

# Media release

20 December 2010

## **GARNERS BEACH CASSOWARY KNOWN AS 'DAD' DIES IN PIG TRAP**

A male Cassowary well known to residents at Garners Beach and being observed as part of a community Cassowary Identification and Tracking Project has died as a result of being trapped in a cage set to trap pigs. The adult sustained mortal injuries by ripping its casque and top beak off while attempting to escape from the mesh cage. The birds were discovered mid morning on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> Dec and the male was euthanised by the Tully vet Graham Lauridsen. It is not known how long the birds had been trapped but it could have been anytime in the 24 hours that elapsed between when the cage was checked at approximately 11am on the 14<sup>th</sup> Dec to 11 am the next day.

The trap was set during the day as part of a Terrain NRM pig management program.

The issue of pig traps being a major threat to the endangered Cassowary has long been discussed and guidelines for the use of traps in Cassowary country established to minimise the risk to non target species.

To avoid situations such as this, traps are baited for several days to encourage the pigs into the cage and with the cage door open. The cage is then set in the evening when pigs are most active and Cassowaries are not. The cage is checked early every morning and not set again until the next evening.

“This is the second report of Cassowaries being caught in pig traps in two weeks with a sub adult trapped at Coquette Point. The incident was brought to the attention of both QPWS and Terrain at the time” said Liz Gallie who is developing the Cassowary Identification Project at Mission Beach. “This death should not be treated as an accident”.

“This is a tragedy for the Garners Beach population of Cassowaries and for the residents who have lost a much loved regular visitor to their properties” Ms Gallie said “a tragedy that that could have easily been avoided by responsible management and proper guidelines being observed”.

“With development encroaching more into the high biodiversity area it should be a priority of local governments to establish best practice guidelines for *any* activities introduced that may impact on or threaten the lives of the endangered Cassowary” said a very concerned Ms Gallie. “There is no room for complacency”

The two orphaned chicks are now in the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) managed Cassowary rehabilitation facility at Garners Beach.

### **Ends**

For more information please contact Liz Gallie on (07) 4068 7315

[See below for additional information](#)

A far north Queensland farmer says pig traps are one of the biggest threats to cassowary populations.

Mon Sep 7, 2009 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/09/07/2678229.htm>

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## Community Cassowary Identification and Tracking Project

Page 14 <http://www.cassowaryconservation.asn.au/Newbulletin/1552010091011.pdf>

Contact Liz Gallie (07) 4068 7315

A community project aiming to identify individual cassowaries at Mission Beach has been following the movements of 'Dad' and his chicks as an unusual situation has evolved where the parents of the chicks were sharing the parenting role.



'Dad' and 'Bella' with the first reported chicks in August this year.

The above photo was taken on the 6<sup>th</sup> August this year, the first chicks to be reported for the season and 'Dad' and 'Bella' stayed together for about 6 weeks before being seen separately.

It is not uncommon for the male and female to reunite after the chicks have hatched but what is being observed with this family is when they were seen separately one chick stayed with the male and two with the female for about a week before being seen again as a family unit.



'Bella' with two chicks 13 September 2010

The occasional uniting and separating continued with the female and male seen at different times with a different number of chicks. The last time they were all seen together was in October. Since then there have been regular sightings of the male with the two chicks crossing the Garners Beach Road.

The birds were sighted for the first time two weeks ago on the south side of the Bingil Bay Road on the property where the pig trap was located.

The female has been seen regularly, now rearing one chick.



'Bella' with chick September 2010



'Bella' with chick mid November

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