



Mammal Mail

Newsletter of the Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group

July - September 2001

Tree-kangaroo Surveys on Case-Study Properties

Earlier this year, John Kanowski, Research Fellow with the Rainforest Co-operative Research Centre based at Griffith University, was contracted by TKMG to assess the habitat and conservation requirements of tree-kangaroos on four case-study properties. The case-study properties of the project, *Conservation of remnant vegetation on private property on the Atherton Tablelands*, include dairy, cattle and tourism enterprises. These were described in detail by Project Manager Sue Mathams in the last issue of *Mammal Mail* and there is an update on page 3 of this issue. This article, written by John Kanowski, refers to his preliminary work on the project.

The work involved some field surveys and (harder still) some thinking. The field surveys, based on searches for tree-roo scat, scratches and the animals themselves, were conducted to determine the occurrence of tree-kangaroos on each property. These surveys were supplemented with information on their occurrence in nearby remnants (compiled from various sources including the TKMG community survey). Following the surveys, I had to consider the conservation requirements of tree-kangaroos on each case-study property. That is, I had to estimate the size of

the population of tree-kangaroos on each property, judge whether the population was large enough to survive on its own (by reference to ecological theory), speculate as to the likely sources of tree-kangaroos immigrating to each property from surrounding remnants and, from all this, come up with a list of actions which might help conserve the population of tree-kangaroos on each property.

Full details of the survey are in the report, *The habitat and conservation requirements of tree-kangaroos on case-study*

properties in the dairy, cattle and ecotourism industries, available from TKMG or myself. For the remainder of the article I would just like to comment on some of the main points to emerge from the work.

All four case-study properties surveyed in this project were found to support tree-kangaroos in remnant and regrowth rainforest. These and similar properties with remnant vegetation make an important contribution to the conservation of tree-kangaroos on the tablelands, firstly by providing habitat, and secondly by providing refuge and dispersal

Continued page 2

corridors for animals migrating from one remnant to another. Most encouragingly, the maintenance and, indeed, enhancement of remnant vegetation on each case-study property appeared to be compatible with the conduct of the primary farm business, be that dairy, cattle or tourism.

However, none of the case-study properties surveyed in this project is likely to be able to support a population of tree-kangaroos by itself in perpetuity. Ecological theory suggests that a minimum of 50 – 500 individuals are required to maintain genetic integrity in populations over the long term. On the tablelands, that implies that remnants must be in the order of 50 – 500 ha to independently support a population of tree-kangaroos – few privately owned remnants are that large. In most, small, remnants, the maintenance of tree-kangaroo populations is likely to require the continued immigration of individuals from nearby remnants - to maintain the gene pool, recolonise after catastrophe

and so on. This was the case for all four case-study properties surveyed in this project.

For this reason, the conservation of large remnants which support abundant populations of tree-kangaroos must be a key component of any strategy to conserve tree-kangaroos on the tablelands. For example, the large remnant on the upper slopes of the Malanda shield volcano (owned by Barry Pember and others) is likely to be critical to the conservation of tree-kangaroos in properties in the upper Barron and upper Johnstone catchments, by providing a steady stream of immigrants to those properties. Likewise, the Curtain Fig and nearby 'Mabi' forests are probably the major source of tree-kangaroos dispersing across the tablelands between Malanda, Yungaburra and Atherton. TKMG may want to consider ways it could assist landowners conserve those few key remnants which support large populations of tree-kangaroos on the tablelands.

A related issue is that tree-kangaroos must be able to readily disperse across the landscape if they are to persist in small remnants on private land. The successful dispersal of tree-kangaroos across the tablelands would be enhanced by the creation of habitat corridors, or at least 'stepping stones' of rainforest vegetation, from remnants to surrounding properties, and by reducing the incidence of road-kills and dog attacks on dispersing animals.

Finally, I would like to thank (i) the owners of the case-study properties - Ross Chapman, Mark Mapper, Kerry and Barb Kehoe and Raphael Shlomi - for providing access to their properties and for sharing information about their tree-kangaroos; (ii) Ross Chapman, Lars Kazmeier, Terry Reis, Peter Grimbacher and Natasha Witting for helping conduct the surveys; and (iii) TKMG for organising the project, especially Tania Murphy, John Winter, Margit Cianelli, Beth Stirn and Sue Mathams

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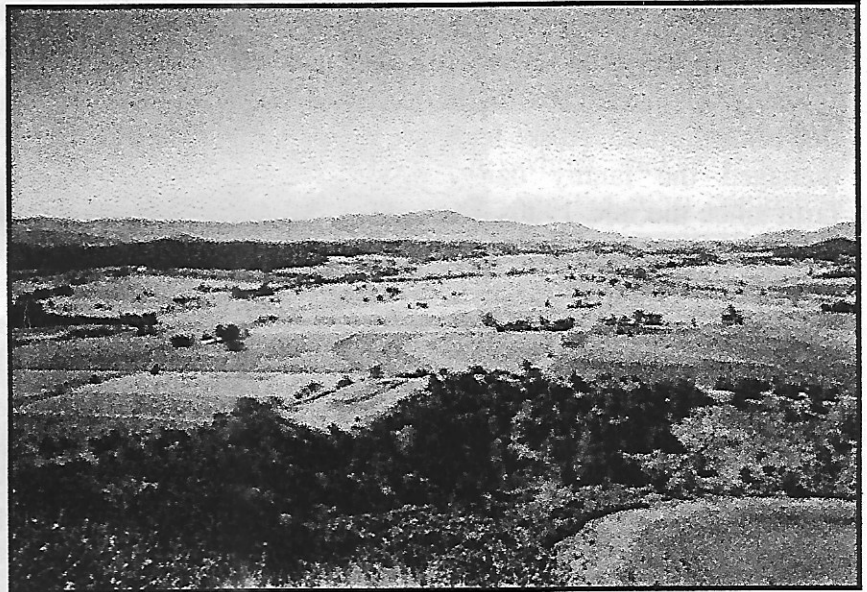
Have a ball on Sunday November 11th
(See page 14 for details)

....getting to know the landholders

Over the past three months Project Manager **Sue Mathams** has been visiting the case-study landholders to find out how they operate their properties and what they do that specifically benefits wildlife habitat. Sue reports:

Some of this work has involved a steep learning curve for me particularly in the dairy and beef industries and I now know that happy cows are better milk producers and that a "few head of (beef) cattle" appears to be the *norm* on the Tablelands. The other industry that we are targeting is the eco-tourism industry which could also be called nature-based tourism to reflect the diversity of activities that can occur in natural settings eg. Mt Quincan offers peace and privacy in a natural environment whereas Jungle Tours offer adventure safaris for an up close and personal wildlife experience. But most importantly, I have learnt that visits to Mt Quincan should always be timed to coincide with the pumpkin muffins being released from the oven!

From these discussions with landholders a case-study for each property will be produced providing information on the landholder, the property and management. This information will then be distributed to the different



View of Quincan Crater looking across to Eacham and Peeramon

industries, making use of existing information networks. For example, with the dairy industry, articles will be sent to the local Dairy Farmers newsletter and presentation may be given to discussion groups. For nature-based tourism a field day (morning) visiting Mt Quincan and the Jungle Tours property has been planned for 11 November (See advertisement on page 2). This field day will introduce the case-study properties (and landholders), and provide information on vegetation and wildlife habitat management.

Management Plans and on-ground works are another component of this project. The Plans will be produced through discussions with the landholders and will draw on assessments of the property and surrounding landscape eg. John Kanowski's Tree-kangaroo survey work. Each Plan will be a practical document to guide the landholders future on-ground works. On-ground works at these properties organised by TKMG include: an interpretive trail focussing on tree-kangaroos at Mt Quincan and 1000 trees to be planted and fencing installed at Jungle Tours.

Oops! The fotos in last issues "Gourmet Gliders" article were taken by Brian Townsend of Fundy Nat.Park.

An overview of the case-study properties

Chapman's Dairy Farm "Merragallen Park" - Malanda

Landholders: Chapman family
Purchased property: 1962

Property size: 128 ha
Land use: Dairy Farm

Ross Chapman is a TKMG member and his property has been used for members to view tree-kangaroos. Ross has managed the family dairy farm since the mid 1980s. It is located 5km south-west of Malanda. The property was originally extensively cleared for dairying with only small patches of remnant vegetation and advanced regrowth type 1b & 5b rainforest (both types are endangered) remaining along the creek.



Ross has revegetated the entire creek line (approximately 17 000 trees) creating a wildlife corridor and habitat. To protect the plantings from cattle Ross has erected 5km of fence, installed a hardened creek crossing and 26 watering points (troughs) to restrict cattle accessing the creek. Ross's current land management practices not only benefit wildlife but also improve production for his dairy eg. the revegetation work provides shade and shelter for stock and excluding stock from the creek reduces mustering time.

From 1990, with the assistance of different tree planting schemes,

The photo shows Ross with an Echidna that sauntered in at milking time.

Mappas Beef Cattle Property - Malanda

Landholder: Mark Mappas
Purchased property: 1989

Property size: 20 ha
Current land use: Beef cattle

Mark is semi-retired and derives only a part-income from running 30 to 40 head of cattle on the property. The property, originally part of a dairy farm that had been extensively cleared, now supports only small patches of endangered type 1b rainforest regrowth along a creek which forms the western boundary of the property. It is this creek, a tributary of the North Johnstone River, that is part of the Anderson Road Landscape Linkage Project, a

revegetation project to link Pearamon Scrub with the Johnstone River Estate. Project work has already commenced on Mark's property with QPWS (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service) fencing off a steep section of the creek and installing a hardened watering point for cattle. 1200 trees were planted by TREAT (Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands) in March this year.

Continued page 5

Extra funding approved

The Conservation of Remnant Vegetation on Private Property on the Atherton Tablelands project will receive extra Commonwealth funding of \$30,000 for 2001/2002 from the Natural Heritage Trust.

TKMG CASE STUDIES UPDATE

Jungle Tours Property - Yungaburra

Landowner: Raffi Shlomi
Purchased property: 2000

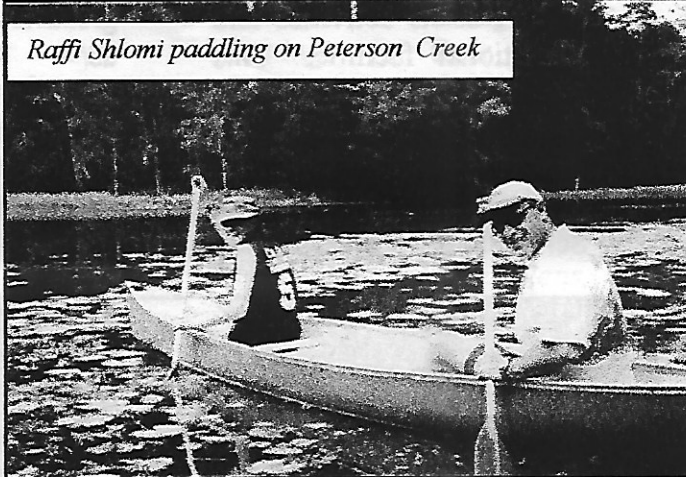
Property size: 15 ha
Current land use: Tours

This property has only recently been purchased and is in the early stages of development.

Jungle Tours operate small safaris to different natural areas for people to experience native wildlife. The property at Yungaburra is

situated on the banks of Peterson Creek with a relatively intact remnant of riparian type 5b rainforest. Guides currently operate canoeing and spotlighting tours at the property. *Jungle Tours* have received council approval to build a 30 bed backpacker hostel on the site.

Raffi Shlomi paddling on Peterson Creek



To improve the wildlife experience on their property *Jungle Tours* are planning to create an "animal kingdom" by major revegetation work which makes this land use the most compatible with conservation of wildlife habitat. To date most of the work done on the property has been weed control along the edges of the remnants.

As well as revegetating his own property, Raffi is very keen to have the riparian zone along Peterson Creek protected and enhanced and has already approached neighbouring landholders to become involved. On-ground works for this project will include 1000 trees planted this wet season to form a buffer for the riparian remnant.

Mt Quincan Crater Retreat - Yungaburra

Landowners: Barb & Kerry Kehoe
Property size: 60 ha

Purchased property: 1989
Current land use: Tourism & beef cattle

Part of the Kehoe's property includes Mt Quincan Crater with approximately 7/8s of the crater within their boundary. On this property they operate two businesses; the luxurious tree houses among the rainforest remnants around the rim of the crater, and beef cattle in the cleared paddocks. "Romantic Rainforest Isolation" is on offer here, with scenic walks around the crater and opportunities to see local wildlife.

Photos by Sue Mathams

Before Kerry & Barb purchased the property it had been extensively cleared for grazing with only a few remnant trees remaining. They have fenced off the main remnants from cattle and these areas support tree-kangaroos which are regularly seen by the Kehoes and guests. The rainforest type is 5b and QPWS and TREAT have planted 500 trees here for tree-kangaroos and other animals. Three interpretive signs will be placed along a path that goes through this planting.

Too much fun to be had on November 11th
(move onto page 14 for details)

NORTH CEDAR CREEK WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Saeed De Ridder is the Technical Supervisor with the Wet Tropics Tree Planting Scheme based in Herberton Shire. He has a deep passion for tree planting, environmental issues, social justice and belting out a raucous folk song. One of his teams current projects is building a wildlife corridor that will benefit many, especially tree-roos and Fluffy Gliders. Saeed reports on this project.

North Cedar Creek is in the Upper Catchment area of the Herbert River. This lovely creek flows through the township of Ravenshoe before joining the Millstream on the outskirts of town.

The township of Ravenshoe relies on North Cedar Creek for its water supply.

The land use adjacent to the creek is a combination of cropping, dairying and beef cattle.

Apart from a few sections, mostly the uppermost reaches of the creek have native vegetation intact. The lower reaches have some remnant patches of native vegetation and some tall, mostly Rose Gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*), individual trees here and there.

Rehabilitation of the creek began in 1998 after liaison with members of the school Agriculture group. The school has a dairy property

as part of its activities and educational facilities. This section of North Cedar Creek adjoining the school boundary and beyond was originally composed of Wet Sclerophyl forest and

greatness has been lost to us.

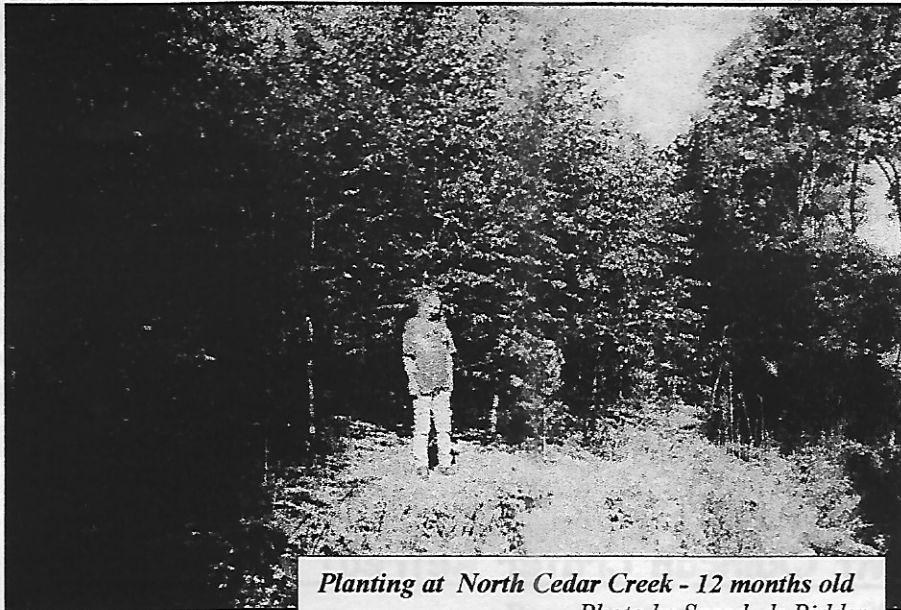
North Cedar Creek has links with Mt Fisher and the World Heritage area, and links up with the Tumoulin State Forest.

Tree climbers (kangaroos) and other mammals (Swamp Wallabies) are not infrequently seen along its lower reaches. Tree climbers have been seen in town blocks, usually up a

tree trying to avoid dogs.

Like so many other creeks on the Tablelands, North Cedar Creek has the usual suite of weed species. Lantana, Glycine, Brachiaria, Needle Burr and Setaria. To deal with these weeds initially is easy enough, but as every "re-veger" knows, dealing with ongoing weed problems in a riparian zone requires a little imagination.

Continued Page 7



*Planting at North Cedar Creek - 12 months old
Photo by Saeed. de Ridder*

rainforest.

It is fortunate that some very old Rose Gums can still be seen, and quite apart from their important habitat value, they just as importantly give the landscape around Ravenshoe that special spectre of grandeur that only big old trees can give to an area. Unfortunately, the absence of any big old Red Cedars and Kauri pines remind us how a very much enhanced spectre of

Fortunately *Eucalyptus grandis* grow very quickly (on fertile alluvial soils up to 4.5 metres in 12 months) and it had not escaped our attention how *grandis* naturally capture a site, especially after fire. We simply imitate this natural strategy in our own plantings. Of course the word *imitate* is not really precise because in actual fact, Rose gums germinate so densely (50mm to 100mm spacings in some instances) it is as if the space it lays claim to was irrefutably destined to belong to *E. grandis* and *grandis* alone by sovereign right as it were.

The word mono-culture is normally anathema to the concept of revegetation for biodiversity purposes. After all the very words mono-culture and biodiversity contradict one another. What needs to be pointed out however, is that unlike the re-establishment of a rainforest planting where closed canopy is being sought as quickly as possible and forever, Rose Gum dominated forests are structurally quite different and a mature Rose Gum dominated forest is quite different from its initial successional stage.

The latter is very often a dense mono-culture of *E. grandis* to the exclusion of just about everything else. So in keeping with the formula "The right tree in

the right place for the right reason", we can safely plant Rose Gums very densely at times (1.5 to 2.0 metre spacings) and enjoy the early advantages of accelerated weed suppression that always threatens to sabotage our plantings in their early stage. This is not to suggest that other species are not also included in our plantings, species such as *Corymbia intermedia*, *Lophostemon suaveolens*, *Syncarpia glomulifera*, *Cryptocarya hypospodia*, *Lomatia fraxinifolia*, *Allocasuarina torulosa* to mention a few. Though much slower than Rose Gums, all of the above take their eventual place in the planting as the structure of the canopy changes with duration.

When discussing vegetation work (especially on privately owned land), perhaps the most serious oversight that could be made is the vital part played by the goodwill of the landholder, and volunteer time and effort. The North Cedar Creek project could not have happened without the goodwill and co-operation of the landholders through those properties it flows. In addition, without the generous contribution of Dr John Winter, whose own personal vision has the played a pivotal role here, the North Cedar Creek project may never have been formulated. It was

John's idea to begin revegetation works in areas Wet Sclerophyl in the Herberton Shire, and to have as our flagship species, the Yellow Bellied Glider, known more affectionately as the **Fluffy Glider** (*Petaurus australis*). At present this glider is listed as vulnerable by the IUCN, mainly due to loss of habitat.

Volunteer work is the like the warmth of the sun that sustains life. However, like the life support systems provided by ecological services, such as our creeks and rivers, the efforts of those who work without monetary reward is still not recognised with any seriousness in the current accepted accounting systems. The rejection of the Kyoto protocol by the U.S.A. reveals a belief that all energy transfers operate in a sterile void totally detached from the lifelines provided by ecological services. In such a context a creek or river ceases to be the vibrant life giving force that many of us extend our gratitude to, and instead too readily becomes no more than a player in a market economy. This may seem to be a digression from the subject of revegetating a creek that runs through the township of Ravenshoe. The point is that the value of a life giving creek and the value of volunteer work not only run parallel but

Continued page 12

Volunteers are asked to splash out for platypus

The platypus is considered to be one of the world's most unusual animals. Much remains unknown about this enigmatic and remarkable animal that inhabits many of the freshwater systems of Eastern Australia. While existing information suggests this unique mammal is still common throughout many areas of Queensland, no reliable data exists on platypus population numbers and their habitat range for the state.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) NatureSearch Program will conduct Queensland's first PlatySearch survey. Whilst the survey is a serious endeavour towards collecting information on the current state of platypus, it is also designed to raise community awareness of local conservation issues. As per records collected for



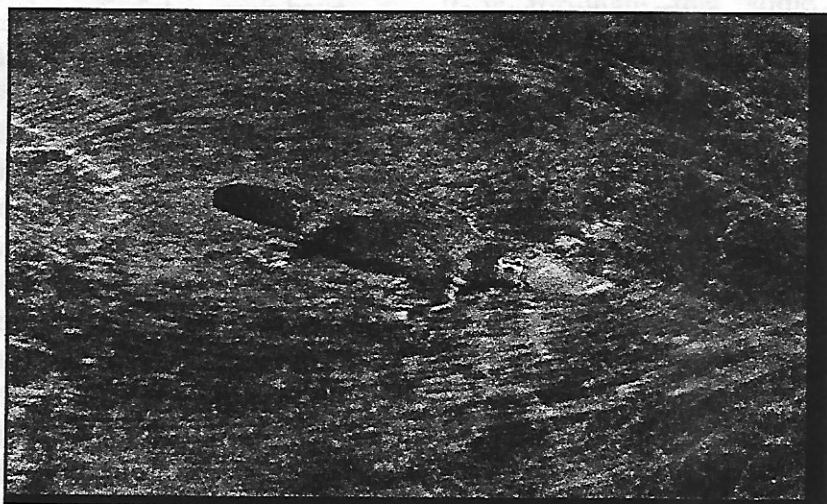
NatureSearch, all relevant data will be added to the QPWS Wildnet database, enabling the service to implement strategies to protect important platypus habitat.

Volunteers can register with their local NatureSearch Coordinator to receive a PlatySearch Kit. This kit will help to identify this protected species, as well as assist you to record the most relevant information. Any queries or records can be

forwarded to your local NatureSearch Coordinator.

PlatySearch volunteers would be given a "**Whose Splash is That?**" guide to help them to identify the protected mammal.

Even if you are not rewarded with a sighting, your records contribute greatly to an understanding of the habitat near you.



For further information on *PlatySearch* contact your nearest NatureSearch co-ordinator:

- Atherton/Cairns: Rachel Mills
Ph. 4091 4262
- Townsville: Linda Whitely
Ph. 4722 5332
- Brisbane: Anna Muscat
Ph. 3202 0219

From the President's desk....by John Winter, President, TKMG Inc.,

The TKMG President's Report 2000/2001

Since this is the Year of the Volunteer, I wish to pay special tribute to our many members and the effort they contribute to ensure the vigor of our group. I have listed many of our members and some of the jobs undertaken by them (apologies to those I have overlooked) and it is most impressive - Gloria and Marion for displays and markets, Malcolm Glennen and Rob for merchandising, Carol for talks, Margit for data and hospitality, Garry for correspondence, Beth for finances, Karen for the East Evelyn Road and scat counting, Lars and Trevor for the web site, Scott for quolls, Leasia for contracts and steering committees, John K for report writing, Rigel for tree identifications, Andrew for quolls, John P for databasing, Trudi for constitutional affairs, Sandra for rating issues, Ross and his TKs, Larry for the newsletter, Tania for organisation and trees, Paul and Jocelyn for venue and Bevan, Jonathan, Elaine and others for general support.

As people's lives change priorities also change and their involvement in the Group waxes and wanes. This is to be expected and accepted but if the group is

to maintain its momentum we need to ensure that our broad base is maintained. This is a challenge that we should never forget which means we must always be a very open group, always welcoming new members and maintaining our enthusiasm.

They spent many eventful days scrabbling about on the forest floor looking for scats with the aid of Karen Coombes and Rigel Jensen

In October a second group of staff from the **San Diego Zoo**, organised by Valerie Thompson, arrived for a ten day stay to help us with projects. Steve Phillips, from Griffith University, came at the same time to lead the study on assessing the relative densities of Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo on the edge and interior of the forest. They spent many eventful days scrabbling about on the forest floor looking for scats with the aid of Karen Coombes and Rigel Jensen. Whilst the results are still not conclusive participants learnt a great deal about lawyer vine, leeches and

scrub-itch. Lisa Dabek, Roger Williams Park Zoo, and her team and their study of tree-kangaroos in Papua New Guinea were also involved in this project. Through Margit we maintain excellent contact with Lisa and Val.

I would also like to acknowledge the wonderful cooperation we receive from other groups, particularly TREAT and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service - Centre for Tropical Restoration (QPWS-CTR). These two organisations are the backbone of any tree planting which TKMG undertakes in its projects. In addition the Atherton office of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service provides us with magnificent office support.

Our funded projects for the year have included two funded by the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and two by the Threatened Species Community Grants program. They include:

Community Survey of Tree-Kangaroos

This project was a major one undertaken last year and was substantially completed by the beginning

of this year. Two major publications were produced; *Tree-kangaroos on the Atherton Tablelands: Rainforest Fragments as Wildlife Habitat* a managers document for landholders, and *Community Survey of the Distribution of Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo on the Atherton Tablelands, north-east Queensland* a technical paper that has been accepted for publication by the journal **Pacific Conservation Biology**. Our thanks to Carol Schmidt and Beth Stirn who were the project officers and to John Kanowski, the driving force behind the technical publication.

Anderson Road Landscape Linkage Project

This is the first year of a project aimed to improve the vegetative linkage between the Peeramon Scrub and North Johnstone River remnant along an unnamed creek and to reduce the risks to resident and transient tree kangaroos. This TREAT project has received funding support of \$18 000 from the World Wide Fund Threatened Species Community Grants program in partnership with TKMG, QPWS-CTR and Eacham Shire Council. This year's key landholder in the project is Mark Mappa's - a property that has become

one of our "Case Studies". TKMG and TREAT volunteers planted 1500 trees on Mappa's property in March 2001.

**This year, 500
tree-kangaroo
food plant trees
were planted**

Conservation of Remnant Vegetation on Private Property on the Atherton Tableland "Case Study Project"

Earlier in the year we received \$42 600 from the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) for this project. The aim of the project is to identify issues associated with the conservation of remnant vegetation on private property alongside key industries such as cattle and eco-tourism using Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo as our icon species. Four properties were selected and John Kanowski has already completed the assessment of wildlife habitat on each of the properties. This was done in conjunction with his Rainforest CRC/ Griffith University project on the restoration of natural habitats. Sue Mathams has been contracted to run the project. Her main tasks are to liaise closely with the property owners, identify issues from the perspective of the land holders and the wildlife, prepare plans for

managing wildlife on the properties and promote the concept to other property owners. She has had two months in the job and is well into her tasks. TREAT supports this project by providing 1500 trees a year to the project. This year, 500 tree-kangaroo food plant trees were planted on the Keogh's property at Mt Quincan in April by 20 TREAT volunteers. The other 1000 trees will be planted on the Jungle Tours property near Yungaburra with the onset of the storm season.

Projecting Spot-tailed Quolls on the Atherton Tablelands

We received \$27,700 for this project through the Threatened Species Network Community Grants program. The primary aim is to increase public awareness of the accidental and deliberate killings of quolls from baiting for dogs and at poultry yards and means of reducing this death toll. Scott Burnett is running the project and has organised the inaugural meeting of the Recovery Team and produced a pamphlet on the design of quoll-proof poultry houses with the offer of limited funding incentives for the construction of such structures. Beth Stirn has commenced a round of talks to schools and Lisa Dwyer

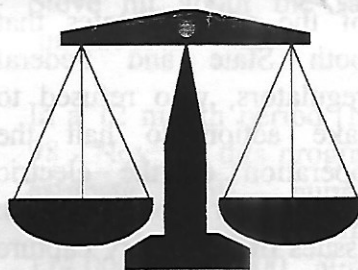
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The Flying Fox Case By Chris McGrath....Barrister-at-Law

In the first full trial under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) ("EPBC Act"), *Booth v Bosworth* [2001] FCA 1453 ("the Flying Fox Case"), Justice Branson of the Federal Court has decided to grant an injunction restraining an action found to be causing a significant impact on the world heritage values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.¹ The case is a crucial test of the new offence provisions for matters of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act and a landmark case highlighting the importance of open standing for public interest litigation to protect the environment.

The Flying Fox Case involved an application by a conservationist to restrain the mass culling of Spectacled Flying Foxes (*Pteropus conspicillatus*) by a large aerial electric grid on a 60ha lychee farm in north Queensland, adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The electric grid consisted of 20 horizontal electrified wires, spaced 25cm apart, strung between poles at 4-9m

height (slightly above tree-top level), with 14 grid lines stretching for 470-820m in length, a total of 6.4km of grid lines. When flying foxes collide with any two of the wires (which are alternated earth - live), they create a circuit and are electrocuted by a high voltage current.



In deciding to grant the injunction, Justice Branson found:

- The operation of the electric grid killed in the order of 18,000 Spectacled Flying Foxes in the 2000-2001 lychee season, of which 9,900-10,800 were females.
- In early November 2000 the total Australian population of Spectacled Flying Foxes did not exceed 100,000.
- The operation of the electric grid in the 2000-2001 lychee season killed roughly 20% of the Australian

population of Spectacled Flying Foxes.

- Unless restrained the future operation of the electric grid would continue to cause the death of comparable numbers of Spectacled Flying Foxes subject only to this species becoming increasingly rare in those areas of Australia from which flying foxes may be attracted to the farm.
- The Spectacled Flying Fox is part of the world heritage values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.
- The operation of the electric grid in the 2000-2001 lychee season had a significant impact on the population of Spectacled Flying Foxes.
- The probable impact of the operation of the electric grid, if allowed to continue on an annual basis during future lychee seasons, will be an ongoing dramatic decline in the Spectacled Flying Fox population leading to a halving

¹ The judgment is available at <www.federalcourt.gov.au>. See also C McGrath, 'Casenote: Booth v Bosworth' (2001) 18 (1) EPLJ 23 in relation to an earlier interim injunction in the case.

- of the population of Spectacled Flying Foxes in less than five (5) years, which would render the Spectacled Flying Fox an endangered species in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.
- The continued operation of the electric grid will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on the world heritage values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The decision clarifies a number of crucial issues for the operation of the EPBC Act. Justice Branson found that a "significant impact" was an "impact that was important, notable or of consequence having regard to its context or intensity". Her Honour also made an important analysis of the meaning of "world heritage values".

A further important aspect of the case is that it establishes that an action taken outside a World Heritage area can be regulated under the EPBC Act if it has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact on world heritage values.²

² This aspect would apply equally to Ramsar wetlands.

Finally, one wider political and administrative aspect of the case that is not found in the judgment is the challenge that the case makes to the role that politics play in the prosecution of environmental offences and listing of threatened species, particularly where agricultural interests are involved. The background of the case indicates that both State and Federal regulators, who refused to take action to halt the operation of the electric grid, suffer from systemic issues of regulatory capture for agriculture. It is disturbing to note that the electric grid the subject of this case had been operated for 15 years with the tacit approval of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service ("QPWS") prior to the injunction being sought.

However, despite its earlier actions, apparently over many years, in acquiescing to the practice of mass culling of flying foxes by fruit growers, the Honourable Dean Wells MLA, Queensland Minister for Environment and Heritage, has recently announced that QPWS will no longer issue damage mitigation permits under the *Nature Conservation Regulation 1994 (Qld)* for the operation of electric grids, effectively outlawing

their operation.³ Provided this public stance is backed by on-the-ground enforcement, the operation of these electric grids appears destined to cease.

North Cedar Creek Wildlife Corridor

(Continued from page 7)

but also coincide. Both give freely. A little reflection makes evident the reality that it is impossible to speak of creeks and plants and critters in the absence of the values attached to them. The context in which we view things is all-important.

Finally, if working to improve the condition of our environment is worthwhile it is because we have accepted in advance the immense value of the natural environment. Work that is freely given by community volunteers reflects the priceless nature of these underlying values. They are like a spring that never fails and must never be misappropriated by the artificial and arbitrary values of the money market. For in reality, the latter borrows its existence from the former and not the other way round, as is generally believed.

³ D Wells, *Queensland Parliamentary Hansard*, 8 August 2001, pp 2331-2333.

The BAT-tle Continues....by Olivia Whybird

The Spectacle Flying Fox monitoring program is up and running for 2001. This flying mammal is a very important species as they are both pollinators and seed dispersers and are considered by some to be 'key-stone' species in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. We know of many processes threatening the species survival, the major ones being: habitat clearing; lethal crop damage control; tick paralysis and camp disturbance. Many long-term residents of North Queensland have noticed a decline in their numbers over the years.

The program started in 1998 and was monitoring their numbers in March and November. This was to record the peak population, when the last years young have started to fly (March)

and the population is at its smallest, when many of the juveniles have failed to make it through the year (November). March counts have been abandoned after Cyclone Rona in 1999 gave us terrible weather and many of the counts were unusable. We patted ourselves on the back for this decision after Cyclone Steve hit about the same time 2000.

In a 12 month period (Nov 98 - Nov 99) this programs estimate of numbers recorded a decline from 114,000 to 74,500, almost 35%. This dramatic decline is why it is vital to continue monitoring the species.

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland has been successful in obtaining funding from the Threatened Species

Network Community Grants Program, a joint initiative of the World Wildlife Fund Australia and the Natural Heritage Trust, to continue the monitoring with a count of Spectacled flying-fox camps in November.

Counting is easy, people stand around the camp sites at dusk and count the bats as they leave to feed. What is difficult is to find the camps and find enough people to count them.

If you have seen Flying-foxes (fruit bats) hanging in the trees during the day or leaving the forest at dusk, please let us know.

The counts will be conducted on the 16th, 17th and 18th of November.

If you would like to help, please phone Olivia on 4055 1238. Please leave a message and a coordinator will get back to you

Bennett's Tree Kangaroo Found Further North

According to the TKMG data base the most northerly point that a BTK has been sighted is grid ref. 317400/8187400 which is about 9 kms east of Black Mountain by Trevor Parker. John Winter was recently in Hopevale talking with Community Ranger Phillip Morris. There John saw a photograph of a BTK killed by dogs mid 1997 about 1.5 km north of the township. (AMG 296700/8309000) which is the most northerly record John is aware of.

Presidents Report **2000/2001 ...from page 10**

is about to embark on an experiment to reduce the availability of dog baits to quolls in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources.

Two of our members are well into their PhD studies on different aspects of Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo, Karen Coombes on their population composition in a fragmented landscape and Lars Kazmeier on their behaviour.

When I sat down to write this I was wondering what to say as there seemed to have been a lull in the Group's activity over the past two or three months. I think this lull is merely relative because it has been a very busy and successful year.

Finally, thank you again to the English family for the support they give to the Group by their very generous provision of a monthly meeting place in the Malanda Hotel.

! Go Batty !

Tolga Bat Rescue is currently conducting an experiment to see if it is possible for Spectacled Flying Foxes to get paralysis ticks during feeding bouts on tobacco bush. We are looking for lots of volunteers to help us collect information and there are a number of ways to help:

- Volunteer your time (evenings only)
- Volunteer your property
- Volunteer both your time and property
- If you know of anywhere else where there are stands of tobacco bush particularly in/near long grass or forest, and we can possibly access it, let us know. eg neighbour's property, state forest etc.

The work will be conducted in the coming weeks during evenings. If you would like more information, you can contact either:

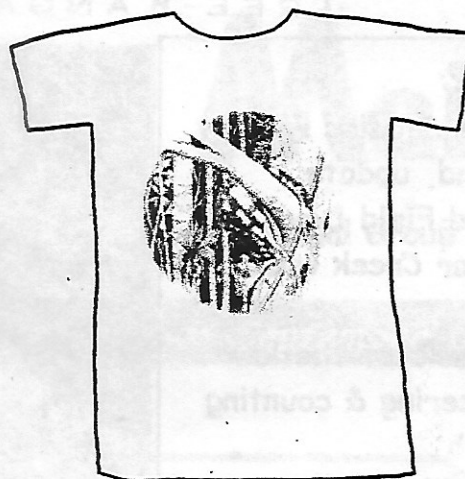
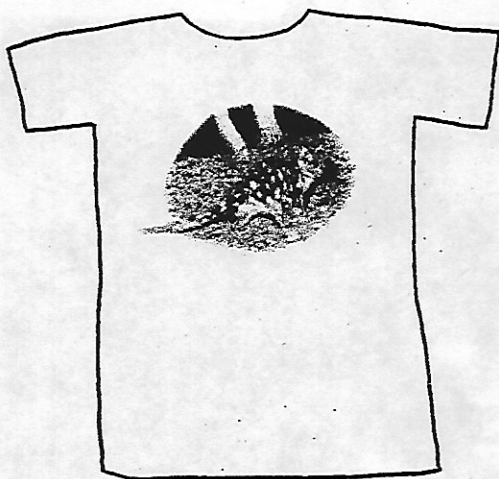
Ceinwen Edwards (Ravenshoe area)
4097 6572

Lisa Dwyer (Atherton area)
4096 6424

or Jenny McLean, Tolga Bat Rescue, 4091 2683
or Andrew Dennis, CSIRO, 4091 8800

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 11TH

The fun? Helping people to spot tree kangaroos, visiting Tableland properties that combine biodiversity with business, chatting to people 'bout local wildlife and habitats (the election results) and more!!.....Sue Mathams needs some volunteers to assist with the *Nature Tourism on the Tablelands Field Day* (8.30am to 1pm...part of the TKMG Case Study project). To volunteer, give Sue a ring on 4095 1424 before Nov. 8th. Please give Sue and TKMG a well needed hand - you'll just love it!



Quoll T-shirts now available. Polo or T-shirt, white, beige or grey. Sizes small, medium, large, extra large. Polo shirts \$27.50, T-shirts \$22.

Our usual range of Tree Kangaroo and Platypus T-shirts are also available.

Next meeting

7.30pm Thursday 1st
December...Malanda Hotel
Ballroom

David Westcott will
present

Flying Fox Project

Everyone is warmly welcome to
attend and a light supper
(small donation please) will be
served. For further details
ring Carol on 4093 9756 A.H.
or John on
4097 6503. The next
BUSINESS meeting will be
held at the same venue, same
time on Thursday, 1st
November.

TKMG Inc.

(Tree Kangaroo & Mammal Group Inc.)
(ABN 66 316 466 220)

Membership Application / Renewal Form

Subscription is \$11 (incl. GST) per
year per couple or single (\$11 = one
vote) and is due every June 30.

Name: _____

Postal Address _____

Phone No.: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Subscription \$ _____ Donation \$ _____

Renewal ☐

New Member ☐

Cheques to be made out to Tree
Kangaroo and Mammal Group Inc.
Mail to TKMG, PO Box 1409,
ATHERTON 4883

In this issue:

- TKMG Case Studies Project
...Background, update,
profiles and Field Day
- North Cedar Creek wildlife
corridor
- The Spectacle of the law
- Bat volunteering & counting
- PlatySearch
- TKMG...President's Report
2001

Photo by Steve Parish



Mammal Mail

Newsletter of the Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group

July - September 2001

Please



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