

4 June 2011

Hi All,

It is cassowary mating time at Coquette Point and the chasing has increased. Dad 2 with the single chick was seen walking with the Matriarch Jessie this week. This is unusual as generally the male separates from the chick before he starts 'courting': no doubt we will soon see this chick by itself. The subadults Big Sis and Little Runt have been playing chasy all over the Point. It is quite scary sometimes when you hear the honking and the bush crashing . When the chase is over Little Runt starts honking and Big Sis stands on one leg and looks triumphant.

No pigs in the cage. Since the pig cage has been in place I have not seen a pig. Perhaps the cage works as a deterrent?

Unfortunately the cassowaries are fascinated by the cage and they love the cracked corn. Found Big Sis sitting in the cage at 6.30am Wednesday morning. She was gulping down the cracked corn.



The next morning Dad 4 and the chicks were in the cage all happily eating corn.



Photo. Everything was OK until the chicks went outside and Dad 4 went in behind the open door to get to the chicks. There was panic.



I was just about to call NP for help when he found his way out. He walked around in circles for about half an hour then followed the chicks as they went to check out the feeding station. He seems OK now and is behaving normally.

My reason for tying the pig cage door back was to encourage the pigs to enter and feed on the corn. I have been closing the door early in the morning, but not early enough for the cassowaries. My pig expert, Neal Griggs advised that if these pigs have at sometime escaped from a cage it is very unlikely that I will catch one. As the cages used by AT

trapping were open at the top it is most likely that these pigs have escaped from a cage at sometime in the past.

On the road home on Wednesday I was driving along the Coquette Point road at 50k when a truck with a crane tailgated me. I had just entered the range section of the road and could not pull over. NP recently put an extra cassowary sighting sign on this section of the road and I was rationalizing if a cassowary walks out in front of my car do I hit it or do I put my foot on the brake and get wiped out by the crane-truck. There was no way he could stop, he was only feet away from my van. The driver tailgated me all the way to the top of the hill where I pulled over. He went past me and stopped at the new house construction, as he pulled in cassowary Little Runt crossed the road in front of his truck looking rather startled.



I approached the driver and asked why he was tailgating me when I was travelling on the speed limit. “ **No you weren’t** “, he said “ the speed limit is 60”. He said he did not see the 50k cassowary signs. There are a number of 50k signs on the road. However, it is confusing as the 60k road signs are within a few metres of the 50K signs. What hope do the cassowaries have?

On Friday afternoon I saw a women walking two dogs on a double lead on the Coquette Point road. Ahead I saw cassowary 'Brown Cone' in the grass beside the road. I pulled over and suggested she should go back as there was a cassowary ahead. She said she knew all about cassowaries and could handle her dogs if they passed a cassowary. I suggested that the cassowary might injure her dogs and if she intervened the cassowary might strike her and such an incident could be fatal to her and/or the dogs. While we were talking 'Brown Cone' crossed the road and stood on the verge looking as if the exertion in crossing the road took all his strength, he is very thin



Notwithstanding my pleas for her to turn back she walked past my van and continued I waited with my camera ready but when she saw 'Brown Cone' was not moving and neither was I, she turned around and went back.



If I had not been there, at that very moment, what might have happened?

Disaster has struck my little sunbirds nesting on the patio. Mother disappeared last night. This morning to my amazement Dad was feeding the chicks.



He was coming to the nest every 15minutes with food. I have never seen this happen before. However, tonight he has not come back to the nest and the babies are alone.

World Environment Day to-morrow hope to see you at the Sustainability Expo at Innisfail TAFE

Cheers Yvonne C.