



Mammal Mail

Newsletter of the Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group Inc.

March 2004

Hypsi Forest and Tree Kangaroo Recovery Project gets the Green light

The Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group received the news that their Hypsi Forest and Tree-kangaroo Recovery project will receive \$30,000 funding under the Federal Natural Heritage Trust Envirofund program.

Hypsi Forest is a local endangered rain forest type (type 1b) that gets its name from the delightful Musky Rat Kangaroo, otherwise known as "*Hypsiprynodon moschatus*" that makes this forest type its home.

Musky Rat Kangaroos are our smallest and arguably most unusual macropod. They are dark brown in colour and by day can be seen foraging in the litter on the forest floor. Much of their diet consists of forest fruits and seeds which they help to disperse through their feeding and hoarding habits. They nurture their young in a pouch, usually giving birth to twins (but 3 and even 4 young have been recorded).

Tania Simmons, TKMG president, explained the focus of the project. "Like most of our projects we aim to raise community awareness of our wonderful wildlife and promote local activities to protect and build on remaining habitat. We need to realise how important remnant vegetation is, how we need

Tree Planting Dates

6th March	Brett & Carmen Fry	700
	Malanda	
13 th March	Reg & Olive Waltham	1200
	Millaa Millaa	
20 th March	Allan & Sharon Waller	1500
	Millaa Millaa	
TBA	John & Dianne Daley	3000
	Millaa Millaa	

Plantings are signposted and will commence at 8.30am.

Bring sun protection, water, covered footwear, gloves, and a trowel if you want. The holes will all be dug.

Morning tea is supplied.

See page 2 for more information and/or phone Larry Crook on 4096 8243.

See you there!

to protect it and build linkages for safe movement of wildlife."

Partners to the project include Eacham Shire Council, Community Revegetation Unit (ESC), Barron River Integrated Catchment Management Association, TREAT and QPWS Centre for Tropical Restoration.

Two properties in the Millaa area, known to be important for Tree-Kangaroos and with remnants of the endangered Hypsi Forest, have been selected.

Each landholder involved with the project will receive a detailed report on the flora and fauna on their property along with a professionally developed property wildlife

Continued Page 2

habitat management plan. Planting of 4500 trees will be strategically located to protect and build onto remnant forest and a field day will be held to promote the project's program of farm habitat management.

Tania invited the community to become involved. "We look forward to lots of community support at our tree planting and field days."

TKMG members Larry Crook and Kylie Freebody have been selected to manage the project. They co-managed last year's project, *Conservation of Remnant Vegetation on Private Property on the Atherton Tablelands – Stage 2*, with Sue Mathams. The Hypsi Project ties in with the Millaa Millaa component of that project, linking Waltham's plantings with those on Waller's and Daley's.

Tree Planting details

Brett and Carmen Fry 8.30 am Saturday 6th March

700 trees will be planted to complete a tree corridor project linking forest on the Ithaca River to forest on the Johnstone River.

The property is at rural number 472 on Glen Allyn Road, near Malanda. Glen Allyn Road is opposite the Malanda High School and the BP garage on the Malanda-Millaa road.

Reg and Olive Waltham 8.30 am Saturday 13th March

1200 trees will be planted to provide a corridor that will link Waltham's trees with trees on Waller's property.

The property is first on your left on Mullins Road, Millaa Millaa. Mullins Road is just under 4 kms along the Old Palmerston Highway. You turn off at Millaa Millaa opposite the big yellow building.

Allan and Sharon Waller 8.30 am Saturday 20th March

1500 trees will be planted to fill in gaps in regrowth on a creek system on the property.

Waller's property is over the road (Mullins) from Waltham's. Entry to their place is off the Old Palmerston Highway, first turn left after Mullins Rd. Rural number 397

This tree-kangaroo was photographed in the pine trees on the corner of Mullins Road and the Old Palmerston Highway on the Waller property.

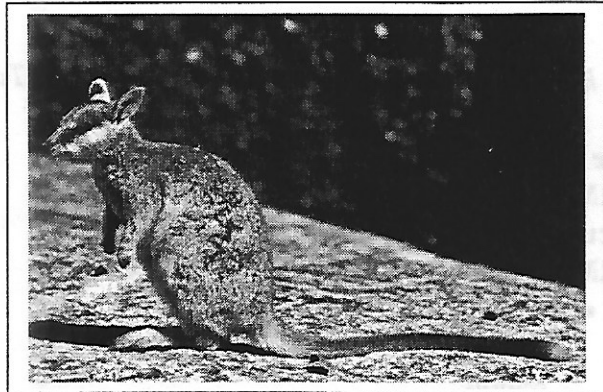


John and Dianne Daley To be advised

3000 trees are destined for this property to build linkages along the North Beatrice River.

Mareeba Rock-wallaby (*Petrogale mareeba*)

Description: Grey-brown; paler sandy brown-buff on underparts, forearms, hind legs and at base of tail. Some specimen's are dark brown to almost black. Pale check stripe; mid-dorsal head stripe occasionally present; dark axillary patch. The tail darkens distally with slight brush at tip; dirty white tail tip of variable length occasionally found in some southern populations. The general colouration of Mareeba Rock-wallaby is similar to Allied, Unadorned and Sharman's Rock wallabies; population colours vary with substrate.



Habitat and Range:

Steep rocky slopes, cliffs, gorges, rocky outcrops and boulders piles within open forest and elements of deciduous vine thicket. From Mareeba north to the Mitchell River near Mt Carbine, west to Mungana, south-west to the Undara Lava Tunnels and south to the Herbert River near Herbert River Falls National Park. Endemic to Queensland.

Little is known of biology of this species.

Species information:

Weight:

Males: 3.6-5.1 (4.5) kg;

Females: 3.1-4.5 (3.8) kg.

Head & Body Length:

Males: 425-548 (485) mm

Females: 425-500 (471) mm

Tail Length:

Males: 420-530 (486) mm

Females: 415-467 (441) mm

Status: Rare (NCA)

Ref: Johnson, P. (2003) *Kangaroos of Queensland*, Queensland Museum/EPA (Available for perusal at the TKMG meeting – see below).

Photo: QPWS

TKMG Public Meeting

Talks will be given by Shane Masterson on his research work with the Mareeba Rock Wallaby and by Sandy Claque on her work with False Water Rat & Counting Bats.

Also, the *Wet Tropics Mammal poster* will be launched (see page 4).

Thursday, 4th March, 7:30 - 9:30pm
Malanda Hotel

All Welcome (Supper Provided - gold coin donation)

Draft Natural Resources Management Plan

By Kylie Freebody

*We have only TWO WEEKS to comment on the **Targets** in the Plan. Due 15th March, 2004.*

The new Wet Tropics NRM Board (FNQ NRM Ltd) has released a series of documents that make up the new Draft NRM Plan. Some aims of the Plan include;

- the identification of natural resource management priorities across the region;
- the identification of three levels of targets and the proposal of cost-effective actions; and,
- the provision of regional direction for future funding and to prioritise investments through an Investment Plan.

On completion, the Plan will comprise the following documents under the series title, 'Sustaining the Wet Tropics';

Volume 1 Background to the Plan (draft available now)

*Volume 2 Condition Reports
A: Biodiversity Conservation (draft available now)
B: Sustainable Use (draft available now)*

*Volume 3 C: Capacity Building and Institutional Change
An Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan in the Wet Tropics (brochure available)*

Volume 4 A Regional Plan for Natural Resource Management

Volume 5 An Investment Strategy

Part of the Plan development involves setting targets against which progress can be measured. These targets will guide planning, on-ground activities and provide benchmarks against which progress can be measured. As the Board's Chair, Mike Berwick, states; 'managing natural resources for sustainability

and ecosystem health is an obligation of stakeholders at all levels'. **Community input is vital to set realistic targets that meet the needs and reflect the priorities of the community, industry and the environment.** This is our chance as a community to make sure that the targets set are community-driven and will influence where and how funds are invested.

The Board (FNQ NRM) has requested the community to provide input into the plan by commenting on the documents and in particular by commenting on **targets** that will be a major component of the Plan. **It is these targets that will determine where all money coming into the region for NRM purposes will be spent. IT IS CRUCIAL THAT THESE TARGETS ARE AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITIES.** Any persons working in NRM or interested in the management of our natural resources should comment on these preliminary targets.

The Board has requested that interested parties provide feedback on the targets in the next two weeks so comments can be incorporated prior to the next public meetings. The Stage 2 series of public meetings across the region will be held in approximately three weeks (Beginning with Ravenshoe on Friday, 19th March).

PLEASE have your say!

Documents and future session details are available at www.nrmboard.org.au OR www.rainforest-CRC.jcu.edu.au OR can be obtained by contacting FNQ NRM Ltd on phone 4061 6477, Fax 4061 4677 or email, nrmboard@znet.net.au.

Local wildlife on show

Local wildlife will be on show at the Malanda Hotel on March 4th when the Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group launch the new Wet Tropics Mammal Posters.

The posters feature the unique native wildlife many of us take for granted. But as Tania Simmons, TKMG president explains, "It's local wildlife that brings us our millions in tourism dollars. We'd be crazy not to do our best to hang on to that asset. The posters are a great way for locals to learn more about our wildlife and the need to conserve their habitat."



Katrina McPherson gets to know her local wildlife better with her new Wet Tropics Mammal Poster. Katrina won the poster at her QPWS Junior Rangers after school activities at Lake Eacham.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority and the Cairns Post sponsored the posters. The TKMG has a limited number of posters available for a gold coin donation. Money raised will go towards purchasing radio

tracking collars for monitoring movements of individual tree-kangaroos.

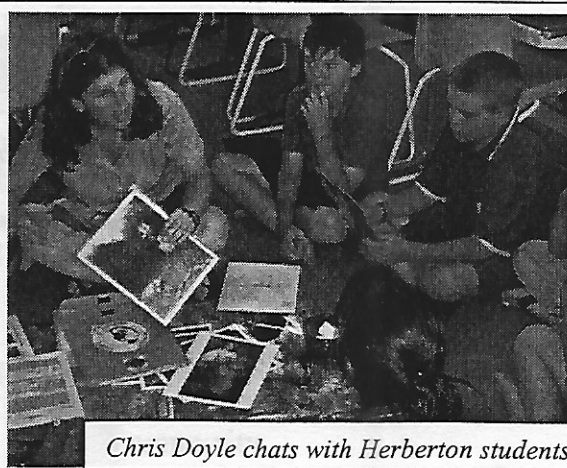
The posters will be available at the TKMG public meeting at the Malanda Hotel, March 4th, 7.30-9.30pm. The night will also feature two local speakers giving a presentation on Mareeba Rock Wallabies and the False Water Rat.

Tania urged local residents to look after local wildlife. "We need to stop clearing habitat and plant more trees to build linkages between forests. We can all be more careful on our roads, especially in the

early morning, evenings and at night, to avoid hitting wildlife. The other key threat to local wildlife is roaming cats and dogs. By preventing dogs and cats from straying, local wildlife would be much better off."

Tree-kangaroo goes to school

Students from Herberton State School had a lesson with a difference last November when they were visited by a range of visitors including a young tree-kangaroo, Susan, and education staff from the Roger Williams Park Zoo based at Rhode Island, USA.



Chris Doyle chats with Herberton students

Chris Doyle, Education Coordinator for the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program at the

schools and we Australian school".

Zoo, explained, "Each year, since 1994, researchers have travelled to the Huon Peninsula of Papua New Guinea to study the Matchies tree-kangaroo and its habitat. The Conservation Education Program started in 1999, involving an art exchange program between PNG and USA wanted to include an

Continued Page 6

The exchange has been so successful that it has become a permanent part of the curriculum presented in both PNG and USA schools. The students seem to benefit greatly from this exchange of ideas, questions/answers, and artwork. This year, the program was expanded to include Herberton State School.

Students at the school participated in specially prepared activities focusing on the connections indigenous people have to the natural world and, in particular, tree-kangaroos.

The Tree Kangaroo & Mammal Group organized the day with help from TREAT (Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands) and Far North Queensland Wildlife Rescue tree-kangaroo carer, and TKMG committee member, Margit Cianelli. Margit brought Susan along.

TKMG president, Tania Simmons explained the connection between the USA Zoo, tree-

kangaroo research in PNG and the local school. "Like PNG, the Atherton Tablelands is home to a unique group of animals known as 'Tree Kangaroos' – they are found nowhere else in the world – apart from zoos. We are fortunate enough to still have populations of Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroos locally. Examining how we manage our landscape and comparing that with other cultures is an important conservation tool for tree-kangaroo management.

"The children were fascinated to learn more about both native PNG and native American cultures and were especially thrilled to see a real tree-kangaroo in their classroom."

Susan the tree-kangaroo was orphaned when her mother was killed on the road. Taking Susan into schools teaches children more about their local wildlife and warns them of the threat that roads and dogs pose to wildlife.

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

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Drawing by W. Cooper