

12 Mar 2011

Hi all,

Wonderful news 'Jessie' the matriarch cassowary of Coquette Point has emerged from the forest, I had not seen her since before Christmas. She appears in good condition but hungry.



Jessie matriarch Coquette Point

shows her looking at the building materials for a new house to be built on the hill. Jessie was orphaned during cyclone Winifred and the community at the top of the hill reared her.

Dad 1 and his two chicks are still walking the road.

They go house to house for food. See photo that shows one chick caught inside a fence, apparently it happens often. I suggested that they close the gate, but it is still left open.



Cassowary chick Dad! Caught in fence



At long last two National Parks officers arrived on Thursday to access the situation with cassowaries. They have established a feed station on the boarder of a forested/mangrove area on the esplanade bordering my property. I am monitoring the station. I put two kilos of fruit in at 6am and again at two pm and clear any uneaten food at 6pm. If the birds are there I give it a miss and return to top it up later. Took photo this morning of Dad 4 and two chicks at the feed station.



Cassowary at feed station 11am 12-3-11

I had some discussion with the rangers about the sustainability of the cassowary population at Coquette Point. Before Winifred we had up to 12 adult males, one matriarch, three sub-adults and five chicks. The birds frequently walked through properties but were not fed by the locals. Over the last twenty-five years about fifty acres of rainforest has been cleared for development; not that much considering the area. Two cyclones in two years and a dramatic increase in the number of pigs in the Moresby Range National park and in the World Heritage mangrove estate has tipped the scales. Pigs compete with the cassowaries for the same food. In my opinion there is enough protected, forested land to support the current population of cassowaries at Coquette Point.



Pigs every-where I look

However there will never be enough food in the forest for the cassowaries and the pigs.

Cheers Yvonne C.

