



Mammal Mail

The Newsletter of the Tree-Kangaroo & Mammal Group

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

October 10th

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7:00PM MALANDA HOTEL

The Annual General Meeting for Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group will be held on Thursday October 10th 7PM at the Malanda Hotel. Light refreshments will be provided from 6:30PM. Following the AGM, Dr. Miriam Goosem from James Cook University will present a talk on "Roads as barriers to wildlife movement: current design options."

Nov 7th: Committee meeting 5:30pm at the Malanda Hotel

Is your membership up for renewal? Please check (contact either Simon or Ilona) and RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP. You can renew before the AGM by contacting Ilona. You will also be able to renew on the evening of the AGM.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR TKMG MANAGING COMMITTEE

By Keith Smith

The TKMG AGM is scheduled for Thursday 10th October starting at 7pm. The meeting will be held at the Malanda Pub, our usual venue. A light supper will be provided from 6.30pm for those members who will not have time to eat before the meeting. All executive positions will be declared vacant and whilst we expect an enthusiastic return of most of the current executive member's, this does present an opportunity for "new blood".

Keith Smith, the current President will **not** be nominating for the position. He will reluctantly be stepping down after only a very short stay in the chair. Keith has found

that competing family and work commitments make it impossible for him to effectively serve TKMG as President.

So once again the position of President is open for nominations. The President's role includes liaising with member's and representing TKMG in the wider community. The President relies heavily on the Secretary, Treasurer -- the busiest executive positions. Vice Presidents and general executive positions are also important supporting positions.

If you would like to participate or know a member who is prepared to play a role on the executive, please do not hesitate to nominate them for a position as a member of the Committee or one of the open Executive positions (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary). Nominations of current members can be accepted in writing or electronically (email) at least 2 weeks prior to the AGM (ie. **Deadline for written or electronic nominations is 26 September**).

If no written/electronic nominations for Executive positions are received, there will be an open call at the AGM and you can put up your hand up at that time to make a nomination. ***Please ensure that the person you are nominating is prepared to accept the position.***

We expect the AGM to be finished by 7.30pm in time for our bi-monthly talk. The October talk will be by our own Miriam Goosem who is well known to most of our members. Dr Miriam Goosem is a Research Fellow at James Cook University in Cairns. Miriam will speak about impediments to wildlife movement particularly roads, and methods adopted to address breaks in connectivity such as wildlife underpasses, rope bridges and overpasses. Miriam's talk is expected to finish about 8.30pm after which the usual tea, coffee and biscuit's will be available for those that would like to catch up and chat for a while.

Towards more efficient conservation efforts for the Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo - the development of a Community Action Plan for the Conservation of the Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo.

By Sigrid Heise-Pavlov and Ceinwen Edwards

The Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*) is a marsupial occasionally spotted by residents of the Atherton Tablelands high in the tree-tops or crossing open fields between rainforest patches. Increasing development within its range causing habitat loss, fragmentation, predation by dogs and collisions with vehicles are all likely to affect this unique animal.

The Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo is considered "Near Threatened" under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Action Plan for Australian Marsupials and Monotremes (Wildlife Australia 1996). However, the species was listed as of "Least Concern" by the IUCN based on the knowledge of its distribution, numbers, threats (at that time) and the fact that most of its remaining prime habitat receives protective status under the Wet Tropics World Heritage Declaration.

As the knowledge of its current distribution and numbers has not been updated and the extent to which factors such as dogs, vehicles, habitat loss and climate change affect its population is unknown, conservation efforts are likely to be inefficient.

Efficient conservation efforts require a multidisciplinary and coordinated approach. With this in mind, the local Tree-kangaroo & Mammal Group (TKMG) set out to address conservation needs for this species and how to meet these needs. Other species and plant communities that will benefit from habitat restoration and protection measures include threatened and near-threatened mammals, birds and frogs associated with Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo habitat and 4 threatened ecosystems utilized by the tree-kangaroos.

Formed in 1997, TKMG has long-term experience in organizing and contributing to conservation activities for a range of local mammals. Past projects and activities include a Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo Community Survey, collating local anecdotal knowledge and distribution information; Cape York Possum Research (led by Dr. J.W. Winter) to assess suitable habitat for the Common Brushtail Possum and guidelines for management; protecting Spotted tailed Quolls on the Atherton Tablelands by raising public awareness, quoll monitoring and quoll-proofing chook pens; Yellow-bellied (Fluffy) Glider Project to map habitat and develop a management strategy; Mabi Forest Conservation, helping to achieve the federal listing of this prime tree-kangaroo habitat (rainforest type 5b) as an endangered ecosystem; Hypsi Forest Project (rainforest type 1b), assisting properties to manage this tree-kangaroo important forest type; lobbying for Wildlife Tunnels under the busy East Evelyn Road; use of tree-kangaroo road signs in areas of high mortality; Conservation Education Program (initiated by Roger Williams Park Zoo, Rhode Island, USA) involving an art exchange program between PNG and USA schools, later expanded to include Herberton State School; Case Studies Projects aimed to promote sustainable management of remnant vegetation on private property by working with landholders in priority areas, using the tree-kangaroo as a focal species; Revegetation Projects, including 3 Community Action Grants for Upper Barron, East Evelyn and Peterson Creek successfully completed and a "Kickstart" regeneration trial underway in disused pastures adjoining high altitude remnant rainforest, monitoring plant success and wildlife use of the plots.

These achievements are only possible with the work of a well-organised committee in conjunction with dedicated members. To keep members updated and provide them with information on current projects for the conservation of local fauna and work

further afield, TKMG publishes a quarterly newsletter, holds monthly meetings, hosts talks on mammal issues, often with a local focus and runs a website.

To outline a future conservation plans for the Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo, TKMG organized a workshop in August 2012 at Lake Tinaroo. With the backing and assistance of Conservation Volunteers Australia, experts and specialists from various fields were brought together to summarise our knowledge of tree-kangaroos and generate new ideas to improve conservation planning. The outcomes of this workshop have been collated into a Community Action Plan for the conservation of the Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo, with goals for a 5 year time frame. Long-term aims include involving an active and aware local community to help secure the future of tree-kangaroos throughout their range; protecting adequate and well-connected habitats; minimizing threats by dogs and vehicles; developing protocols for the care and release of sick, injured and orphaned tree-kangaroos; and ensuring that knowledge of this species is adequate to guide conservation actions.

Launching of the Community Action Plan will be at the AGM on 10th October. Please join us then to hear how you can help.

International Tree-Kangaroo Workshop
Captive Management & Conservation: Current Issues and Future
Directions
October 6-10th Melbourne Zoo, Victoria

By Amy Shima

TKMG members, Sigrid Heise-Pavlov, Karen Coombes and Roger Martin, will be attending the International Tree-Kangaroo Workshop being held at Melbourne Zoo. Roger Martin will be delivering the keynote address on "Tree-Kangaroo Evolutionary History" as well as presenting a paper on "The Conservation Status of Australian Tree-Kangaroos". Dr. Karen Coombes will be giving a presentation on her recently formed "Tree Roo Rescue and Conservation Centre, Ltd". Dr. Sigrid Heise-Pavlov will be presenting "A Community Action Plan for the Conservation of the Australian-Endemic: Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroo (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*) on behalf of the TKMG and our partners from the Community Action Plan Workshop held in August 2012 as well as "Regular Monitoring of Captive Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroos Can Assist in Conservation Planning". Copies of the Community Action Plan will be available for conference attendees.

TKMG has generously provided some funds to help each of the members who will be attending and giving a presentation to defray travel costs.

THANK YOU!!!
MALANDA SOCIAL DANCE GROUP

Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group would like to give a heartfelt “Thank you!” to the Malanda Social Dance Group for their generous donation of the proceeds from the April 2013 Dance to TKMG. The funds will be put towards assisting with the work TKMG is supporting on learning more about tree kangaroos, as well as preserving and caring for them.

It’s wonderful to have the support of other Community Groups such as Malanda Social Dance Group. Thanks and keep on dancing!!!

MUPI AND ME

Some thoughts from Ernie Raymont, countryman to the ‘mupi’ (Lumholtz tree-kangaroo), Ngadjon-Jii elder and Life Member of TKMG

As told to Amy Shima

The Tree-Kangaroo and Mammal Group is honoured to have one very important Life Member, Mr. Ernie Raymont. Ernie’s relationship with “Mupi” (the Ngadjon-Jii name for the Lumholtz tree-kangaroo, also sometimes spelled ‘mupee’ or ‘mabi’. In terms familiar to Western society, ‘mupi’ has been described as his “totem”. But “totem” isn’t the right word to describe the relationship between Ernie and “mupi”. A totem is “an object (plant or animal) serving as an emblem of a family or clan and as a reminder of its ancestry.” To Ernie, “mupi” isn’t an object, rather it is kin...a relative and a countryman.

Ernie’s unique relationship with “mupi” comes to him through his paternal lineage. White anthropologists refer to this as a “patrilineal moiety system”. Each family within a clan had a “countryman” animal—for example, “mupi” (Lumholtz tree-kangaroo) or “gumbulgan” (cassowary). This relationship with “mupi” meant that Ernie’s paternal grandfather, Jimmy Kelly, as well as his great-grandfather and beyond, did not hunt their countryman, “mupi”. Other clans could hunt “mupi” but not Ernie’s mob.

Ernie grew up in Malanda. Work saw him live elsewhere for many years but he eventually returned home to the Tablelands. For many years, Ernie worked at the Malanda Falls Visitor Centre sharing his knowledge of the rainforest by providing guided walks in the rainforest and informing tourists (and locals) about the rich history and relationship the traditional owners had with the country. While Ernie has retired from Malanda Falls Visitor Centre, his work is being carried on by a relative, Andrew (Drew) Morta. While Andrew has very keen eyesight and an uncanny ability to spot

tree-kangaroos (not an easy task as tree kangaroos are great at “hiding in plain sight” and, for a relatively large animal are surprisingly difficult to see in the forest), Ernie has the unique ability of finding “mupi” by scent! He can smell when there is a tree-kangaroo nearby long before anyone sees the animal.

According to Ernie, traditionally people did not go out at night into the forest. People would hunt in the forest during the day but the nighttime was reserved for the animals to do their hunting. Traditional owners reckoned that the animals didn’t bother them during the day so they should respect the animals and let them hunt in peace at night. Nowadays, we don’t hunt tree kangaroos and the busy lives which most people lead do not allow them to spend hours in the rainforest during the day. Ernie reckons that, as long as it is done with respect for the animals, following responsible spotlighting guidelines (*see Mammal Mail Vol 12 No 3: A Guide to Spotlighting Etiquette*) and with the appropriate authorization for protected areas, going out ‘spotlighting’ to see animals (including “mupi”) at night is fine.

Respect and caring for “mupi” is something that is important to Ernie. He wishes people would be more careful when they drive so that tree kangaroos don’t get run over. Signage helps but we can all do our part by slowing down a little and driving more carefully at night. Ernie also hopes that people will respect and care for all animals. In Ernie’s view, dogs can be good pets and useful animals but we should keep them under control and restrained—not let them run loose. Free-ranging dogs will injure or even kill “mupi”. Ernie thinks that the more we can learn about “mupi” and how they live as part of our environment, the more we can understand, respect and care for “mupi” as if he were our countryman, too.

STUDY ON TREE-KANGAROO MORTALITIES ON THE ATHERTON TABLELANDS

By Dr. Amy Shima

An unfortunate fact of modern life is that wildlife is killed by motor vehicles and occasionally by our pet dogs and cats. Tree kangaroos are killed while crossing roads and also fall victim to attacks by dogs. I am working with TKMG to document and learn from road and predator killed tree-kangaroos. If you find or see a DEAD tree-kangaroo, please ring me at 0499-180-961. I am an experienced wildlife veterinarian and, in collaboration with veterinary pathologists from James Cook University, am currently trying to collect as much information as possible on road-kill and dog-killed Lumholtz tree-kangaroos on the Atherton Tablelands.

It is important to have access to the animals **as soon as possible after death** so meaningful post-mortem examination can be done and samples collected. So, please ring as soon as possible (even if it is early in the morning) when you come across a dead tree-kangaroo. It is important to provide the following information: the **date, time and location (cross-streets or landmark such as property name or number or gps location)** of the carcass. Any other information you can provide (for example, let us know if you saw the animal being attacked and killed by dogs). All information on

road kill and predator killed tree-kangaroos reported to me will eventually be put into the QPWS WildNet database. Such information may also be included in publications in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

It is unfortunate that tree-kangaroos are killed by encounters with motor vehicles and even more unfortunate when they are killed by dogs (unleashed pets, feral dogs or wild dogs). But by examining and collecting samples from these animals, I hope that their deaths will contribute in some way to the scientific knowledge we have about Lumholtz tree-kangaroo. Perhaps they will not have died in vain and their deaths may serve to help us better understand and protect their living relatives.

If you see an animal that is still ALIVE...please contact:

Karen Coombes, Tree Roo Rescue and Conservation Centre 0427-790-694

or Tablelands Wildlife Rescue 07-4091-7767 (24 hour phone number)

Or take the animal to the nearest veterinary surgery.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

MALANDA FALLS VISITOR CENTRE reopened on Friday, September 6th. The striking looking new building houses excellent exhibits and provides great information about Lumholtz's tree-kangaroos, Malanda history and the Tablelands. If you haven't done so already, stop by and check out the exciting, new Malanda Falls Visitor Centre.

Tree-kangaroos are regularly being sighted around the Visitor Centre.

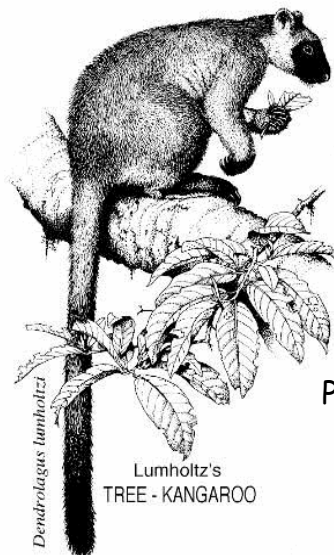
TREE KANGAROOS TO DREAMWORLD: Three Lumholtz tree-kangaroos, male "Csi" and females "Maggie" and "Mindy" were recently sent from the Tree Roo Rescue and Conservation Centre, Ltd. (TRRCC) to DreamWorld Park in Queensland's Gold Coast. The TRRCC Facebook page states that these animals could not be released back into the wild as a result of 'nearly total sight loss' due to dog attacks or being hit by vehicles. These animals are destined to be part of a captive breeding program at Dreamworld.

MT QUINCAN HABITAT PROTECTED: The gazettal of Mount Quincan Nature Refuge in May 2013 saw a further 43ha of endangered habitat on this extinct volcano protected under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act. This new nature refuge adjoins the existing 8ha Mount Quincan Crater Nature Refuge.

The Holme and Kehoe families who own the properties that cover Mount Quincan have protected 46ha of critically endangered remnant and regrowth Mabi Forest and 5ha of endangered volcanic crater wetland on this prominent feature located 3km south of Yungaburra.

Mount Quincan is a relatively intact example of a large volcanic scoria cone, active about 7,300 years ago, that is representative of the more recent volcanic activities that shaped the geology of the Atherton Tablelands.

Mt Quincan Crater is of international significance as an outstanding repository of fossil pollen. The peat deposits within the crater have been the subject of several scientific studies, particularly as a record of climate change and associated plant and insect patterns over the last 10,000 years. With growing international focus on climate change, it is likely that this deposit will become even more important for global climate change studies.



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Newsletter of the Tree Kangaroo & Mammal Group, Inc.

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The TKMG Website:

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

is maintained on a volunteer basis by
Pesavento Web Development & Marketing

<http://www.pesavento.biz>

A Big THANK YOU to Pesavento Web Development & Marketing for your invaluable assistance in enabling TKMG to get their message out to the community and to the world.