Mapping Rabbits at Koala Beach

Rabbits undermine the foundations of houses and destroy gardens, as well as damaging public infrastructure such as roads, water towers, and rock walls. They also compete with native animals and cause serious damage to areas of urban bushland.

Despite the best efforts of community trappers, roaming domestic Rabbits and their off-spring are still increasing in numbers at Koala Beach Estate. In an effort to address this issue, a Rabbit control program is being developed.

The first step in this process is to work out where Rabbits are within the Estate. You can help with this process by going on-line and recording your Rabbit sightings on RabbitScan.

Please go to [http://www.feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan](http://www.feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan) and record where you are seeing Rabbits within Koala Beach Estate.

But what about Hares?

Please do not enter sightings on Hares into RabbitScan. Hares will be controlled at Koala Beach during the Rabbit control program, but we do not need for them to be mapped. Entering records of Hares into RabbitScan could “pollute” the Rabbit data.

In the near future the following actions will be undertaken:

- Surveys to assess the population and habitat quality of the threatened Coastal Planigale, including monitoring to see if this species is using areas of restored habitat.
- Planting of Koala feed trees within the Arthraxon reserve.
- Surveys to assess the Koala population at Koala Beach and reporting of recommendations to ensure survival of this species at Koala Beach.
- Preparation and implementation of an integrated pest management plan to control Rabbits and Hares at Koala Beach.

Contacts

TSC Rangers
02 6670 2400 (a.h. 1800 818 326)

TSC KBWHMC contacts
Tanya Fountain 02 6670 2787
Pamela Gray 02 6670 2778

Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers
24 hour wildlife hotline
02 6672-4789

Koala Beach website

Next meeting - 1st February 2012, 4:00pm at Koala Beach Sports Fields.
All Welcome.
Wildlife Profile

LARGE-FOOTED MYOTIS
(Myotis macropus)

Conservation status
This species is now generally uncommon to rare throughout most of its range, and is listed as Vulnerable under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995.

Description
These tiny animals only weigh up to 15 grams and are about 5cm long, with a wing-span of ~28cm. They have disproportionately large feet with widely spaced toes and long, curved claws that help them to hunt.

Distribution
The Large-footed Myotis is found in the coastal band from the north-west of Australia, across the top-end and south to western Victoria. It is rarely found more than 100 km inland, except along major rivers.

Habitat
Large-footed Myotis only occur in areas that have permanent water in close vicinity to suitable roost sites. They are known to hunt over forested streams; rivers and estuaries; and also on reservoirs; farm dams and lakes. Suitable roost sites include: caves; mines; tree hollows; under bridges; and dense vegetation that are close to or overhanging water.

Feeding behaviour
Large-footed Myotis hunt for food at night, foraging over pools of water in small streams, rivers and lakes, and rake their clawed hind feet through the water to catch fish and insects. They also hunt flying insects by making small sounds through their mouths that humans cannot hear (echolocation). The sounds bounce off objects and come back to the bat, alerting them to the location of their prey.

Large-footed Myotis at Koala Beach
At Koala Beach, Large-footed Myotis use artificial roosts under the Cudgera Creek bridge. They share this roost with another Threatened Species, the Little Bent Wing Bat (Miniopterus australis).

Threats to Large-footed Myotis
- Changes in water quality that diminish their food resource. This can occur as a result of:
  - vegetation clearing and logging (sedimentation);
  - sewage and fertilizer run-off;
  - pesticide/herbicide leakage; and
  - altered flow regimes.
- Disturbance to roosts through human activities such as recreational use of caves and bridges.
- Removal or destruction of caves, old timber bridges, other bridges, old mines, and culverts.

Update on works undertaken by the Koala Beach Wildlife and Habitat Management Committee 2011
The Koala Beach Habitat and Wildlife Management Committee, with the assistance of Council Natural Resource Management staff, have undertaken the following actions over the last year:
- Lobbied successfully to get traffic calming devices installed on Tom Merchant Drive (road to the Koala Beach sportsfield).
- Had interpretive signage installed at the Koala Beach sportsfield.
- Participated in cane toad musters and pest rabbit survey.
- Written to real estate agents reinforcing the no dog/cat policy in Koala Beach.
- Planted 200 fauna habitat trees for National Tree Day.
- Initiated investigation and management of a range of environmental issues including installation of fauna safe lighting, tree removal, vehicle speeding and section 88b instrument/Koala Plan of Management compliance.

Other recent actions funded by the Koala Beach environmental levy include:
- Monitoring and reporting of the local Glossy-black Cockatoo population, its habitat and usage of nest boxes.
- Purchasing of traps for community pest rabbit trapping and rabbit euthanasia.
- Installation and monitoring of bird and arboreal marsupial nest boxes.
- A koala habitat walk guided by a local ecologist.
- Updating the Koala Beach Habitat Restoration Plan and continuation of bush regeneration works in habitat areas for Glossy-black Cockatoo, Common Blossom Bat and Koala.
- Monitoring of wild dog numbers and trapping.
- Monitoring of fox numbers, trapping, fox den searches and fumigation.