



Kangaroo Valley Colony Report

It has been a busy few months around the three Kangaroo Valley Rock-wallaby Colonies and the Contractors have acquainting the new Saving our Species Project Coordinators with the sites and fieldwork. There is an explosion of joeys and the Friends are currently contracting Troy Bagnall to undertake humane trapping for introduced predator around the three Kangaroo Valley colonies. The Rock-wallaby joeys are highly vulnerable to fox, cat and dog predation between 5 and 12 months as they are emerging from their Mum's pouch, gaining independence and working on their agility and escape routes. Other kangaroo and wallaby species keep their joeys in the pouch until they are capable of escaping predators. Rock-wallabies rely on impeccable balance to navigate their rugged vertical habitat and therefore must hide their furred, thermo-regulating joeys in high rocky crevices for short periods while they forage. Too much weight in the pouch spells disaster for Rock-wallabies. At least two Kangaroo Valley Rock-wallabies are known to have fallen to their death while trying to lug a grown joey around.

At the Creek colony the supply of surplus males has had the desired effect on reproduction. We can confirm that seven of the eight adult females are carrying joeys in their pouches – Pinot hasn't offered the camera the right angle to confirm yet! Cliff, the strapping male translocated from the Mountain Colony at the beginning of April, has proven rather popular with the Creek Girls. So, it is true – female Rock-wallabies appreciate a choice of mates! This is a remarkable reproductive result for the Creek colony which has been fraught with translocation and recruitment set-backs for years. Now we just need to help all these joeys reach adulthood by keeping the introduced predators away from the colony. Adopters of Fiona, Nibbler and Jewel have recent monitoring camera images to view, including the first peek of Fiona's new joey.

The Friends hope to offer new Kangaroo Valley Rock-wallabies for adoption in time for Christmas. The adoption packs make a beautiful gift with the follow-up images and news of cute joeys emerging from their Mum's pouch.

Two captive breed females finally joined the Mountain Colony on July 8, however one was sadly caught by a fox within a week of her release. The Friends stepped in and assisted the Saving Our Species project by paying for intensive trapping around the Mountain colony in July and so far, the other translocated female has survived. It takes a few weeks or months for the captive-born Rock-wallabies to learn how to use their new habitat like a wild-born Rock-wallaby and to learn about the threat of predators and how to avoid them.

The Friends have contributed \$6000 to this release. This covers the rigorous radio-tracking of translocated Rock-wallabies and predator and Rock-wallaby camera monitoring, and the provision of special food pellets and fresh water. The pellets and water have to be carried in through steep, rugged terrain, but it is worth it if they anchor the new Rock-wallabies to the site. The stress of translocation can be fatal and good nutrition is paramount until the new Rock-wallabies learn their way around and what plants to eat. At the Mountain Colony the Rock-wallabies must cross a vehicle track and open habitat to access to the closest permanent water source. By providing water within the safety of their complex rocky habitat we aim to reduce the risk of predation of captive breed and young wild Rock-wallabies. Irene's joey from last year is a survivor and she has another currently emerging from her pouch. Adopters of the resilient Irene should appreciate the photo update.

All the River Colony the older adopted females have joeys – Pia, Bangarra, Flower and Wirra – and at least four other young adult females have joeys too. There are six adult males here and fighting over the warmer months may see some changes in dominance. Trapping by Troy I and expert baiting by Local Land Services contractor Evelyn Osborne will hopefully protect most of these joeys through to their 'recruitment' to the adult populations.

This financial year the Friends can use the \$14,000 Local Land Services Grant that Treasurer Melinda Norton successfully sort to cover the extensive cross-tenure introduced predator shooting by Troy and Dean Bagnall.

The not-for-profit volunteer group will continue raising funds to cover the shortfall of the Saving our Species project budget for predator and Rock-wallaby monitoring. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to help us help the Kangaroo Valley Rock-wallabies.



Meet Natalie - Our Friendly Social Media Officer

I became a member of the *Friends for the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby* group in June 2019, wanting to do more for an important threatened species in the local area. As a member I have helped out with different activities both outdoors in the habitat of the BTRW, and at events to educate the public on the BTRW colonies of Kangaroo Valley. The most recent event that I attended was the Environmental Expo in Nowra. It was an eventful day, interacting with many groups of school children of varying ages as well as general members of the community who were interested in doing more for the environment. I gained a lot of experience from the event as well as having some fun along the way, with Juliet and others making me feel very welcome.

Currently I am working as the Social Media Officer for the Friends of the BTRW, promoting our wonderful BTRW colonies in Kangaroo Valley by posting regularly to Instagram and Facebook. In this role I focus my efforts on providing our followers with updates on our BTRW colonies through videos and photos obtained through our *spy cameras*. I also spend my time looking for ways to encourage new members to join, donate or symbolically adopt their very own Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby via our social media sites. Although creating eye-catching and informative social media posts can be challenging, I have had plenty of fun with every one of them and look forward to continuing my work with the Friends of the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby.

Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram (BefriendRockwallaby) and share our fantastic new promotional videos so we can foster further support:

<https://show.pics.io/friends-of-the-btrw-or-final-videos>

Australia is home to more than 500,000 animal and plant species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. Over the last 200 years, more than 100 animal and plant species have become extinct. In NSW alone there are close to 1000 animal and plant species at risk of extinction. Threatened Species Day is when we turn the spotlight on native plants, animals, and ecosystems that are under threat and reflect on how we can protect them into the future.



The Friends of the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby taxidermy display is currently installed at the busy NSW National Parks and Wildlife Visitors Centre at Fitzroy Falls accompanied by interpretive information, merchandise and a donation box. The display is easily transported to community events and schools when we have a stall, presentation or activity planned. The display engaged and educated the audience of our annual presentation and kids puppet show at the Visitors Centre on September 7 – **Threatened Species Day**.

To commemorate Threatened Species Day the Friends also joined forces with Shoalhaven Bat Clinic to speak to 140 year 7 students about the plight of the endangered Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby and the vulnerable keystone species, the Grey-headed Flying Fox. The much-misunderstood Flying Fox regenerates our forests through pollination and seed dispersal. They could be extinct in 50 years. Just like Rock-wallabies, Flying Foxes display intelligence, beautiful and varied faces and individual personalities.

Right: Lachlan Wilmott, one of our new NSW Government Saving our Species Coordinators, releasing a female captive breed Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby into the Mountain colony on July 8. One of the two females released was unfortunately killed by a fox a within a week.



Right: Trina finding her feet after travelling from Waterfall Springs. Future releases of Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby in Kangaroo Valley will rely on the availability of individuals from Jenolan Caves, as captive breed BTRW are to be released there first to gain a sense of habitat use and predator awareness.



Mareeba Rock-wallabies

By Sharni Stewart from Kangaroo Valley School

When I was on holiday in Cairns, we went to a little town called Mareeba. Anyway, there was a sign that read "Granite Gorge" so we followed the signs and found a camping ground. We walked to the reception and a man said that we should walk down a couple more metres ... and we did. There was a flat rock with Mareeba Rock-wallabies sitting and waiting for a scratch and a feed (photos above).

We sat down and all the little wallabies came over for some attention. One of them had a joey and was hissing at the males! They were really entertaining and had a sweet temperament. Sometimes they would hop up a cliff face and get halfway up and just sat there like they had super glue on their feet!



Above: Kangaroo Valley school student Sharni patting a Mareeba Rock-wallaby near the campground at Granite Gorge. Left: Kalkajaka Culture Dreamtime Story depicting Godman's Rock-wallaby recorded at Black Mountain National Park.

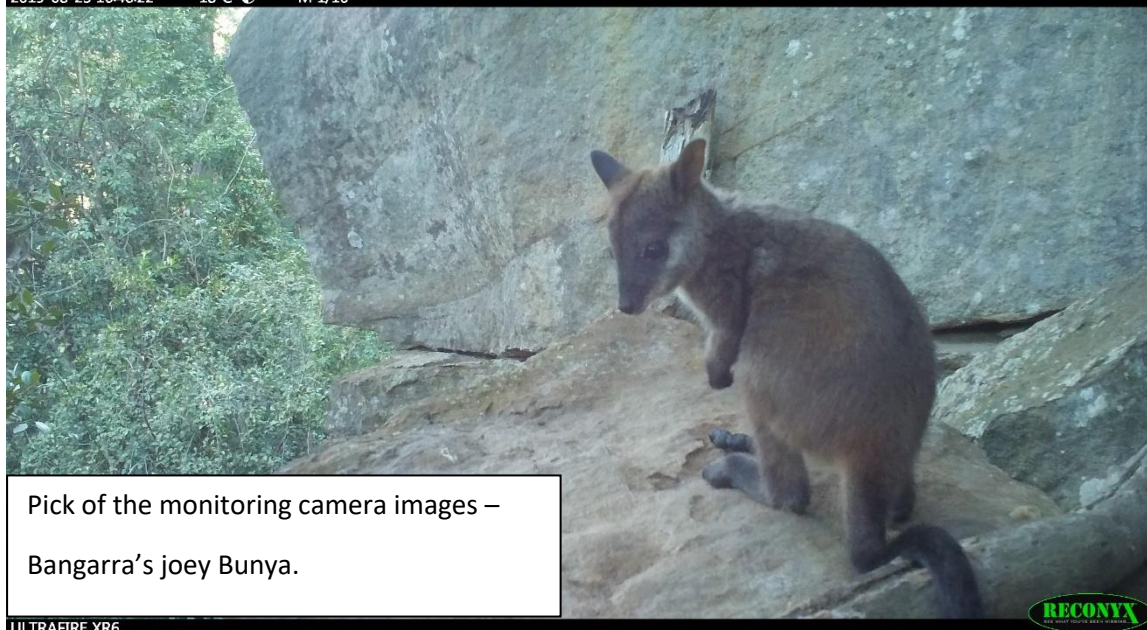
Elusive Godman's Rock-wallaby

By Jann Mattick, Friends Vice President

A trip north and the hunt was on - to seek out Godman's Rock Wallaby reported at Black Mountain, a massive pile of volcanic boulders next to the highway south of Cooktown, QLD. Black Mountain is an ideal rocky terrain adjacent to their feeding area of low open forest, open scrub or montane regions near the coast. Godman's Rock-wallaby is similar in size and colour to the Mareeba Rockwallaby. Alas, our hunt was fruitless although, with the colour of the rocks at Black Mountain, they could have been watching us.



2019-08-23 16:46:22 18°C M 1/10



Pick of the monitoring camera images –
Bangarra's joey Bunya.