

# Cape York Healthy Country newsletter



## Business Navigator starts work

THE Business Navigator Steering Committee welcomes Gayle Thomas to the Cape York NRM team as their Business Navigator. The position is hosted by Cape York NRM and is supported by a Steering Committee made up of a diverse team of industry professionals.

Business Navigators will play an important role in providing professional support to individuals and communities on Cape York. The initiative will assist applicants in developing new business and economic proposals by enabling them to effectively navigate complex approval processes.

Gayle has owned and operated a number of businesses and is well placed to assist people to develop new business and economic opportunities. More recently Gayle was the Commercial Principle (owner) of Australian Tourism Network (ATN). ATN offered a broad range of business services, including developing business plans, feasibility research, marketing plans and working with clients to develop solutions.



Gayle has a social science degree and is completing her masters in Conflict and Dispute Resolution. She has a long involvement with the social health of Indigenous people living in Cape York and is a Board member for Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service in the capacity of professional for social health.

Gayle is particularly excited to be part of the Cape York NRM team as their Business Navigator, due to it allowing her to work in this exceptionally beautiful landscape using her skills to assist build strong and healthy local communities.

**Aspiring business people can contact Gayle at Cape York NRM on 0407 173882 or at [gthomas@capeyorknrm.com.au](mailto:gthomas@capeyorknrm.com.au)**

Members of the BNI Steering Committee are Dick Foster - Chair, Dr Steve Burroughs - Private consultant specialising in remote indigenous community work, David Hudson - Indigenous Tourism, Colin Ford - Business Development, Management and Indigenous Engagement, Andrew Kerr - Lawyer specialising in land tenure and business law, John Goodwin - Community Sector Banking and Community Development Financial Institution Pilot and Indigenous Development.



Left to Right: David Hudson, Dr Steve Burroughs, Directors of Cape York NRM Joseph Elu, Dick Foster and Desmond Tayley, Bob Frazer CEO Cape York NRM, Colin Ford, Andrew Kerr.

Cape York Natural Resource Management is a community owned organisation helping the people of Cape York to build resilient communities and healthy country by supporting natural and cultural resource management and economic development such as sustainable agriculture.

# Measuring pasture quality using NIRS



PHOTO: Kiri Broad - Brahman cross weaners in the Gulf

**By Kiri Broad**

**Beef Extension Officer, Agri-Science  
Queensland, Department of Employment,  
Economic Development & Innovation**

AS the cost of supplementation increases, it is important that licks are achieving optimum results for cattle production and timing to match the decline in pasture quality can assist in saving dollars.

Near Infrared Spectroscopy (NIRS) is the analysis of dung which gives an estimation of the crude protein (CP) and dry matter digestibility (DMD) of the diet. Energy (MJ/ME) can also be calculated, as well a Phosphorus (P) estimation, which will give an indication of whether P is adequate in the diet.

NIRS testing for diet quality (CP, DMD) can be undertaken at any time of the year and using these results at the start of the dry season in particular can assist with improved timing of supplementation strategies.

Research has shown that a response to non-protein nitrogen (eg urea) supplementation is most likely when the DMD:CP ratio is greater than 10:1 (for speargrass pasture).

This means if DMD of the pasture from the sample was 55%, and CP was 5.5%, the ratio is 10:1. If the CP drops to 5%, the ratio becomes 11:1 and supplementation with urea is likely to have a greater production response. In the early dry season, this ratio may be low (under 10:1) and so large amounts of urea supplementation may in fact be having little effect on cattle production (though small amounts may still be useful for preparing cattle for mid-late dry season supplementation). Changes in DMD and CP are most commonly seen at the start of the dry season, where pasture is beginning to decline, rather than late dry season where the pasture has most likely already declined beyond supplementation threshold.

Therefore, pasture quality testing will be most beneficial in the early-mid dry season.

Phosphorus analysis is best undertaken during the wet season, as changes in the animal's use of P in the diet allow for greater estimations of P status. P values are given in mg/kg for faecal P and a P:N ratio is also given. The faecal P mg/kg value is what is leftover after the animal has used P in the body processes and therefore gives an idea of the total dietary P that was consumed and is available to the animal - helping to assess the P levels in the pasture. Assessment of this value and an estimation of whether there is adequate P in the diet is provided with the analysis. The P:N ratio gives an indication of whether there is sufficient P in the diet (in relation to available nitrogen) for certain productivity to be achieved (eg gaining weight, holding weight, pregnancy etc).

Phosphorus and CP values can be assessed even if cattle are being fed licks. However, it is important that any licks are noted on the form that is sent with the samples. Ensuring that the most information possible is sent with the sample, will mean that the most accurate results are returned to you.

NIRS should be used in conjunction with your own observations, such as cattle condition, pasture quality and quantity, spoilage from frost etc.

Tests cost \$60.50 (incl. GST) for a simple diet quality assessment and \$27.50 extra (incl. GST) for a Phosphorus analysis and are done through Symbio Alliance.

Instructions and forms are available on the website- [www.symbioalliance.com.au/laboratory-services/customer-services/stockfeed-livestock](http://www.symbioalliance.com.au/laboratory-services/customer-services/stockfeed-livestock)

Test kits, forms and free postage bags can also be obtained by calling them on (07) 33405700.

If you would like any more information, or some further assistance please call the FNQ FutureBeef Team on 07 4048 4882

**Our Mission: Helping people to work together to care for the natural environment and to promote the sustainable use of Cape York's natural resources.**

# Discovering the world of weeds competition

Have you ever wondered what makes a weed a weed, how easy they spread and the impact they have on our environment and agricultural systems?

These questions will be under the microscope in the 2012 Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation's (DEEDI) prestigious Hermitage Research Facility Schools Plant Science Competition.

The competition is open to Australian students from years Prep to 12. Activities will include a weed seed bank experiment, a weeds survey, and creating a weed herbarium. Competition sponsors have donated many great prizes, including a part scholarship to the value of \$1,000, a 12-month subscription to a scientific journal plus a range of medallions, trophies, science based educational materials and certificates.

To enter the 2012 Plant Science Competition contact Kerrie Rubie on (07) 4660 3666 or email [kerrie.rubie@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:kerrie.rubie@deedi.qld.gov.au)

The competition closes on 18 May 2012. Visit the competition link at [http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4791\\_4235.htm](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4791_4235.htm)



PHOTO: Weeds will be under the microscope in the 2012 plant science competition.

## Four pilot Indigenous reference groups set up

Over the past six months Cape York NRM has supported Traditional Owners to set up pilot Indigenous Reference Groups (IRG) in the Coleman, Watson and Olive/ Pascoe River basins in Cape York Peninsula. Work is also underway to establish an IRG for the Ducie River Basin.

The role of the IRG is to provide advice through a culturally appropriate framework to the Minister for the Department of Environment and Resource Management relating to any future wild rivers declaration proposal for their specific river basin. The purpose is to provide Traditional Owners with opportunities for their economic aspirations and cultural and natural resource management interests to be better reflected in any future wild river declarations.

As well as strengthening information sharing between the Queensland Government and Traditional Owners, the IRG framework also provides Traditional Owners with a forum to meet, discuss, reach agreement and speak on cultural, natural resource management and

other things impacting on the health of their country, and a process to communicate those issues, not only to the Minister and government agencies, but also to non-government organisations and institutions. IRG members are nominated by the members of their clan estates and provide a 'messenger' role that has the support of the Elders and people of their Clan. The ownership of the reference groups lies with the people, who decide on the structure, membership, language name, and if chosen, a distinctive logo and communications materials which can be in their own language.

The concept has been embraced by the Traditional Owners of the river basins taking part in the pilot. They recognise the potential of the IRG framework to provide wider benefits and opportunity to deal with other significant land use and land tenure issues and broader social, cultural and economic issues.

Feedback from the members of these IRG's indicates that the program has already provided opportunities for Traditional Owners to be involved in

decision-making processes affecting country and that the initiative is seen to be an effective culturally appropriate tool for all NRM decision making and to provide a way for non-indigenous people to better understand Aboriginal connections to land. Traditional Owners have also seen the groups as a way to reduce confusion and 'consultation fatigue' in differing government departments and programs and reduce the need for 'too many meetings'.

The interim evaluation of the Pilot also found that the IRG communication and engagement processes have served to focus the views of people having direct interests in country 'on the ground' and those, and it is hoped that what has been learned from the process this will result in more effective communication between Traditional Owners, the Minister, other stakeholders and Indigenous communities on Cape York.

For further information contact Don DeBusch at Cape York NRM on 0428283439.

## Do you have Australia's best beef recipe?

Beef Australia 2012 is providing all aspiring chefs with an opportunity to have their very own recipe published and shared with the world via the Great Online Beef Recipe Competition. The competition encourages "at-home" chefs to experiment with beef products while preparing delicious recipes that could be a new family favourite or one that has been shared from generation to generation. Email your original, never-before published beef recipe to [tanya@beefaustralia.com.au](mailto:tanya@beefaustralia.com.au). Winners will be notified by email and the winning recipe will be published in the official program at Beef Australia 2012. Entries must be received by no later than 4pm, 31 March 2012.



## Turtle & Dugong Taskforce

SERIOUS ABOUT CONSERVATION, CULTURE & COMMUNITY IN CAPE YORK

Cape York Institute  
For Policy & Leadership



Balkanu

# Call for Indigenous authority to manage turtle & dugong conservation in Cape York

CAPE York saltwater people say Indigenous authority is key to a strong sustainable future for turtle and dugong.

After three days of intense workshops an 80-strong forum of Traditional Owners has released a bold vision for conservation of turtle, dugong and totem species.

The forum, coordinated by Balkanu, examined science, cultural ethics, technology, existing Indigenous management initiatives, and media and politics to reach their draft strategy.

The vision is simple- a sustainable future for turtle and dugong and our cultural identity, a return to Indigenous responsibility and authority, equitable action on all impacts, and collaborative conservation effort by all who share the stocks inside and outside of Australian waters.

The group has called for Cape York saltwater people to have statutory enforcement power, to give effect to management plans developed by Traditional Owners.

The meeting concluded that without Indigenous statutory authority and the capacity to work with others inside and outside of the regional waters, our efforts would be futile.

Angkamuthi Elder Robbie Sallee said 800 villages in the Pacific share this regional turtle stock, which means that this conservation effort must be shared throughout the entire range of the animal.

The strategies developed this week seek to address all impacts on these treasured and important totem species. "Hunting is one of 20 major impacts on turtle and dugong," said Mr Sallee. Thanikwith Elder Richard Barkley said, "Hunting is something we are willing to confront and take

responsibility for but we will not be a scapegoat for the real and major impacts on the decline of the species such as habitat destruction, pollution, starvation, over-industrialisation, climate change and pig predation. These are not our impacts."

Wuthathi/Yedikana Traditional Owner Horace Nona said Raine Island, which is one of the largest Green turtle nesting site is sinking and drowning tens of thousands of nests each season. Rising tides are not the fault of Aboriginal people. It was once mined for guano (phosphate rock) which is implicated in its current failure as a rookery.

Based on extensive research scientists told the workshop that there has been nesting failure at Raine Island for the past 14 years which is seriously threatening long term stocks of Green Turtle.

"Urgent action must be taken on all impacts. For example, pigs are the scourge of Cape York and a critical threat to turtle lifecycle," Mr Nona said.

While the strategy and actions need to be developed further with clans, their Traditional Owner representatives at the forum have agreed to confront the following issues:

- Technology, and gear restrictions
- Methods and practices-alignment with Indigenous knowledge, science, and traditional purposes
- Action against rogues
- Consideration of closures-various types
- Consideration of bans such as night hunting, and in feeding areas
- End esky trade

The strategy also calls for more science, and for Traditional Owners and scientists to work together to drive research that enables effective management.

Addressing the forum internationally acclaimed dugong researcher Professor Helene Marsh of James Cook University endorsed the call for indigenous management authority with real enforcement powers. She also agreed that Indigenous knowledge and participation in dugong research would be constructive.

Mr Nona said, "We have wanted indigenous authority reinstated for decades. We do not want to come back in 5 or 20 years and be talking about the same issues."

"We are ready to act now. We condemn rogue hunting, and we condemn black market trade of turtle and dugong meat. We want to stop it now but need power to do so." Lama Lama Traditional Owner Gavin Bassini said his people look forward to a genuine negotiated settlement on turtle and dugong conservation secured under a cultural deal between government and TOs. "We're determined to manage what happens on our sea country in order to have sustainability."

The overarching framework established by this forum will be presented to State and Federal governments for action.

On Sept 8th the Commonwealth and State Governments announced a \$5M package focused on Queensland with some long awaited and encouraging key principles that recognize the critical value of Indigenous leadership in all aspects of solution development and community scale strategies which dove-tail into a regional and state framework.

The Traditional Owners of Cape York would like to thank Minister Tony Burke for enabling "proper way" planning on this important issue. It is now paramount that we take this "proper way" draft strategy to all communities for their input.



### **Cow cockies concocting climate change considerate cattle**

New and innovative sustainable farming practices are being developed for the cattle industry. Rathdowney producers Matthew Arkinstall and Warren Drynan have been looking at aspects of feed efficiency links to cattle breeding. They are behind the creation of a sustainable and highly efficient Feed Test Station in Running Creek, which recently won the Queensland Water and Land Carers 2011 Queensland Landcare Awards.

<http://www.seqcatchments.com.au/media/cow-cookies-concocting-climate-change-considerate-cattle>

### **DERM has released the guide *Managing Grazing Lands in Queensland*.**

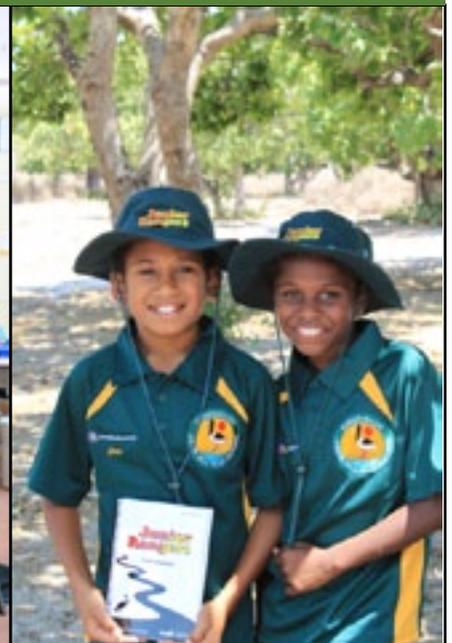
The main purpose of the guide is to assist lessees involved in the Delbessie Agreement – an area of around 50% of Queensland. Lessees have a responsibility under the Land Act 1994 to manage their properties in a sustainable manner. This includes maintaining productive pastures, managing plant and animal pests, conserving soil, biodiversity and water resources. The guide provides concise information for graziers about a range of issues relating to sustainable management. The information was

summarised from over 50 information sources including – web sites, computer programs, CD's, books, brochures, fact sheets and training packages. DERM, DEEDI, CSIRO, Regional Bodies and industry groups have produced these products.

As well as being useful for graziers the guide will be a valuable source of information for anyone wanting an overview of the sustainable management of grazing lands in Queensland.

For further information contact Bruce Carey on 3170 5763. [bruce.carey@derm.qld.gov.au](mailto:bruce.carey@derm.qld.gov.au)

## **Junior Wild River Rangers program launched**



### **By Stephen Danckert, Senior Project Officer, Regional NRM Programs, Department of Environment and Resource Management**

A Junior Wild River Rangers program was launched in Pormpuraaw in November 2011.

Working alongside local wild river rangers, students are encouraged to take an interest in land management, incorporating an Indigenous perspective into looking after country in Queensland's wild river areas.

At the launch students were invited to search for weeds in the local area, which they pressed, examined and then discussed the impacts of the weeds in their local river systems. A highlight of the morning was connecting with the schools of Normanton and Mapoon via an online video link, where the students talked about the different weeds they had discovered in their area. Schools in the northern Queensland communities of Pormpuraaw, Normanton and Mapoon make up the first phase of the program.

PHOTOS: Wild river rangers educating students at Pormpuraaw State School. Junior rangers John Passi (left) and Shakeria Tarpencha (right) from Pormpuraaw State School at the launch of the Junior Rangers program in November 2011.

The program will initially focus on Year 5 with other year levels to be progressively introduced.

A key element of the program is providing a connection between classroom learning and hands-on, outdoor activities. Activities led by the wild river rangers include natural resource management learning experiences in the classroom, on-country visits with elders and school camps.

The Junior Wild River Rangers program builds on existing wild river rangers work in the communities and local schools.

For further information on the Junior Rangers program visit the Department of Environment and Resource Management website <[www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildrivers/ranger](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildrivers/ranger)>.

## New Board Member for Cape York NRM

Gavin Bassani lives and works in Indigenous Zone 3. Gavin is a Lama Lama Traditional Owner whose lands extend from Silver Plains to Marina Plains on the East Coast of Cape York. Gavin is currently the Operations Manager for the Lama Lama Rangers based at Port Stewart, working with a team of 9 full-time rangers undertaking a range of cultural, conservation and land management activities.

Prior to this he was a 005 QPWS Ranger based at the Coen Management Unit coordinating works for the joint management of CYPAL parks including KULLA, Lama Lama and Mungan Kaanju. Gavin has extensive experience in weeds and feral control, fire management, visitor management and compliance.

Gavin was also the Deputy CEO of the Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation from 2004 – 2008. His role included preparing and managing funding submissions, day to day CDEP operations, homelands support and managing partnerships with Government and non-government organisations.

Gavin is also the Chairman of the Lama Lama Land Trust, Deputy Chair of the Yintjingga Aboriginal Corporation, and a Cape York Land Council Director. As a Board Member of Cape York NRM, Gavin aspires to see people making informed decisions about Land, Sea & Cultural Management on country.

Gavin can be contacted at the Lama lama Ranger Base on 07 40 603369 or via [gavb07@yahoo.com.au](mailto:gavb07@yahoo.com.au)



## 2012 Indigenous Fire Workshop

You are invited to attend the 4th Indigenous Fire Management Workshop at Kings Plains, Cape York Peninsula on the 16th – 20th July 2012.

We proudly present a number of practical workshops showcasing the applications of Indigenous Fire Management Practices in support of cultural, rural, and environmental fire management strategies. Experience the sharing of knowledge whilst walking with the fire and having discussions first hand.

The workshops will be led by a number of fire specialists and the event will involve:

- The demonstration of implementing traditional ecological burns in a contemporary environment.
- Demonstration of innovative indigenous and western scientific monitoring methods for conservation and flora and fauna management.
- Fire application to support rural and pastoral land management, including trial plots.
- Digital media communication skills and filming techniques.
- Live entertainment, films and presentations.

Catered by the meanest chef in the country.

Book soon to secure your position.

For more information please email [mulong@mulong.com.au](mailto:mulong@mulong.com.au) or alternatively contact Ben Lister on 0413 524 234.

Registration forms and pricing will be emailed out on request.

Check out the direct link to previous workshops, <http://www.youtube.com/user/MulongTKRP> to see a short trailer on previous Indigenous Fire Mentorship and research programs.



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY

## Community Action Grants

Are now available.

Grants can be between \$5 – \$20,000 and works must be completed by June 2013.

The three priority areas are: biodiversity and natural icons, coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats, and sustainable farm practices

Individuals are not eligible to apply, however community groups such as Cape York Peninsula Landcare Incorporated are able to sponsor or host the project.

Applications close on Tuesday 27th March.

Contact Regional Landcare Facilitator Andrew Hartwig if you would like any assistance with an application.

Visit <http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/cag/index.html>

ph.07 40695046  
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[ahartwig@cook.qld.gov.au](mailto:ahartwig@cook.qld.gov.au)



# Wild River Rangers Program 2011 achievements and activities



## By Stephen Danckert, Senior Project Officer, Regional NRM Programs, Department of Environment and Resource Management

2011 was a big year for the Wild River Rangers program with an expansion in ranger numbers, cyclone recovery work, the introduction of a Junior Wild River Rangers program, security of employment negotiations and announcement of extension into western Queensland.

The Wild River Rangers program began in 2007 and cares for and promotes the natural values of a number of Queensland's river basins. Most wild river rangers are Traditional Owners of the land on which they work and are employed through local Indigenous host organisations with funding provided by the Queensland Government. Wild river rangers form part of a strong Indigenous workforce, supporting communities and increasing the skill base of local people. Their activities are tailored to meet local needs, with rangers working closely with Traditional Owners on cultural and environmental priorities.

Their activities include preventing wildfires, managing invasive weeds and feral animals, reducing land disturbance and water pollution, and supporting wildlife management and recovery. In 2011 the number of rangers in northern Queensland expanded to 40 positions across 12 communities.

Following the devastation of Cyclone Yasi in February, a team of 25 rangers from Burketown, Cooktown, Girringun and Ewamian spent three weeks in Cardwell.

They helped locals remove debris from houses and cleared fallen trees from roads and properties.

The Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation was recognised for these efforts at the 2011 Queensland Safer Communities Awards, where they received an encouragement commendation.

The town of Burketown in Queensland's Gulf region hosted 15 wild river rangers for Validation Week, testing the skills and training of rangers in scenario-based situations over a five day period.

Wild river rangers from across the state worked closely with staff from Customs, Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, Queensland

Ambulance Service and local police throughout the week. They were tested on skills in remote area first aid, negotiation, mapping and navigation, and pest knowledge and management. The Queensland Government released a discussion paper outlining two options for improving the security of wild river ranger positions. Government staff then consulted with all wild river rangers and their host organisations.

Wild river rangers will now have a choice of becoming Queensland Government employees or continuing to be employed through host organisations.

Both options have been made available to wild river rangers and host organisations, allowing selection of the option that best suits local communities and individual rangers. The government is now working to implement these options.

More information about the Wild River Rangers program is available on the Department of Environment and Resource Management website [www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildrivers/ranger](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildrivers/ranger)  
PHOTO: Kelly Flower. Wild river ranger Jagama Yanner on the Albert River during Validation Week 2011.

## CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER:

CAPE York NRM are seeking stories and photos for this Newsletter from organisations and individuals promoting their activities in Cape York. Submit your article to [media@capeyorknrm.com.au](mailto:media@capeyorknrm.com.au).

## Support Officer Position Vacant

The Rinyirru (Lakefield) Land Trust would like to engage the services of a part time support officer.  
Contact: Carol Kinnard T: (07) 4091 8118 E: [Carol.Kinnaird@derm.qld.gov.au](mailto:Carol.Kinnaird@derm.qld.gov.au)



# Yuku Baja Muliku Turtle Triage Centre

**THE Yuku-Baja-Muliku Rangers have been running a Triage Centre for sick and injured turtles for the last 4 months. They have found it to be beneficial for the green turtles and also very rewarding personally.**

Our ranger team has been involved with monitoring Archer Point sea grass beds for the last four years with the help from Christina Howley and the results are given to the Seagrass Watch team.

It has been noticed that a lot of sea grass beds in Queensland have been buried or washed away as a result of massive cyclonic events and extreme rain events. Due to these sea grass beds disappearing a lot of sick turtles have been appearing up and down the east coast of Queensland. Turtle rehabilitation centers like the one in Cairns run by Jenny Gilbert have been setup, but the sheer number of animals getting sent in was too much to cope with.

A small army of volunteers have emerged to help with these centres but that does little for the turtles that have not found help when room is not available. That was the purpose of our triage centre, to help alleviate the pressure of overcrowding while still being able to seek important medical advice at anytime needed.

Yuku-Baja-Muliku rangers are working closely with the Marlin Coast Vet Clinic that visit Cooktown Region once a month. Rod Gilbert (vet) checks turtles while in town and recommends treatment / medication if required. We also work in closely with the Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre. Jenny has been a huge help and has supported Yuku-Baja-Muliku in all aspects of our turtle rescue program.

Yuku-Baja-Muliku staff have an arrangement in place with Hinterland Aviation. Hinterland Aviation has flights to and from Cooktown daily during the working week, and fly turtles free of charge to Cairns when they need further care.

Yuku-Baja-Muliku are in the planning process of building a better triage centre, aiming to assist the Cairns Turtle Rehab and our region with injured or sick turtles. We would like to thank Hinterland Aviation for their wonderful contribution, the Department of Environment and Resource Management team run by Graham Keating for his support and for funding the building of a more improved turtle rehab centre. Plus the Marlin Coast Vet Clinic, Jenny Gilbert from Cairns Turtle Rehab for all their support and advice with injured animals and for our turtle rescue program. Thanks to Pete Kilshaw for assistance with turtle rescue in our region and the locals for notifying the Yuku-Baja-Muliku Rangers of any injured or sick animals that they come upon.



PHOTO: Yuku Baja Muliku and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Rangers transport a rescued turtle. 'Big Bertha's' shell is 117cm length and the turtle is estimated to be between 80 and 100years old.

**Cape York Natural Resource Management**

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