



It's mission possible for quoll in north

A NORTHERN spotted-tailed quoll has been found at Mission Beach in far north Queensland for the first time.

Conservationist Liz Gallie accidentally caught the quoll, pictured, in a rat trap at her Bingil Bay home.

The Environmental Protection Agency says northern spotted-tailed quolls inhabit coastal ranges usually 600m or more above sea level between Townsville and Cooktown.

There also have been unconfirmed sightings to the west of Townsville and as far south as the Mackay-Whitsunday area.

Once common, quolls have been hammered by habitat clearing, poisoned by cane toads, 1080 baiting, car hits, competition from feral animals and people killing them because they eat backyard chooks.

Ms Gallie said the discovery showed there was still much to be learnt from the ecosystems of Mission Beach, which also was home to a threatened colony of cassowaries.

"Despite being recognised for many years for its biodiversity significance, there is still no thorough study of the fauna of Mission Beach," Ms Gallie said.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife ranger Audrey Reilly said the discovery was significant as the quoll was in low-lying rainforest near the beach instead of high country.

The discovery has raised hopes the quoll numbers might be increasing as is suspected with southern quolls in southeast Queensland.

Brian Williams

Picture: Liz Gallie