an initial discussion before heading out to the corridor. We visited the Robinson Creek crossing which is the deepest valley and would constitute the main arboreal crossing, with its south branch a secondary one.

We spent at least two hours on site and had positive discussions with Caroline and her team. The topics discussed were:

- Shrub coverage under the lines between valleys
  - This will be maintained at about 1.5 to 2.0 m height with taller shrubs poisoned
- Tree and shrub cover in the riparian strip along Robinson Creek:
  - *Eucalyptus resinifera*, *E. grandis*, *Syncarpia glomulifera* were species that could potentially attain heights to interfere with the powerlines. They could be pollarded providing they attained a girth allowing climbing with spikes.
  - *Lophostemon confertus* was a common tree in the strip. It is generally a tree less than 20 m tall in Tumoulin forest which would not pose a problem to the overhead powerlines so would not be pollarded.
  - *Acacia* sp. was present, again not likely to attain troublesome heights. However, Nigel Tucker recommended their removal because of their canopy architecture that makes them vulnerable to wind-throw.
  - *Allocasuarina torulosa* was also present

- *Persoonia tropica*, and *Acrothamnus spathaceus* were common shrubs, particularly in the section between the treed section and the low shrub layer on the upper slopes.

Alan said that they would use Jarraff Tree Trimmers on overhanging branches along the edge of the power line clearing, but they would cause too much damage to the vegetation if used in the section under the power lines.

Three treed fauna crossings can be maintained in the section traversing Tumoulin Forest Reserve and adjacent freehold:

- Robinson Creek – the deepest valley
- Robinson Creek, South Branch
- Cedar Creek on freehold at the southern end.

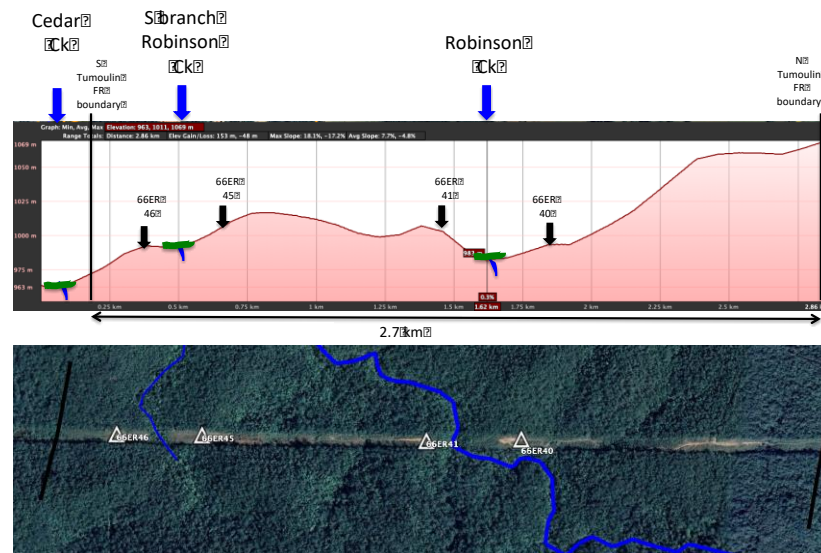


Figure Showing elevation profile of power-line corridor through Tumoulin FR, with possible treed fauna crossings with numbered towers and treed sections (green). Cedar Creek crossing is on private land.



*Persoonia tropica* is a species restricted to high-elevation moist eucalypt forests in a small area of Far North Queensland and is locally common within TFR.

Ceinwen and John came across a large example of the shrub in eucalypt forest that appeared to have been stripped bare of fruit, probably by Sulphur Crested Cockatoos

Photo: John Winter

# KEEPING WILDLIFE SAFE BY KEEPING CATS CONTAINED

Amy Shima DVM

If you enjoy our native Australian wildlife and, also have a pet cat, just a few simple actions on your part can make a **tremendous** difference in keeping our wildlife safe. Even the most content, beloved and happy pet cat can't help themselves from doing what comes naturally by hunting, injuring and killing native wildlife. This includes birds, small mammals and, indirectly, larger mammals that you wouldn't think a cat could do anything to harm. The simple solution to how to protect both our native wildlife and your pet cat is to keep the cat contained and not allow it to roam freely, particularly at night.

There are an estimated 3.3 million pet cats in Australia...that's 15 cats for every 100 people. While it is difficult to estimate the impact domestic pet cats have on wildlife but pet cats (even well-fed, well-cared for ones) will prey on a broad range of small mammals, birds and are implicated in the deaths of an estimated 230 million native animals every year. It is estimated that one pet cat will kill 110 native animals in a year. And, don't forget that cats can harm wildlife (and also cause illness in people) without lifting a paw. Cats carry the parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii* and coming into contact with cat poop in the environment can result in infections in both animals and people. For more information on toxoplasmosis, please check out these websites:

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/toxoplasmosis>

and the Wildlife Health Australia Toxoplasmosis of Australian mammal Fact Sheet:

[https://wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au/Portals/0/Documents/FactSheets/Mammals/Toxoplasmosis\\_of\\_Australian\\_Mammals.pdf](https://wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au/Portals/0/Documents/FactSheets/Mammals/Toxoplasmosis_of_Australian_Mammals.pdf)

Cats are healthier and live longer happy lives if they are kept home and not allowed to roam freely. The RSPCA notes that 'Contrary to what some might believe, cats do not need to roam to be happy.' Cats kept safely contained indoors helps to minimize the danger they pose to wildlife as well as keeping the cat safe from vehicle strike, dog attack, cat fights, snakes and other dangers.

'Cat ecology, impacts and management in Australia' an important paper published in the respected journal, *Wildlife Research* ([https://doi.org/10.1071/WRv47n8\\_ED](https://doi.org/10.1071/WRv47n8_ED)) notes that...'For pet cats, given enough political and public support, the available technical solutions for reducing impacts are simple; responsible cat ownership...early age desexing, keeping pets indoors or in a securely contained outdoor area and designating suburbs adjacent to high conservation-value areas as cat free.' It is estimated that on average, a pet cat kills 100 native animals every year...in total, this means that pet cats are killing 66,900,000 native mammals, 79,700,000 native birds and 82,900,000 native reptiles every year!



A roaming cat with its brush-tailed phascogale catch



There are fantastic designs for do-it-yourself 'catio' enclosures as well as ready-made ones available for purchase. Just do an internet search using the phrase 'pet cat enclosures' or 'catio' or 'how to build a cat run & enclosure'. There's an interesting YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExaapDpXiZE> about how cat enclosures help to protect native wildlife in Busselton, WA.



Some excellent cat enclosure ideas; keeping your cat safe and wildlife safe too.

I love cats and, until I moved to Australia, nearly always had an indoor only cat as a companion. If my living situation and circumstances were different, I might have an indoor 'moggie' but instead I choose to co-exist and focus on enjoying the amazing wildlife that enriches my life in Australia. Please do your part to keep our Australian wildlife safe and keep your cat indoors!



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*The opinions expressed in Mammal Mail are not necessarily those of the Tree Kangaroo & Mammal Group, Inc*



— for a better future —

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