

Bird's eye view of our rainforest



Being watched: The prehensile-tailed mouse currently being studied in the Daintree. The mouse eats the pulp from seeds of discarded forest fruits and is considered vital to the rainforest

Picture: MICHAEL CERMAK

SCIENTIST Romina Rader has taken research to new heights by using a crane to study a rainforest creature.

Ms Rader, from James Cook University in Cairns, is observing the prehensile-tailed mouse from dizzy heights at the Australian Rainforest Canopy Crane Research Facility in the Daintree, about 120km north of Cairns.

Ms Rader said the mouse was once considered rare but that could have been because its habitat has been beyond the scope of most researchers – at the tops of trees.

“Traditionally, researchers have had to spend a lot of time and effort using ropes and climbing gear to get up into the canopy,” Ms Rader said.

She said it was imperative

to establish what species of mammals inhabited the upper regions of the rainforest canopy and why they lived there.

Ms Rader said the mouse was believed to be one of many mammals critical to the survival of the rainforest.

“It’s possible this is one of the mammals that eats the pulp from seeds of discarded forest fruits,” she said.