



A DESPARATE plea for residents to help save the last remaining Pottsville koalas have been made by the president of the Threatened Species Conservation Society Dave Norris.

In a heartfelt letter to The Weekly, Mr Norris said the level of threat to the koala population was now critical and he says "koalas deserve better".

"Over the last four years I have been reporting koala sightings at Black Rocks (Pottsville) to Tweed Shire Council and the NSW Bionet Wildlife Atlas after becoming aware of the level of threat to the survival of koalas on the Tweed Coast," he said.

"Recently I photographed five koala sightings in five days adjacent to the Black Rocks sports field, four being on the edge of the access road.

"One of these koalas (sighted 20 metres inside the open koala protection gates) had symptoms of the stress-related disease Chlamydia. I have been visiting the sports field site regularly in the hope that this koala will have moved to a location where the Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers are able to secure its capture and treatment."

Mr Norris said it was well-documented that persistent general disturbance exposes koalas to stress which culminates in the fatal disease.

"Over the last one and a half years three Black Rocks koalas have been euthanased due to this disease, two remain uncaptured and untreated and another eight koala sightings have displayed symptoms of this disease," he said.

“Considering that koala expert Dr Steve Phillips recently stated that there are probably only 10-15 koalas remaining in the Pottsville Wetlands/Black Rocks area, we cannot afford to lose anymore koalas.”

However, Mr Norris said during the course of his daily surveys of the sports field site, he has been alarmed at the ongoing koala-impactive activities through the middle of a koala breeding area and during koala breeding season.

“During the last five days I have witnessed four dogs having been transported through the open koala protection gates and roaming free on the sports field, ignoring four “no dog” signs,” he said.

“Surely our fragile koala population deserves better than this, especially during breeding season. At the very least, the koala protection gates should be locked at all times except during authorised access, as recommended by Council’s Koala Advisory Committee.”

Meanwhile, Tweed Shire Council voted this month to approve further monitoring of the region’s koala population using drone technology.

The technology was successfully used by a Queensland university and is being adopted by several councils.

Give us your thoughts: Should more be done to save the last of the Pottsville koala population? Send your comments or letters to [editor@theweekly.net.au](mailto:editor@theweekly.net.au)