



FLYING-FOXES

Nature's nocturnal pollinators.



FLYING-FOXES

Flying-foxes are unique animals which **regenerate our forests** and keep our ecosystems healthy through pollination and seed dispersal.

Flying-foxes are bats or more accurately 'mega-bats' (big bats).

They are also referred to as fruit bats but their diet is mainly nectar, pollen and rainforest fruits.





FLYING-FOXES vs MICRO-BATS



Flying-foxes don't use sonar or echolocation like the smaller, insect-eating bats or 'micro-bats'.

Micro-bats have small eyes and big ears which enable them to echolocate and track their prey such as mosquitoes, moths and beetles.

Micro-bats are important in the control of insect populations whereas mega-bats or flying-foxes are important in keeping Australian forest ecosystems healthy.





FLYING-FOX WINGS



If you look carefully at a flying-fox's wings, when flying or dipping into the water for a drink, you can see the blood vessels in the wing membrane which keep the wing membrane supple and alive.

The flying-fox can wrap its wing around its body to protect it from cold and rain.

The mother also wraps her wings around her baby to keep it warm and safe.

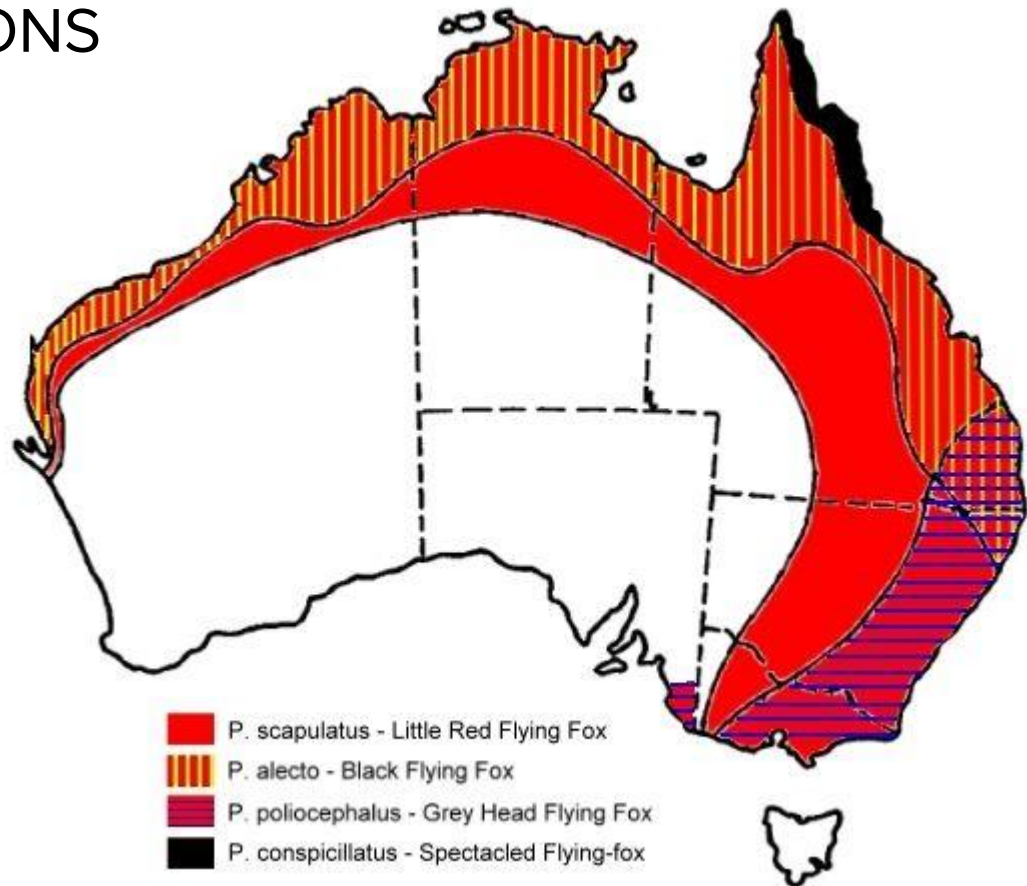




FLYING-FOX LOCATIONS

Flying-foxes are migratory and move up and down the Australian Eastern Seaboard spreading Eucalyptus tree pollen and rainforest seeds.

Flying-foxes are a '**keystone**' **species** which means that many other species of plants and animals rely on the flying-foxes' pollination & seed dispersal skills for their survival and wellbeing.





FLYING-FOX THREATS

Flying-foxes, like all our native wildlife, are increasingly vulnerable to human-caused ecological pressures such as climate change.

Land clearing for urban sprawl and agriculture removes the roosting and foraging habitat driving bats to orchards where they are frequently shot.

Other man-made hazards include power lines, barbed wire, and backyard fruit tree netting.





SOLUTIONS: Aerial Bundled Cabling

Power lines that are 'electrified bare wire' lines can be changed to '**aerial bundled cable**' (ABC) cable.

ABC cable is safe for both people and flying-foxes, because all the power line wires are put into a single cable which is safe for flying-foxes and if the ABC cable blows down in a storm, it is not dangerous to people either.

Contact your local Council





SOLUTIONS: Wildlife Friendly Fencing

Every year, thousands of animals face a cruel death or permanent injury from **entanglement on barbed wire fences**, especially nocturnal animals such as bats, gliders and owls.

They **fail to see the fence** or are blown onto the fence in windy conditions.

The solution is **Wildlife Friendly Fencing** which avoids the use of barbed wire but is still safe, effective fencing for wildlife, people and livestock.





SOLUTIONS: Wildlife Friendly Netting

Wildlife Friendly “Backyard Fruit Tree” Netting is **small aperture, robust netting** that effectively protects the fruit crop and enables flying-foxes to leave without becoming entangled.

Wide aperture, flimsy, plastic netting is deadly to birds, bats, mammals and reptiles, and it also fails to protect the fruit.

Many large hardware stores sell wildlife safe netting known as **Fruitsaver, Hailguard** and **Coolaroo**.





SOLUTIONS: Planting Native Trees

Planting **flowering and fruiting native trees** to provide homes and food for all Australian wildlife will also benefit our planet.



Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air and planting more trees will ultimately reduce the high level of CO₂ in the atmosphere which is heating up the planet.



If every person planted trees for our wildlife and for a healthy environment, the whole Australian community would benefit.





FLYING-FOX RESCUE: Caught on Power Lines



Wildlife groups spend a lot of time each Spring and Summer looking after orphaned wildlife.

Flying-fox mothers carry their babies for 6 weeks when they fly out to feed at night. If they rest on power lines they can be electrocuted but the baby often survives.

If a passerby sees or hears the baby they can **call a Wildlife Rescue Group** that can arrange for the baby's rescue and care.





FLYING-FOX RESCUE: General Discovery

Flying-foxes that need help (particularly babies) are often found on or near the ground.

Never touch a bat yourself as there is a small risk (< 1%) that a flying-fox will be carrying a rabies-like virus. All wildlife rescuers are vaccinated and can handle flying-foxes without risk.

If someone is scratched or bitten by a flying-fox, it is very easy to have a rabies vaccine administered by a doctor and then they will be safe.





FLYING-FOX CARE: Baby Flying-foxes



Carers feed the young with a specialised bat milk, at least 4 to 5 times a day, just like a human baby.

As the baby flying-fox grows they learn to eat soft fruit and flap their wings to fly.

When they are a few months old, they begin to eat apple, pear, melon and grapes with a special high protein powder sprinkled on their chopped up fruit.





FLYING-FOX CARE: Juvenile Flying-foxes

At 4 to 5 months, the juvenile flying-foxes are prepared for release from an open aviary which is situated near a wild colony of flying-foxes.

For a period of 6 weeks carers will have no contact with the flying-foxes except to drop in daily buckets of fresh fruit.

The buckets of fruit are hung outside the aviary to encourage the young flying-foxes to explore as they transition from aviary life to a life with a wild colony.





SPREAD THE WORD

We need to respect flying-foxes, and develop a kinder perception of this unique nocturnal animal.

The biggest misconception is that they are sinister creatures of the night, however, they are social, communicating mammals which are **vitaly important to the health and diversity of forests** along the east coast of Australia.





FLYING-FOXES

Nature's nocturnal pollinators.