

Friends of flying-foxes



Protecting our 'Gardeners of the Sky'

Flying-foxes are essential to the health and regeneration of our native forests. Unlike other pollinators such as bees and birds, flying-foxes can transport pollen and disperse seeds over huge distances. Their ecological importance cannot be disregarded.



Flying-foxes are increasingly moving into more urban areas. This may be as a result of food scarcity, predators, changes in environmental conditions (drought or floods), or habitat clearance for housing developments, agriculture or forestry.

The urbanisation of flying-foxes has increased their contact with humans, and with it introduced a number of activities which are threatening their survival.

Never before has it been so crucial to protect flying-foxes – not only for their sakes, but for the future of entire ecosystems and the many native animals that rely on them. This is why we need to build our understanding and respect for our 'gardeners of the sky' and learn to live alongside them.

Flying-fox habitat restoration

Flying-foxes are one of several threatened species in NSW and play a valuable ecological role as pollinators and seed dispersers.

Restoring and replanting flying-fox habitat - planting the right trees, in the right places, in the right regions - helps to address the gaps in native food availability and provide ongoing nectar supplies year-round.

Kyogle Council's *Flying-fox Camp Management Plan* is helping to guide rehabilitation and revegetation works at the northern end of the Kyogle Recreation Reserve in an effort to encourage the flying foxes to roost further away from recreational and residential areas where they can be adversely impacted on by human activities. The *Flying-fox Habitat Enhancement and Creation Project* commenced in 2022 and will run until 2030 to create this critical habitat.

Kyogle Landcare volunteers have been responsible for rehabilitating sections of Fawcetts Creek over the past 20 years. Kyogle Council, in collaboration with Kyogle Landcare, undertake rehabilitation works and tree planting along Fawcetts Creek in the Kyogle Recreation Reserve each year. If you are interested in helping with habitat restoration, contact Council or Kyogle Landcare for more information.



Wildlife carers looking out for flying-foxes

Wildlife carers do an exceptional job of caring for sick and injured flying-foxes, with many injuries caused by human-induced threats such as entanglement in netting or barbed wire. Wildlife carers are specially trained to handle flying-foxes, and wildlife rescue and rehabilitation providers are licensed under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

Wildlife carer records show that entanglements in barbed wire and fruit netting, hyperthermia, orphaned pups and electrocutions on powerlines are leading causes of flying-fox injuries. This study also found that the large majority of recorded flying-fox rescues in NSW were the Grey-headed Flying-fox, a species listed as vulnerable to extinction.



You can help wildlife carers by donating food (an adult flying-fox may eat as much as 500g of fruit per day), protein powder as a dietary supplement, or equipment such as fruit dicing machines, animal cages, blankets, cage liners or food and water containers.

For more information on how you can help flying-foxes' care and rehabilitation through donations, contact WIRES Wildlife Rescue: www.wires.org.au or Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers Inc: www.wildlifecarers.com

Flying-fox monitoring

Monitoring flying-fox camps and population numbers helps us to better manage both impacts on flying-foxes and address their impact on communities.

The National Flying-fox Monitoring Program (NFFMP) began in 2013 and is a collaborative project between federal and state governments and the CSIRO. The aim of the program was to establish a reliable benchmark for the size of flying-fox populations in 2013 and to monitor population trends in later years by undertaking quarterly counts at all known camps of Grey-headed and Spectacled Flying-foxes.

The NPWS are responsible for undertaking flying-fox counts at the Kyogle camp. If you would like to learn how you could become involved in flying-fox monitoring, contact the Kyogle NPWS for more information.

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Both natural and non-natural causes can result in flying-fox injury or death. Understanding these causes helps to inform conservation priorities and strategies for flying-foxes.

In Kyogle, there are a large number of local groups involved in the conservation and care of the region's flying-foxes.

They include NPWS Kyogle, Kyogle Council and Landcare (including Kyogle Landcare and the Border Ranges-Richmond Valley Landcare Network).

Flying-foxes need all the friends they can get! If you would like to learn more and are keen to get involved in flying-fox conservation, please contact Council for more information.

