



**Road kill:** A Queensland Parks and Wildlife ranger checks the remains of a cassowary killed at Mission Beach yesterday.

CP 17/11/09 Picture: JULIE LIGHTFOOT

# Mission Beach hit-run kills adult cassowary

MISSION Beach is mourning the death of another adult cassowary, left in a badly injured state on the side of a road after being hit by a vehicle.

Devastated tourists moved the bird off the road but could do little else but watch it die yesterday morning, after rushing out of a walking track upon hearing a loud thump from the direction of the El Arish-Mission Beach Rd.

The tourists had gone on their walk to see a cassowary.

"They saw one, but not in the way they had planned," upset resident Liz Gallie said.

"It was lying there dying on the road. The driver hadn't even stopped."

**Julie Lightfoot**

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The bird's death comes just four days after renowned conservationist Bob Irwin visited Mission Beach to launch a voluntary land buy-back program in a bid to save the rainforest town's endangered cassowaries.

Fifty-seven cassowary road deaths have been reported at Mission Beach in 15 years but conservationists say the figure is probably higher. Traffic strikes are considered the No. 1 killer of cassowaries.

Ms Gallie said police and the Queensland

Parks and Wildlife had fielded calls from concerned motorists yesterday morning. The bird had died while trying to cross the road near Fenby's Gap and the Licuala walking track.

"It's hard for us to understand how anyone could hit and seriously injure an endangered species, especially one that is so important to our environment, community and economy, and not stop to see what they could do or at the very least report it," she said.

"Reporting cassowary deaths, at the very least, allows us to better understand where and why they happen so strategies can be introduced to avoid more of them in the future."

➔ The number to call for injured wildlife is 1300 130 372.