


Welcome to a much belated March edition. Yet again our MM has been held up by the little technical gremlins that have been visiting (& destroying) the Ed's computer. Looking at an upgrade which should be in place soon and will mean no more late publishing dates.

'TREE MONKEYS' IN 1939 AUSTRALIA

A reader sent in links to a couple of old newspaper articles from the early 1900s discussing some tree dwelling species found in northern Australia. Thought it might be an interesting article to reflect on considering how little we still know about these amazing animals.

OUTDOOR AUSTRALIA

Some Strange Marsupials



Tree Climbers, Flyers, and Other Pouched Rarities

The Spotted Cuss-Cuss

A ROUND, almost earless head, from which protruded two large round eyes of a vivid orange colour, peered down at me from the bunched severity of the brows.

During my short-glance to bear I discerned a lurid, round body clinking with sharp-clawed "hands" and long prehensile tail to the top of a tree-trunk. Then even as I watched the creature for I could not then see that it was— began slowly to move. Up, in almost cloth-like motion, it ascended towards the tree-top, until, lost in the greenery and the gathering dusk of the tropic night, it passed from sight. It was not my first view of the spotted curlew, but it was the best I had ever had of it.

This meeting was typical of the twilight hours of this zoological curiosity in a land where such curiosities are almost legion. Often named the 'monkey-pensum,' or 'Cape York monkey,' the spotted macaque, with a range of habitat almost exclusively confined to the North Queensland bush, New Guinea, and some islands in the Torres Strait, is one of the rarest of Australian mammals, and, in so far as its popular name is concerned, among the most misnamed.

ALTHOUGH no tree-hanging as any monkey, and apart from a long eared tail and some slight facial resemblance to man's similar "cousin" it is no more monkeyish in its appearance and habits than the koala. The cue-cue is a phalanger, a marsupial suckling its young in its pouch, like the more common possums of the south, in which, of course, it is closely related.

A nocturnal animal, it spends the hours of daylight curled up in the fork of a tree, emerging at night, or at earliest in the late twilight of day, to climb among the tree-tops in search of the more succulent tough lye and larch berries upon which it lives. Then it wakes into greater activity, and, though seemingly docile at all times, becomes a regular spitter if attacked, its long, curved claws being capable of inflicting severe lacerations, and many an aboriginal hunter who has sought to handle it alive has found to his cost.—*Caroten*

Mythical Monkeys

EVER since the cow-cow *orientalis* of Ambrosia was discovered in 1911, the genus to which it belongs has been a source of interest and speculation to the biologist. As for the spotted cow-cow, the species native to the Cape York Peninsula and the only one of its genus known



the north of Queensland, and is not very plentiful even there. Every effort should be made to preserve its kind against extinction, for, unlike most other marsupials, it does no harm to the crops or pastures of man. David Fisher.

Flying Squirrels

ANIMALS that deserve to be as rigorously protected as the booby are the Australian squirrels, which naturalists call flying possums. To bush people they are "flying squirrels." These harmless, gliding creatures are fast disappearing from the settled districts through the clearing of forests and the waning zeal of gunners, who shoot them for sport. Their peculiar flight was once a common and interesting feature of night life on the eastern rivers from Queensland to Victoria, and their chattering sound in the air a familiar sound.

They can go only a short distance through the air. Springing off a lofty branch they spread the flying membrane, as parrots and fruit-eating hully and at a fair speed to the next tree. The flight is downwards, and the landing is made at varying heights from the ground according to the branches in the same way as a possum does. Where the trees are too widely separated, and they alight near the ground can be followed and catch them. The squirrels therefore need an area where there are plenty of trees.

Several species inhabit eastern Australia. Most of them are handsome creatures with beautiful bright eyes and long, soft fur. The skins are very thin, and the tails long and bushy. The largest is 17 inches (head and body), with a 20-inch tail. The upper part is black and the under part white. The yellow-bellied squirrel, of the same region, is deep orange underneath. The smallest is the pygmy squirrel, which has a head and body length of only three inches and a tail of the same length.—E.S.S.

Punched Mice

THOUGH seldom heard of the little pouched mice are to be found in many parts of the country from the eastern coast right across to the Mullabor Plain. Occasionally a nest is ploughed up on farms, and the little natives are often killed in mistake for the common, imported mouse of the barn and field. The pouched mice with one exception, are not harmful; their chief food consists of insects, but the blinger species will prey on the common mouse.

Most people look for them in the hollows of trees; the smallest kinds, however, live in holes in the ground, under logs and rocks, and in crevices. Some of these pygmies have as many as 10 young ones at a time. Such a family has to get out of the peach early, and then, like



THE CAPE YORK "MONKEY"

Note the strong grip of the tail cuscus-cus, whose movements in the tree resemble those of the monkey. The graph was taken in North Queensland, the only part of Australia where it exists.

the baby koala, they get on to the med and cling to her fur. Most of the are graceful creatures, and have pretty fur.

The largest of the group is the brown pouched mouse. It is well known in the eastern districts as the bushy-tailed small marsupial. It is found in tree hollows in low spouts. Unlike others of the genus it is a little savage, and as active on the ground as in the trees. A favourite haunt is the edge of a swamp, where it captures sitting quail, duck, swamp pheasant, and when a hunter's house is near it makes even use of the front shed as a

Though small, this nimble nocturnal can wrestle with the biggest hen on the farm. It seizes the victim by the neck and gains grip in the inevitable tumble from the roost. The subsequent violent struggle is the most exciting part of the performance. In the same way it captures many a small mammal in the hours of night. Food is

A Rare Pygmy Squirrel

WHILE timber-cutting in a forest near Toogoolawah, Queensland, Mr. Houghton caught a fully-grown male pygmy flying squirrel whose body was only two and three-quarters long, with a "feather" tail measuring a half inch. The squirrel had slender legs and hind legs, which gave it its appearance. The flying squirrel was found in the district a decade or two ago, but is rare.—Corinda.



THE POUCH'D MOUSE

A harmless little creature that lives mostly on insects.

to the Australian mainland, it has never failed to be "discovered" and "rediscovered" by every new prospector in the North Queensland bush; and rarely has it been described other than as an "animal of the monkey type." Actually, of course, it is a phalanger, just another of the many animals of the marsupial order so common to the fauna of Australia.

There are a dozen or more species and subspecies of this peculiar genus in the Andro-Malayan region, and the spotted one, or "Cape York," is the handsomest of them all. It is notable, among other things, for its soft, close-packed coat of fur, and the difference in coloration of the sexes, the male being of a yellow or rufous black colour, with white blotches on the back and sides, and the female a uniform grey.

A shy, reclusive creature rarely seen, a creature which clings monkey-like to the branches with sharp-clawed "hands" and long prehensile tail, it is perhaps no wonder that the new chum to the tropic bush of Queensland, seeing the cuscus for the first time, should mistake it, as he often does, for a member of the monkey tribe.—"Flaora."

Tree-Climbing Kangaroos

An old bushman and I one day came upon two tree-climbing kangaroos on the Atherton Tableland, west of Cairns, Queensland. They were perched in the head of a tall eucalyptus tree that stood in a small clearing. My companion tapped upon the trunk with a tomahawk. Immediately the animals began to exhibit signs of unrest, and after moving among the branches for a short time one began to descend.

When still about thirty feet above us, it launched itself into space, hit the ground with a great thud, and hurried off into the undergrowth, apparently unhurt. A few minutes later the second tree climber did the same.

My companion laughingly informed me that when there is no neighbouring tree to which they may pass, the tree-climbers always descend to the ground in this fashion. Never will one stay long in a tree if the trunk is tapped upon. He remarked that they often started men, who were got aware of their presence, when engaged in felling trees.

This rare species of mangrovia exists only in

Sydney Morning Herald February 1939

<http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/17559412?searchTerm=tree+kangaroo+tablelands>

The following items are two selected segments from the article available in the Historic Australian Newspapers 1803-1954 section of the National Library of Australia web site.

The Spotted Cus-Cus by 'Chirocween'

A ROUND, almost earless head, from which protruded two large round eyes of a vivid orange colour, peered down at me from the bunched greenery of the boughs.

Bringing my field-glasses to bear, I discerned a furred, round body clinging with sharp-clawed hands' and long prehensile tail to the fork of a tree trunk. Then, even as I watched, the creature - for I could not then see what it was - began slowly to move up, in almost sloth-like fashion, it ascended towards the tree-top until, lost in the greenery and the gathering dark of the tropic night, it passed from sight. It was not my first view of the Spotted Cus-Cus, but it was the best I had ever had of it.

This meeting was typical of the twilight habits of this zoological curiosity in a land where such curiosities are almost legion.

Often termed the 'monkey-possum' or 'Cape York Monkey,' the Spotted Cus-Cus, with a range of habitat almost exclusively confined to the North Queensland bush, New Guinea, and some islands in the Torres Strait, is one of the rarest of Australian mammals, and, in so far as its popular names are concerned, among the most misnamed.

ALTHOUGH, as tree-haunting as any monkey, and apart from a long, coiled tail and some slight facial resemblance to man's simian 'cousin' it is no more monkeyish in its appearance and habits than the koala. The cus-cus is a phalanger, a marsupial suckling its young in its pouch, like the more common possums of the south, to which, of course, it's closely related.

A nocturnal animal, it spends the hours of day-light curled up in the fork of a tree, emerging at night, or at earliest in the late twilight of day, to climb among the tree-tops in search of the most succulent bough tips and bush berries upon which it lives. Then it wakes into greater activity, and, though seemingly docile at all times, becomes a regular spitfire if attacked, its long, curved claws being capable of inflicting severe lacerations, as many an aboriginal hunter who has sought to handle it alive has found to his cost.

Tree Climbing Kangaroos by David Fisher

AN old bushman and I one day came upon two tree-climbing kangaroos on the Atherton Tableland, west of Cairns, Queensland. They were perched in the head of a tall sassafras tree that stood in a small clearing. My companion tapped upon the trunk with a tomahawk. Immediately, the animals began to exhibit signs of unrest, and, after moving among the branches for a short time, one began to descend.

When still about three feet above us, it launched itself into space, hit the ground with a great thud, and hurried off into the undergrowth, apparently unhurt. A few minutes later the second tree-climber did the same.

My companion laughingly informed me that when there is no neighbouring tree to which they may pass, the tree-climbers always descend to the ground in this fashion. Never will one stay long in a tree if the trunk is tapped upon. He remarked that they often startled men, who were not aware of their presence, when engaged in felling flees.

This rare species of marsupial exists only in the north of Queensland, and is not very plentiful even there. Every effort should be made to preserve its kind against extinction, for, unlike most other marsupials, it does no harm to the crops or pastures of man

To read the entire article & others visit

<http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/17559412?searchTerm=tree+kangaroo+tablelands>

Many thanks to 'Natascha' for submitting the links to our Info email address.

The TKMG website -
www.tree-kangaroo.net
is maintained on
a volunteer basis by
www.pesavento.biz



FUTURE FOOD FOR T-K'S IN CARE

Millaa Millaa Vine



Photo by Browyn Scott at
http://snailseveview.blogspot.com/2009/11/01_archive.html

It was brought to the attention of TKMG during a committee meeting that the food supply for T-k's in care was becoming harder & harder to source. Being renowned as 'choosy' or particular in their choice of food plants, the T-k's aren't the easiest patients to prepare meals for.

The Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo is primarily a leaf eater, but also occasionally consumes fruits and flowers from quite a wide variety of native rainforest trees. It is also known to feed on the leaves of wild tobacco and lantana, both invasive weeds. They don't feed on Eucalyptus foliage, which is high in certain toxic compounds and can only be utilised by other species such as possums and the Koala.

In recognition of the critical need for a secure food supply for T-k's in care and captivity it was decided that we could help our carers by purchasing specific plant species & planting them on their property. The outcome is that trees have been purchased and planted.

The first planting was of some 60 T-k food trees for T-k carer Margit Cianellis. The trees were purchased by TKMG from the TRC Community Revegetation Unit nursery and planted by Conservation Volunteers Abroad in April.

Another 120 T-k food trees were planted at T-k carer Karen Coombes' place. These trees were also bought by TKMG from the Tablelands Regional Council's Community Revegetation Unit nursery and planted by Karen with the help of TKMG members Ilona Moerman and Ceinwen Edwards in early May.

What a fantastic job, if you would like to help with future T-k food plantings then let us know.

THANKYOU TO TKMG FOR TK FOOD TREES!!

By: Dr Karen Coombes (Tree kangaroo researcher, rescuer and rehabilitator)

I would like to thank the TKMG for their generosity for the donation of 120 rainforest trees for food trees for tree kangaroos in care.

If you didn't already know, we rescue tree roos and when we have one or more in care after a rescue, we need to feed them rainforest leaves and we need to pick lots of them and daily! They are very fussy!!! We do have a large property with rainforest, however, we need to be able to reach the branches and the majority of those in the forest are too high to reach.

So we plant "tree roo favourite" food trees when we can so that we have plenty of smaller trees on hand.

So I am very grateful to the TKMG for their generous donation and the TRC for the trees and the loan of their digger. In addition we must thank Cienwen, Ilona and her father for their invaluable time in helping to plant them all!!

Thankyou very much. I am sure the tree roos will be very grateful also!!

Further Reading:

Native food plant lists for our Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo, possums, Flying foxes, Gliders and Cassowaries are available on our web site.

Visit and select "Food Plants List" from the right hand menu to see "Habitat Plantings – Food Plants May 2010" at <http://www.tree-kangaroo.net/>

Black Bean



Photo by Mary Loudon



Photo by Mary Loudon



Photo by Mary Loudon

Photos:
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre/plants_fungi/blackbean.asp

THANKS' TO TKMG FOR THE DARTGUN

By: Dr Karen Coombes (Tree kangaroo researcher, rescuer and rehabilitator)

A very big Thankyou to the TKMG for purchasing a tranquilliser gun for us to use for tree kangaroo rescues!!

In the past, tree kangaroo rescues were performed without the use of such a handy device, which was very difficult, until I was undertaking my PhD on Lumholtz tree kangaroos. Of course I needed one then so I had the loan of one from JCU in Cairns.

However, upon completion of my PhD in 2005 I had to give the dart gun back to JCU. By this time we had gotten spoilt and needed a dart gun for rescues. As you could imagine, nearly all rescues involve getting a tree kangaroo out of a tree. Not an easy task without a dart gun! Usually ends up with us all chasing the tree roo after it jumped from the tree and this is not good for them, very stressful for everyone especially the tree roo! It can be even more difficult if there are only a couple of you, which is usually the case. And of course you have to be able to run faster than a tree roo. They can't outrun a dog but they can outrun humans!!!

Furthermore, most tree roo rescues occur outside business hours which make it even harder to borrow a dart gun from anyone.

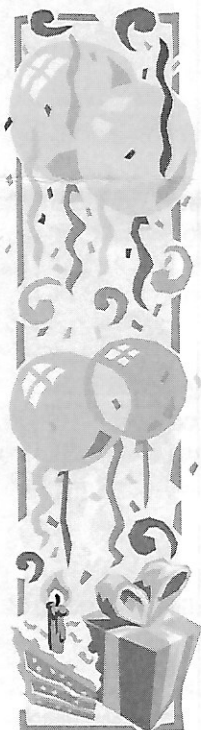
For example, the last rescue (before the purchase) we had to borrow a dart gun from CSIRO and then send someone all the way over to Cairns Wildlife Safari at Koah to buy the tranquilliser drug and this took hours. Then the gun wasn't working properly and we were lucky in the end to get her down from the large Mango tree she was in. A dog had bitten her and we had to rescue her for treatment. I will tell you "Becky's" story next newsletter!

We have rescued a young female tree roo since the purchase of the gun, "Sophie" (her story is also in this newsletter). Her rescue went as smooth as you could hope and it is all due to the fact that we had a dart gun, darts and the tranquilliser all on hand.

You never know when you are going to get that call!! So we are VERY grateful to the TKMG for their generosity and it has been put to good use already!!! Thankyou!!

HAPPY 21ST TO RAINFOREST HABITAT

By: Dr Karen Coombes (Tree kangaroo researcher, rescuer and rehabilitator)



Rainforest Habitat celebrated its 21st birthday last weekend. Neil and I were very privileged to be invited to their luncheon on Sunday. A great day.

For those of you who are not aware, Rainforest Habitat in Port Douglas, is 1 of only 2 wildlife parks in the world that has Lumholtz tree kangaroos!! The other is David Fleay's nature Park near Brisbane.

Rainforest Habitat take our rescued tree kangaroos that can not be released back into the wild and give them a great life in captivity where are part of a successful breeding program and they are cared for with the highest level of pride and dedication, thankyou!!

They currently have 4 females and one of those "Gennie" has a 9mth old male joey (they did have a male, Jake, but unfortunately he has pass away of old age – not a bad way to live out your life if you cant be in the wild with all those girls).

So if you ever get the chance, please go and visit and have "brekkie with the birds" or "lunch with the lorikeets"! It's great and highly recommended!

They also announced a name and logo change on Sunday.

They are now called "Wildlife Habitat" and their new logo incudes a cassowary and of course a Lumholtz tree kangaroo.

Congrats to Pip and Charles Woodward, Michael Woodward, Terry Carmichael, Claire and all the staff!

Thankyou for looking after our tree roos!! Happy birthday "Wildlife Habitat"!! Looking forward to many more.

Bat Conservation International

Wild about Bear:

Grills Discovery Channel over Anti-conservation Message

By Nina Fascione (Executive Director, Bat Conservation International)

A recent Discovery Channel episode of *Man vs. Wild* featured Bear Grylls gleefully killing bats with a homemade club. The clip, which shows Grylls throwing a flame in a cave to "smoke out" the bats, swatting them to the ground and then stomping on them, has aired internationally and been posted on YouTube, allowing for continued access.

Though BCI understands the show is about survival, they feel that this clip perpetuates negative attitudes toward bats and could generate senseless copycat activity and/or the type of vandalism that is driving many bat species to the brink of extinction. Only four months ago, a Kentucky man was sentenced to eight months in jail after pleading guilty to beating to death 105 endangered Indiana bats.

Please express your disappointment at this anti-conservation message by filling out the feedback form on Discovery Communications website. Let the Discovery executives know:

- This episode undermines decades of bat conservation efforts
- Bats are an important part of a healthy ecosystem. They eat agricultural pests, disperse seeds to replenish the rainforest and pollinate a variety of plants. Many bats are endangered and the loss of a single species can have ramifications throughout the ecosystem.
- Viewers should be informed that killing bats-or even disturbing them-may be illegal depending on the species and country.
- We would like Discovery Channel to ensure this edition of *Man vs Wild* and related footage is not aired again and that this footage is removed from Youtube, the Discovery Channel website and all other communications
- We hope Discovery Channel uses all its nature programming to forward conservation efforts.

Note: We are thankful that Mr Grylls didn't sink his teeth into the Olive Python a week or two ago, although he did remove it from where he found it to over the other side of the creek. Maybe members could email SBS , which shows the programme Monday nights, asking them to refrain from airing this bat episode.

ALBINO FRETAIL & FRIEND



Photo: http://www.tolgabathospital.org/hospital_thebats.htm

News News News News News

NEW TKMG COMMITTEE

After long term stints in the job, the President, Treasurer and Secretary will all be definitely stepping down at the September AGM.

Anyone wishing to nominate (or nominate another person) for one of these positions, please contact the Secretary Ian Sinclair (details on back page).

Also, **consider becoming a committee member.**

NEW POSITIONS & MARKETS

We need a person to take on the position of **Merchandising Officer** handling sales, outlets and an online service (to be set up).

We are also seeking people to assist with our **Yungaburra Market stall** (fourth Saturday of the month)

Please contact the Secretary Ian Sinclair (details on back page)

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Thurs 3rd June 2010
5:30PM

Malanda Hotel

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

Dr Scott Burnett

'Using Owls to monitor threatened mammals – a North Queensland case study'

15th July 7:30PM

Malanda Hotel

HELEN ADAMS

Helen Adams, a retired BRICMA Co-ordinator, passed away at the end of February & her funeral was on 04 March 2010 in Mareeba.

Helen was renowned as a dedicated conservationist and a driving force in many land management projects including Landcare, TREAT, the Bat Hospital and Envirocare.

Helen's wishes were to be cremated in Atherton & her ashes spread on Lake Tinaroo so she could travel the Barron River as soon as the dam overflowed.

Our condolences & kindest wishes go out to Helen's family.

Billboard

Billboard

Billboard

Tablelands Low Carbon Diet Challenge

Reduce your carbon footprint –



take the Low Carbon Diet Challenge

The Low Carbon Diet helps people reduce their carbon footprint at home. It's all about making simple and low-cost changes to your everyday actions to reduce the amount of CO₂ your household produces. The Low Carbon Diet can help families reduce their carbon footprint by up to 2000kg per year and save \$\$\$! Find out more at www.climatesmart.qld.gov.au

Come to the launch of the

Tablelands Low Carbon Diet Challenge

and find out how your family can save money and help the environment

- 7.30pm, Wednesday 9th June 2010
- Malanda Showgrounds Supper Room

Low Carbon Diet
A Queensland Government initiative

Happy 21st to the Rainforest Habitat

WPSQ: Spotted-tailed Quoll National Recovery Plan

This National Recovery Plan for the spotted-tailed quoll, *Dasyurus maculatus*, is the first national recovery plan prepared for the species.

The Plan details the species distribution, habitat, conservation status, threats, and recovery objectives and actions necessary to ensure the long-term survival of the spotted-tailed quoll.

This is one of those very rare occasions that we can all have our input into such an important document. Wildlife Queensland encourages you to please make a submission.

The draft plan can be downloaded at <http://www.wildlife.org.au/projects/quolls/index.html#news>. Comments are due by 19 May.

Feral Animals

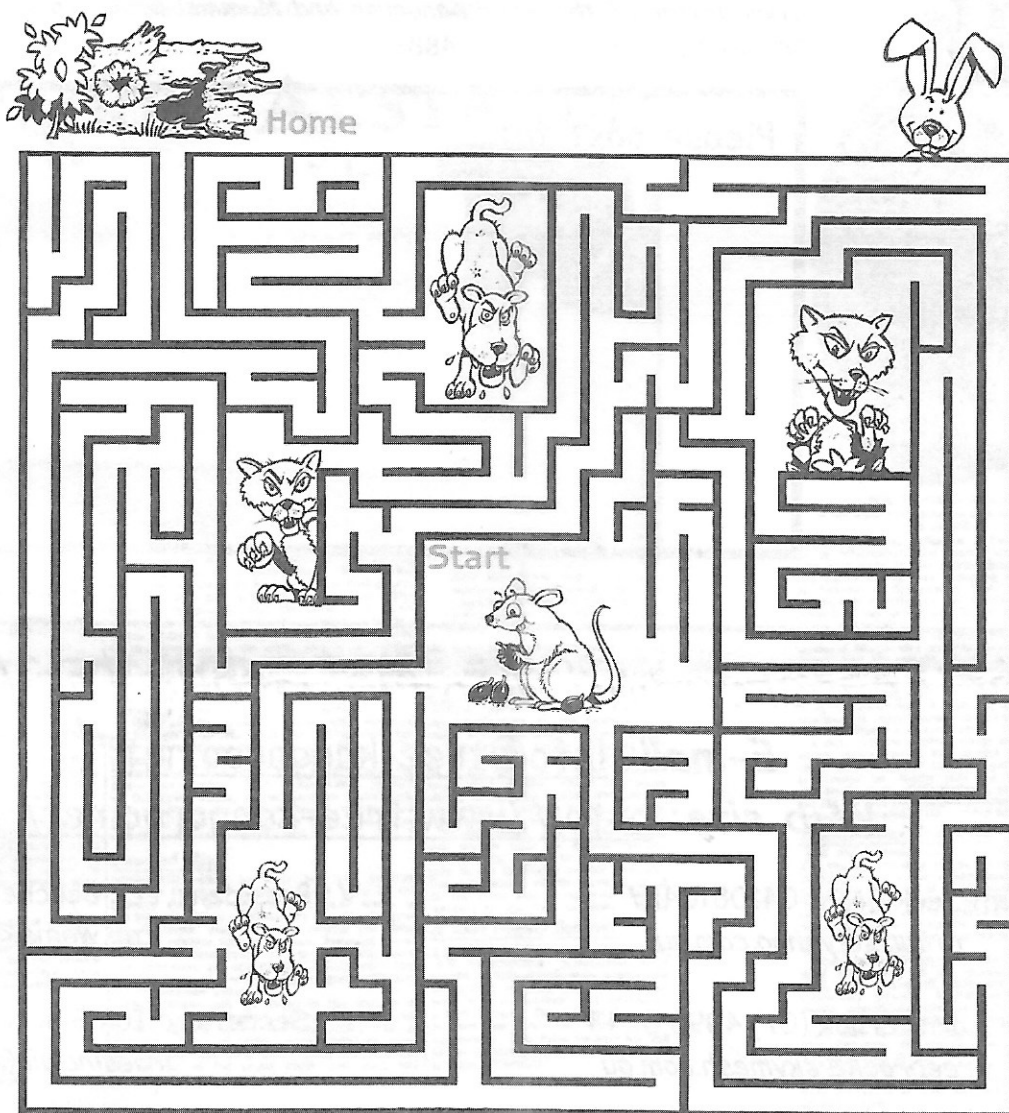
Feral pigs cause a lot of damage by digging up vegetables & plant roots and causing erosion. They destroy crops, hurt lambs & small native animals.

Rabbits eat vast amounts of farmers' pastures, and crops or destroy native plants, allowing weeds to take over. Feral cats kill and eat small marsupials, birds and reptiles. Wild dogs attack farm animals and pets.

Try this game with your friends.

Native animals are most likely to be hunted by feral animals while they are looking for food.

The dunnart is a small ground marsupial that can be easily surprised by feral animals. Below he is looking for food on the ground. Can you help him avoid the jaws of the feral cats and wild dogs and reach home safely.



What's On?

Public Meeting Dr Scott Burnett

'Using Owls to monitor
threatened mammals – a
North Queensland case
study'

**Malanda Hotel
7:30PM
Thursday 15th July**



Lumholtz tree-kangaroo, April 2010 Photo by Laurie Perks
Send in your Mammal Photo for this spot



Drawing by William Cooper

Mammal Mail

10ewsletter of the Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group Inc.
PO Box 1409, Atherton, Q, 4883

December 2009

Please post to:



Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group Inc (TKMG)

E-mail: info@tree-kangaroo.net

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

President: Jack Grant 0410810427
ptiloris@yahoo.com.au

V. President: Lee Beecheno 0439 540948
Lee.woma@gmail.com

Treasurer: Larry Crook (07) 4096 8243
freebrook@skymesh.com.au

Secretary: Ian Sinclair (07) 4096 6690
iroesinclair@bigpond.com

Newsletter: Lee Beecheno 0439 540948 Lee.woma@gmail.com