Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands Inc

TREE (Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands Inc) TREAT (Trees for the Atherton Tablelands)

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TREAT Newsletter Cool Season April - June 2008

Have You Seen This Turtle?

Alastair Freemen

Proof of Johnstone River snapper that was caught in the Mirriwinni Park, Malanda

Turtles are a familiar sight at many river planting sites on the Tablelands. Usually the species is the ubiquitous sea-shelled turtle, Emydura krefftii, but occasionally a Johnstone River snapper (Elseya latisternum) is seen. TREAT members may not be aware of is that there is a second rare species of turtle on the Tablelands called the Eastern Snake-necked Turtle (Chelodina oriximinensis). This species is the species on the Atherton Tablelands is only known from the Johnstone River. In the tablelands, as well as the Johnstone River, it has been recorded in the Barron River at Kuranda, in the Mareeba Dam, at the Lake Barrine Crater and in the Tarzan Creek. All of these locations are unpolluted and flowed in the Eden Alryn, Tarzan and Minyar Dam Catchments.

Unlike the Sea-shelled turtle, which is a carnivorous species that eats other aquatic fauna, the species most often observed in the creek, streams and dams is a herbivore. The Eastern Snake-necked Turtle is a smaller species than the Johnstone River snapper (and its no bigger than those in the sea shells although the biggest sea shells can equal in size adult Eastern Snake-necked Turtles). Unlike the sea-shelled turtle, the Eastern Snake-neck often with a white chin and/or neck and you may see pale pink around the nose.

Recently a James Cook University Honours student Amanda O'Malley completed the first detailed study of the ecology of this species concentrating on four populations on the coastal lowlands. Her work indicated that there may be some concern for the conservation status of this species.

The Threatened Species Group of EPA in Atherton is interested in locating nesting sites on the Tablelands as well as recording any new populations of this species. If members of the community see this species in their creek, dam or wetland and any turtle nesting on their property or elsewhere on their that Johnstone River snapper may be present please contact me at:

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A New Bird!

Barb Lansley

What a turnout we had in the spring of the new Mareeba-Dimbulah Bioregion! It was a very wet morning on Friday 14th March, but it didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the 30 TREAT members who came along.

The new Birds captivate and strengthen the exercise one signed in March 2004. This site is for a period of 3 years and again we are writing the obligations of DPIW and TREAT to each other, for the common good.

Cindy Cole, Regional Director, again came up from Cairns to sign the document for the Qld Government. Above the star of the rain on the roof, he spoke of the energy of the partnership and the symbolism of the Birds. He also announced the Environmental Protection Agency had shortlisted the Landcare and the local area was part of their new Bird Tripoto.

Staff from Atherton and Lake Eacham DPIWS came in the morning as well as TREAT's co-founders Joan and James Wright. Also present were Mareeba Shire Council Environmental Officer Ian Gibbs and Tablelands Regional Council Environmental Officer Bernard Fund committee). The School for Field Studies students were also present for the morning.

Morning tea which preceded the signing was TREAT's usual feast of goodies and there was a special celebratory cake for the occasion.

May this unique partnership at Lake Eacham continue long into the future!

Good Things for TREAT

Barb Lansley

Good things have been coming TREAT's way recently.

In January we received a A$800 donation from a former **School for Field Studies student Melissa Schlatter** who wanted to do something for TREAT after her time here. Melissa's donation will be used to buy a new Bird Trap for the Mareeba-Dimbulah bioregion (more in this newsletter on the Bird Trap). She also gave us some kind words on the TREAT website. Thank you Dr. Schlatter. Judy Dodds, Heather Moe, Meagan Hinzen, James Park, Catherine Kelly, Amanda Freeman, Tim Corran, Dima Aakar, Emily Cheapam, Pam Chiba, Jessica Ryan, Jessica Ryan, Jessica Ryan