



The newsletter of the Australian Rainforest Foundation

December 2007

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Best wishes this festive season and a cool 2008

Climate change has to be the most serious issue facing the planet today and we have heard much in the media in 2007 about how global warming may melt the polar ice-caps and raise sea levels - but what about the rising temperatures in our rainforests?

In 2008 the Australian Rainforest Foundation will continue to do everything we can to protect and rehabilitate Australia's rainforests and its inhabitants while at the same time encouraging conversation and action regarding the overall environmental health of the planet.

Our rainforests are a global treasure, recognised around the

world for their beauty and biodiversity but they are often forgotten for their natural ability to effectively cool the planet as they absorb and store carbon. Regardless of this, they are still under threat – and we must act to save them now. In 2008 we will be calling on you to do just that, as we continue to roll out our global awareness and fundraising initiatives.

Of course we must thank our members, supporters, sponsors and friends who have already joined us and allowed us to achieve our goals over the last ten years but we look forward to extensively extending this global network in the coming year.

Wherever you are on our planet this holiday season, safe travels and best wishes from us all at the ARF.

Protecting our rainforests for future generations

In December 2006 the ARF announced a huge boost to the conservation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the Daintree Rainforest through a major financial contribution from Gold Coast residents, retired QC John Kearney and his wife Alison. The sponsorship of two pristine rainforest blocks by the Kearney's was a result of the Foundation's unique advertising campaign supported by General Peter Cosgrove.

Elizabeth Kearney, granddaughter of Mr and Mrs Kearney, recently holidayed in the region and the ARF was delighted to be able to show her the blocks her grandparents had so generously sponsored and the work the ARF has undertaken to rehabilitate these pristine sites.

If you would like to know more about sponsoring or adopting your part of Australia's rainforest go to <http://www.arf.net.au/sponsor2.html>



Elizabeth Kearney visits her grandparents sponsored reserve

Free workshops arm residents to fight weeds

Residents of the Tully and Daintree regions are now armed to confidently identify and begin to manage invasive weeds on their rainforest properties thanks to free weed management workshops held in November. Thirty-seven local landowners attended the fully-booked, two half-day sessions hosted by the ARF under the Rainforest Stewardship Program.

The workshops were a direct result of consultation with the community, where weed and feral animal management, were identified as a major problem on private rainforest blocks with residents calling not only for financial assistance but the skills and know-how to get the job done themselves. Presenter, Paul LeGear, took participants through the ARF produced printed material supported by hands-on demonstrations and question and answer sessions.

Landowners who attended the workshops are now also eligible to apply for financial assistance through ARF Weed Management grants of \$500 - \$5000. More workshops will be held in 2008. To register your interest in these email info@arf.net.au



Armed and ready to begin the attack on weeds!

Green snags and 'grunts' to reduce pig population

A University of Queensland (UQ) PhD student is using green snags and simulated pig noises to keep feral pigs from tearing up the rainforest and recently spent a few days staying at the ARF's Daintree Community Conservation office to further his research with fruitful results.

Andrew Bengsen, from Mossman, is part of a UQ team working on a four-year-project to control pigs in tropical rainforests and his green, sausage-shaped baits target wild pigs but are not eaten by most of the other 300 odd animals that inhabit the rainforest. "We are trying to make poisoning an option for feral pig control as trapping only has a limited, localised effect due to the pigs rapid reproduction," Mr Bengsen said". The baits are green cylinders that weigh about 250 grams, are 10 cms long and made of fishmeal and grains. Having animal and vegetable products in it, deters specialist feeders such as wallabies and other strict herbivores. Pigs are happy to eat anything," he said.

The baits are coloured green to deter animals that use colours to identify food and are buried 10 centimetres below the forest floor so only pigs can smell and dig them up, while most other animals don't. "Small animals like rodents will have a nibble on the outside of the bait and they'll be full, but the toxic core would be put inside the centre of the bait so the animal has to eat the whole bait or tunnel right into it in order to be poisonous," Mr Bengsen said.

Mr Bengsen is based with the Davies laboratory in CSIRO's Townsville office. His project group is led by Iain Gordon for UQ, the IACRC and CSIRO's Division of Sustainable Ecosystems.



Pigs take the 'snag' bait on ARF Daintree properties

One lucky little chick

Steven Garrad – ARF Community Conservation Officer, Mission Beach

It's that time of year, and reports are coming in almost daily of sightings of cassowary males with two or more young chicks, which is excellent news after the catastrophic figures in the recently released Queensland Parks and Wildlife 2006-07 State of the Wet Tropics Report. The report highlighted 31 cassowaries had died in the wake of Cyclone Larry and that's nearly 3% of the known population of this endangered keystone species.

From March 2006 to June 2007, 15 of the birds died around Innisfail, 11 in Mission Beach and five in Tully. Car accidents accounted for 18 fatalities and dog attacks killed six birds. Other causes of death included malnutrition and fights with other cassowaries. Unfortunately at the Garners Beach facility we have also experienced first hand a dog attack on a young chick.

The young stripy (pictured) was captured by a dog that had been chasing its father and siblings in early November in a Mission Beach housing development. The dog took the chick back to its owners who then took the chick immediately to the Tully Vet surgery where its wounds were tendered to before being passed into our care. Probably only 10 days old or so, it has adjusted quickly to the finely chopped fruits we are feeding it and is exploring its pen which is lined with leaf litter along with some potted palms to make it feel at home.

Also, near the Garners Beach facility is an old male big Bird with one-eye (trauma with a car several years ago) called 'Bandit', he is regularly seen taking his two chicks 'out for dinner' in the area which is proving a tourist attraction as it is often near the road. Signs have been put up in an attempt to slow traffic. Reggie, the adult female resident at the facility since October, is still undergoing tests to see what exactly has caused her feather loss – but as yet no positive findings.



One lucky little chick, with teeth marks of the dog who attacked it around its neck.

Angsana management team set records and become Hero₂s

Leaving behind their beach side property at Palm Cove, the management team of Angsana Resort and Spa, Great Barrier Reef traveled in December with local tour company Wilderness Challenge to the World Heritage Daintree rainforest to help the ARF plant the first 1000 of 2000 trees sponsored by the luxury resort.

General Manager Mark Slimmer led the ten strong management team in the planting. "Angsana Resort and Spa, Great Barrier Reef, is part of the worldwide Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts Group. The group has a Corporate Social Responsibility program that is extremely proactive with a variety of initiatives. One such initiative is its 'Greening Communities' program through which every resort in the group has committed to planting 2000 trees in 2007," Mr Slimmer said.

"After research, we decided we wanted to work with the Australian Rainforest Foundation and felt that the Daintree was an appropriate area for us to plant the trees considering its World Heritage status and relationship to tourism in our region."

An ARF block on the corner of Cape Tribulation Road and Turpentine Road was chosen for the planting with preparation work carried out by ARF officer Adrian (Golly) Watson. Assisted by ARF staff and Daintree resident volunteers the team planted a record 1083 new trees in just over 1hr and 10mins before enjoying a BBQ lunch at the ARF's Daintree Community Conservation office.

"We were delighted to work with the ARF in achieving our 'Greening' goal and hope to work with the organisation on further plantings and projects in 2008," Mr Slimmer said.

Find out more about becoming a Hero₂ at www.hero2.net.au



Mark Slimmer, General Manager, Angsana Resort & Spa, plants tree number 1083 of 2000 made possible by the resorts' 'Hero2' contribution, watched on by Jacinta Allen, ARF and Shawn Huddy, Wilderness Challenge.

Farewell to Jol - Golly now on the ground

The Foundation was sad to see the departure from the ARF's Community Conservation Office in the Daintree of Jolyon Ritchie last month. Jolyon was the first Community Conservation Officer recruited by the ARF and established many systems and relationships that will form the basis of the ARF's ongoing work. We wish him well in his career.

Adrian Watson (otherwise known as Golly) has taken up a Caretaker role at the Cape Tribulation Rd office where he will live on site and oversee the ongoing works and rainforest recovery of the ARF's 24 blocks.

Steve Garrad, ARF Community Conservation Officer based in Mission Beach will travel regularly to the Daintree facility to continue Jolyon's work engaging with and assisting where possible Daintree landholders.

Golly is also working with local contractors to establish a nursery on site at the facility to ensure the Foundation can continue to plant the 'right tree in the right place' and extend our rainforests through our Hero₂ program.



Golly gets on with the job.

2008 Year of the Frog

Did you know that 214 amphibian species occur in Australia which puts us in the top 13 countries in the world and that 47 of these species are already under threat and on top of that 25% of Australia's frog species occur in the Wet Tropics region. We told you our rainforests are special! And because of that the ARF is joining the Year of the Frog global campaign, to be launched on New Year's Eve.



Amphibian Ark as an arm of the Amphibian Conservation Summit (ACAP) has named 2008 the Year of the Frog, with a global campaign to raise awareness of the amphibian crisis, and to generate funding for amphibian conservation.

It is believed that one-third to one-half of the world's approximately 6,000 known amphibian species could go extinct in our lifetime. This would be the largest mass extinction since the disappearance of the dinosaurs.

The ARF website and our e-newsletter will keep you informed throughout 2008 on ARF events and activities in support of this campaign.

Last minute Christmas gifts – Call us now on (07) 4041 1489

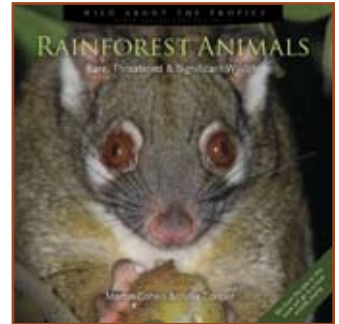
Visit the ARF Interpretive Centre and Gift Shop in Cairns, 51 Esplanade, Cairns, Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm or check out our brochure here - for all of your last minute Christmas gift ideas and know that all of proceeds will go to protecting our rainforests for future generations to enjoy.

All purchases made can be gift wrapped and posted to anywhere in Australia (postage extra).

A great read:

Rainforest Animals – Rare, Threatened and Significant Wildlife.

Written by two of Cairn's leading wildlife advocates, Dr Martin Cohen and Julia Cooper, this 56 page full-colour publication was produced with assistance from the ARF. The first of a series on tropical wildlife the book is presented in an easy to read format with stunning photography that makes it a great gift for locals and visitors for all ages. **Price \$25.00.**



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December / January in the Rainforest

As the first heavy downpours of the wet season commence native frogs become active. Only the male frog makes a sound, calling to attract a mate. These deafening choruses can be heard at night and mating congregations can be observed.

Our native frogs and their rainforest habitat need protecting. Become frog friendly by reducing the use of chemicals in your garden and planting native shrub and tree species. Some frogs and native tadpoles can appear similar to Cane Toads, if in doubt simply set it free.

In Brief

Japan to help save Australia's rainforests:

A Japanese film crew spent a day with ARF staff in November filming cassowaries in care and inspecting the need for corridors in the fragmented rainforest of coastal lowlands including a trip to the Leo Road block. All good international promotion for the ARF in its aim to raise global awareness of the importance of our rainforests and the need to raise private funds.

Fruit gets a chilling thanks to fridge donation:

The banana supply at the Garners Beach Cassowary Rehabilitation Facility has been intermittent of late as the donors' farm moves between harvesting periods. This, and the fact that the bought fruit is spoiling at an increasing rate as the daily temperatures rise, has led to short term shortfalls in the food for the birds in care.

This problem has been solved in part by the delivery of a large commercial refrigerator (pictured) donated by Mr Warren Garrad of Brisbane. The mighty fridge was offloaded by forklift at a nearby farm then transported by QPWS truck to Garners Beach – the ARF would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Garrad for this very kind donation.



That's one big fridge... and that's where it's going!