

Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group Inc.

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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.

In October a second group of staff from the San Diego Zoo, organised by Valerie Thompson, arrived for a ten day stay and to help us with projects. Steve Phillips, Griffiths 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 Pearamon 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.

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

John Winter
President
6 September 2001