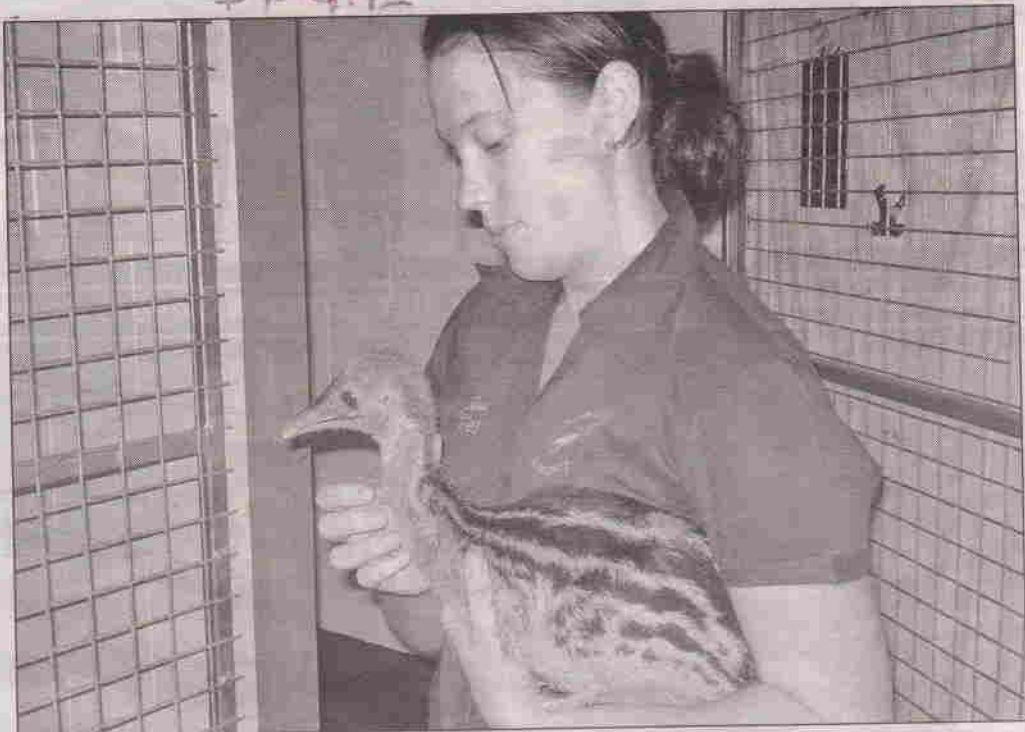


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RECOVERING: The baby cassowary with Tully vet Tina Kleinhans.

Photo: Supplied

# Attack on chick sparks warning

A DOG attack on a young cassowary near Mission Beach has highlighted the need for owners to keep their pets under control, the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) Senior Director Clive Cook said.

Mr Cook said a Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (QNPWS) ranger had been alerted to the injured cassowary and on Thursday had taken it to a veterinarian for treatment.

"The vet reported that the cassowary chick, which is about two to three months old, had puncture wounds consistent with a dog bite but fortunately they have not resulted in any serious injury," Mr Cook said.

"The vet has treated the

bird with long-lasting antibiotics and the ranger has now taken it back to where it was found and hopes to reunite it with the parent bird.

There is an estimated 1500 cassowaries in the wet tropics area and efforts are being made to preserve their numbers.

"This is a serious incident as the southern cassowary is in decline, and is listed as endangered under both Queensland and Commonwealth legislation," Mr Cook said.

Mr Cook said the attack was one of many recent reports of native wildlife being attacked by domestic dogs in the Innisfail-Mission Beach area.

"Under Nature Conservation regulations penalties

of up to \$12,000 can be imposed if a person is found to use a dog to take protected wildlife," he said.

"Offences also exist under the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 for unlawfully allowing an animal to injure or kill another animal and the maximum penalty for this offence is \$30,000 or one year's imprisonment."

Mr Cook said the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and other councils also had by-laws requiring dog owners to ensure their pets were kept under control and did not pose a threat to wildlife.

Mr Cook said anyone seeing domestic dogs roaming uncontrolled or were aware of wildlife being attacked should contact their local council.