

Central Queensland Koala Volunteers



AUTUMN EDITION 2018

A New Year's Eve Gift!

The residents of Alectura Nature Reserve, at Cawarral, were woken on New Year's Eve 2017 not by noisy neighbours, but by koala bellows! The next morning a very mature male koala was found in a bloodwood tree next to the house. The residents, Alistair and Rhonda Melzer, said that this was the first record of a koala on the 84 ha property since they moved there 20 years ago. Koalas were plentiful in the area during the early 20th century, but declined to local extinction by the 1930's under the influence of hunting, local harvesting of eucalypt foliage for distillation of essential oils, and widespread epidemic disease.

This is the second record of a koala regionally, during the 2017 breeding season. A sick female koala was collected by Department of Defence staff on a road reserve south west of the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area. These two records are encouraging as they indicate that a relic koala population persists in the Livingstone Shire. With the right care, it should be possible to rebuild this local population.

Alistair Melzer



As a Koala volunteer, friends are always eager to share their koala experiences with me. Below is an example. I think it is great that a koala can cause such excitement. We should encourage anyone who sights a koala to notify a koala volunteer, then maybe we would get an idea of numbers in areas we are unaware that koalas habit?

I am stocking up on my 'orphan' koalas in readiness for Gladstone's Annual Ecofest in early June. <http://www.gladstone.qld.gov.au/ecofest> The sale of our soft toy koalas helps to raise awareness of the koala's plight as well as helping towards research.



Below is my friend's report on seeing 'his' koala.

Happy Australia Day 2018. I wanted to share with you a bit of excitement we had here this morning. Below is a message I sent to our Weyba Point owners. This followed a recent sighting by a local on an adjoining property. He/she is now about 8 m above our deck. Very gratifying that the tree preservation and planting (of hundreds of trees including koala preferred species) here is helping the wildlife.

Carmen

Why is it Important to use Flagship Species in Community Education?

Two members of the Koala Volunteers CQ, **Rolf Schlagloth & Dr Flavia Santamaria**, in their capacity as researchers with the Koala Research Central Queensland, have published a paper based, in part, on work conducted by Rolf in Ballarat (Vic) a few years ago. The paper draws on the power of the Koala as an icon and determines that this species is a flagship for conservation and education Australia wide.

The paper titled 'Why is it Important to use Flagship Species in Community Education? The Koala as a Case Study' investigates the conservation and planning implications of the use of an individual flagship species, the Koala as an example in a community education intervention in a regional Australian city. Educating the community to accept changes in planning laws aimed at the protection of a single species such as the Koala has never been an easy task.

The approach used to educate the Ballarat community in doing just that, and the power of this iconic Australian marsupial in promoting conservation and changes in planning regulations were examined. The paper highlights the flow-on conservation and educational benefits of flagship and umbrella species in a world where conservation is very often overpowered by other interests and priorities. Protecting and conserving species are complex tasks due to the tight budget allocated for conservation management.

The paper illustrates the flow-on benefits of using a flagship species to spearhead regional conservation and planning as well as community education. After exploring some alternative terminologies for defining iconic species, the authors proceed to introduce the case study of the koala as part of the community education intervention in the regional Australian city of Ballarat. They draw out the significance the koala had in this project and alert to some implications and conclusions about using flagship species in community education programs in general.

One such finding is that their use of the charismatic koala as an example, points to the veracity, resonance and effectiveness of the flagship species concept to increase public awareness of conservation issues and to protect other species through this umbrella effect. They encourage the community to concentrate on similarly iconic, charismatic species with broad appeal so the wider community can be

successfully educated to protect natural habitat, which goes well beyond the benefit to one flagship species. The authors believe that, there are many shires in Central Queensland, which could benefit from a similar approach to community education for conservation, using a flagship to overcome preconceived ideas and other obstacles.

The paper is published in May in the *Animals Studies Journal (ASJ)*, which provides a forum for current research in human-animal Studies. ASJ publishes international cross-disciplinary content with a particular, but not exclusive, interest in Australian, New Zealand and Asia-Pacific scholarship.

Schlagloth, Rolf; Santamaria, Flavia; Golding, Barry & Thomson, Hedley. Why is it Important to use Flagship Species in Community Education? The Koala as a Case Study. Animal Studies Journal, 7(1), 2018.



Koalas (mother with backyong) Courtesy of Mr & Mrs McBain – Mt Helen, Ballarat



Photo ABC

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/author/nick-mclaren>

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/state/nsw/2017/12/21/koalas-nsw>

The New South Wales government has purchased 400 hectares of private land in the Southern Highlands to establish a koala habitat reserve.

The land is located on the Wollondilly River south-west of Moss Vale.

The Member for Goulburn, Pru Goward, said it was the first government purchase under a new scheme to protect koala habitat and was designed to prevent a further slide in koala populations.

We have certainly seen a decline in some places, a catastrophic decline in koala numbers in our region in the Southern Highlands there's about a thousand."

Ms Goward said the land was purchased using part of a \$10 million fund sourced from NSW Environmental Trust.

"It was an incredibly lucky buy because what it does is it now gives us a highway from the Blue Mountains through to the Morton National Park for koalas to traverse, so that if there's bushfires, there's a catastrophic event in one part they can move to another."

Koala corridors act as refuge during natural disasters

Minister for the Environment Gabrielle Upton said the land was suitable as it contained the tree species most favoured as a food source.

"By purchasing this land for the national parks system we are expanding koala habitat," she said.

Wingecarribee Council officer Joe Stammers helps run the Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project.

He said the area had the largest population of koalas in southern New South Wales and welcomed any measures to protect them.

"We have been working really hard with the community, we have got lots of wildlife carers here," he said.

"We have had at least 200 sightings from individuals over the last couple of years."

Mr Stammers said the council had also worked closely with private landholders interested in cultivating the right eucalypt species to support koalas and other native wildlife and the new reserve would complement that work.

"We have got a program just within council called Land for Wildlife," he said.

"We have got, I think, over a hundred properties, before they were lifestyle blocks or for farming but people are now looking at it to use their land for conservation".

"They want to show their grandkids and leave something as a legacy," he said.

Written by Nick McLaren

— xxx —

Koala survey at Avocet Nature Refuge and Goonderoo Nature Refuge using a thermal camera mounted UAV.

Dr Flavia Santamaria

The word 'drone' is becoming more or less a household name. We are not referring to the beautiful male wasp, but the piece of engineering that is taking the world by storm. Its technical name is Unmanned Aerial Vehicle or UAV. Its use now spans from military to search and rescue, weddings, and various other services. In the field of natural research, many are now relying on this versatile machine for the survey of habitats, animals and plants.

As anyone who has ever surveyed koalas knows, it is very hard to spot them among the branches of trees during the day or at night. For this reason our team is becoming increasingly interested in using UVAs in surveying koalas, these cryptic creatures well camouflaged in the trees.

But how would you survey koalas using a UAV, you may ask? Many research projects are now using camera-mounted UAVs to film or take pictures. But, in our case it wouldn't be that easy, since a common

camera attached to a UAV would have the same trouble spotting koalas. So, we are going to trial the use of a thermal camera fitted UAV to 'see' the body heat of a koala sitting in a tree.

Police use these types of cameras to search for people at night or, at times, during the day. In fact, when the ambient temperature is less than the body temperature, it is (or it should be) relatively easy to spot the warmth of a body as it appears on the screen in various colours. Koala's body temperature is around 35°C, but tree trunks are warm too, especially in summer or on hot days, therefore, we need to carry out this work when the temperature of the tree and environment is lower than koalas' body (the image below shows what a koala on a branch looks like with thermal imaging).

Similar work is already being done by other researchers in SE Queensland, but the density of koalas is greater and it is therefore easier to spot them with or without thermal cameras. The situation in Central Queensland is different as koala densities are lower and the use of a flying object with thermal vision would be of great help to us.

Anyway, the survey is going to be at Avocet Nature Refuge and Goonderoo Nature Refuge where we are aware of the occurrence of koalas; we are looking forward to employ this technique to survey larger areas in the future.

If anyone is interested in volunteering please contact Alistair via Email a.melzer@cqu.edu.au



Source - <http://vespadrones.com/2015/11/29/uav-thermal-imaging-for-environmental-monitoring/>

Mission

CQ Koala Volunteers seek the conservation of the koala and other tree living mammals in Central Queensland by

- *Supporting research into koalas, other arboreal mammals and their habitat through (a) providing volunteer support to research projects, and (b) assisting in the raising of funds for research and the volunteer teams;*
- *Developing public awareness of the needs of koalas, tree living mammals and their habitat requirements generally;*
- *Fostering community support for koalas and tree living mammals generally;*
- *Encouraging and assisting with the development of habitat rehabilitation projects where necessary through the region;*
- *Supporting the rehabilitation and release of sick, injured or displaced koalas and tree living mammals.*

The Central Queensland Koala Volunteers are not about stopping development. They seek to encourage planned development, which allows for the co-existence of koalas and other tree living mammals with human activity.

Funds are used to buy equipment for the researchers, to fund volunteer field teams and provide limited support for animal carers. Donations may also be made to the Koala Research Centre of Central Queensland and are tax deductible.

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CQKV – Capricornian Statement
1st Jan 2017 – 31 Dec 2017

S5 – Savings Accumulator

CQKV – Capricornian Statement

Credit Balance as at 31Dec16 – 31Dec17 \$6,291.47

	INCOME	EXPENCES	
Memberships	\$165.00		
Donations	\$140.00		
Interest	\$107.71		
Koala Fundraise	\$280.00		
TOTAL	\$692.71	NIL	
Credit Balance at 31Dec17			\$6,984.18

S26 – Cheque

Credit Balance as at 31Dec16 – 31Dec17 \$711.91

Interest	\$0.27	NIL	
Credit Balance at 31Dec17			\$712.18
Includes \$10 Membership credited			

Assets

S5 – Savings Accumulator	\$6,984.18		
S26 – Cheque	\$712.18		
Term Deposit	\$12,731.15		
			\$20,427.51

Profit for year S5	\$692.71		
S26	\$11.07		
Term Deposit	\$394.76		
Total	\$1,098.54	NIL	



Photos by James Lindley

Queensland Ministerial Expert Panel on the Koala

The public release of the full report of the Koala Expert Panel is expected in the next few weeks. Whilst the Panel was asked to examine the state of the koala in south east Queensland in detail, they were also asked to provide general recommendations for the rest of the state. We'll provide an overview of the relevant recommendations in the newsletter following that release.

Central Queensland Koala Reintroduction Project

The Rockhampton Zoo is currently considering the draft koala breeding program. CQUniversity is reviewing the immediate research and monitoring requirements of the project. A number of property owners have registered an interest in being involved in koala releases. We'll provide an update after the next meeting of the project's steering committee.

St Bees Island

The long-term study of koalas and their habitat on St Bees Island is continuing. There will be three Earthwatch related field trips this year (May, July October). There are opportunities for a few fit and flexible volunteers to assist on the July and October trips. Work will include the collection of invertebrates and the monitoring of changes in koala habitat structure and composition.

Springsure

The trial tree plantings on Norwood Creek in Minerva Hills NP were burned this year during a controlled burn. We'll be heading out to have a look at their survival later in 2018 or early in 2019.

We are also due to repeat the standard spotlighting in 2019. There will be room for one or two fit and able volunteers on that trip.

Avocet Nature Refuge

We are looking to schedule a habitat survey and mapping trip to Avocet this year. This will be a field trip over a few days, and may involve camping. If you are up to a bit of bush camping and rough walking through thick scrub let us know.

Dates are yet to be set but will tie into, but be separate from Flavia Santamaria's 'drone study.

