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Wildlife Conservancy of Tropical Queensland

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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President and Founder:

Tim Nevard OAM

Vice President: Trevor Adil

Secretary: Peter Apel

New faces at the Wetlands



Liz Cayzer and Neil McGilp with Tim Nevard

With over 25 years experience successfully operating nature-based tourism businesses, Tourism Naturally's Neil McGilp and Liz Cayzer are the new tourism operators at the Mareeba Wetlands.

Liz and Neil have previously had direct involvement with wide and varied nature-based tourism products— from conducting canoe and rafting tours, operating a backpackers and running safari camps to taking 4WD tours in the remote Kimberley region and managing a luxury resort. This breadth of experience allows them to understand the needs and expectations of the diversity of visitors that visit the wetlands.

Liz and Neil are committed to offering high-yield ecotourism products integrated with the conservation values of the Reserve.

After four years of sleeping in a swag, Tracey McDougall and David 'Chook' Crawford have bought a bed and become the new faces of the Mareeba Wetlands.

Tracey, originally from NSW, and Chook, born and bred in the Cairns area, are well qualified for their new positions. They spent three years working at the exclusive El Questro in the Kimberley before moving to the far north-east in 2003. They then worked as camp host (Tracey) and guide (Chook) for Oz Tours Camping Safaris taking trucks full of 15 eager tourists the length of Cape York and back.



Tracey and Chook: the new faces of the wetlands

They have taken to their stationary setting with ease. Tracey can change over the accommodation quicker than you can say 'Mareeba Tropical Savanna and Wetland Reserve' and Chook is amusing tourists with his tales of the Australian bush.

Wildlife Report

Life on the wetlands during the dry season is constantly changing. As the surrounding country begins to dry out, waterbirds leave their shrinking waterholes to look for permanent water to wait out the dry.

Brolga (*Grus rubicundus*) have been a common sight early in the morning on Clancy's Lagoon. Usually more common on Pandanus Lagoon, these magnificent birds mainly use the wetlands as a nighttime roost site, feeding on maize stubble and irrigated fields during the day.

Of course both the **Green** (*Nettapus pulchellus*) and **Cotton** (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) **Pygmy-geese** are common birds on Clancy's Lagoon.

The weather is warming and spring is almost here! We have already seen the first of our spring babies appear. For the past few months we have only seen the two female **Emus** (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) around the Reserve and, although we suspected that the males may have been sitting on eggs, we were getting a bit concerned for them. But low and behold last week one of the males appeared with six young chicks in tow! The male is keeping a close eye on his brood and will look after them until they are about 18 months old.

Not only do Tracey and Chook have to look after the visitors, they have recently

also aided the soft release of a **Bush Stone-curlew** (*Burhinus grallarius*) named Russell. Russell was abandoned as an egg and handreared from hatching. He was brought to the Reserve for release and after many a night practicing his wailing call, Russell has integrated into the wild population.

Now for the non-bird related wildlife news! Conservancy volunteer Chris Purnell is staying on site at the Wetlands and recorded on camera a new species of mammal for the Reserve. While stalking around his tent at night with a large spotlight Chris discovered and photographed a **Black-footed Tree-rat** (*Mesembriomys gouldii*). First thinking it was a small, undernourished **Brush-tailed Possum** (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), closer inspection of the photo revealed the characteristic white-tipped tail and black furred feet of the tree-rat.

The **Gouldian Finches** (*Erythrura gouldiae*) are busy breeding up their numbers and we already have a large number of juveniles in our aviaries. We anticipate that the next release will begin in September/October and will be looking for any volunteers who would like to assist with monitoring of released animals. Please contact Lisa on 0418 784 794 or

conservation@wildlifequeensland.com.au for further information.



Black-footed Tree-rat – a new record for the Reserve



Gouldians performing



The male emu escorting his young brood

Update on Kamerunga

For those of you who don't know Cairns, this rainforest Reserve is only ten minutes from the CBD but adjoins the Barron River Gorge and National Park. The wheels of government grind slowly, and it will still be several months before the State Government is in a position to hand over the trusteeship of this Reserve. However, in June, Clive Cook, Director of the EPA's northern region, and Steve Wettenhall MP,

Member for Barron River, met with the Board of the Conservancy to discuss the proposals for the Reserve, appropriate tenure arrangements, funding, and development of the Tropical Queensland Wildlife Centre. In the meantime the Conservancy would like to hear from other wildlife groups who wish to be involved in this exciting project.



Site at Kamerunga

The Mareeba Tropical Savanna and Wetland Reserve is now

open 7 days 10am-4:30pm

from April to December (weather permitting)

Please contact the Visitor Centre on 4093 2514 or jabirusafarilodge@bigpond.com for information on tours, accommodation and visiting the Reserve.

Please contact the Conservancy directly on 0418 784 794 or info@wildlifequeensland.com.au for information on Conservancy and members activities, volunteering and membership.



Come and enjoy the Reserve at Twilight for the AGM

Conservancy AGM

The Wildlife Conservancy of Tropical Queensland will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Saturday 1st September at 4:30pm at the Mareeba Wetlands Visitor Centre on Clancy's Lagoon.

Come and enjoy the Mareeba Wetlands at the best time of the day with a glass of wine and cheese and

biscuits.

All positions for the Board of the Conservancy fall vacant at the AGM, so please consider becoming involved and nominate for a position. New faces are always welcome. If you would like to find out more, phone Gwyneth Nevard on 0408 932303.



New vehicle ready to work!

New vehicle for Conservancy

The Conservancy was recently successful in obtaining funding from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for the purchase of a new vehicle. This vehicle is a Toyota Hilux Dualcab Utility so there is plenty of room to pull trailers and carry tools

and equipment as well as volunteers! The Conservancy appreciates the support of this important source of funding for community groups and will definitely be putting the new vehicle to good use in our conservation and land management activities.



The Conservancy's temporary office in Mareeba

Temporary office space

Due to the operational changes at the Mareeba Tropical Savanna and Wetland Reserve, the Wildlife Conservancy of Tropical Queensland is extremely grateful to the Northern Gulf Natural Resource Management Group for providing temporary office space in their office in the Post Office

Centre in Mareeba.

You can still contact us anytime on 0418 784 794 or email info@wildlifequeensland.com.au or drop in and see us at our new office.