BATTING ABOVE AVERAGE

Flying-foxes are keystone pollinators of the Australian bush. The job of propagating over 100 species of native trees and plants, falls fairly and squarely on their tiny little shoulders.

Without them, there would be no food and shelter for our koalas, no pristine habitat for our extraordinary array of native birds, and no magnificent forests for us all to enjoy.

But due to loss of habitat and climactic changes, their numbers are falling dramatically. The grey-headed flying-fox is now listed as vulnerable to extinction federally. This loss of natural habitat and food availability has seen them increasingly set up camp near towns in search of food and shelter, affecting residents and communities.

This brochure is intended to dispel some myths and help outline ways to co-exist with these incredibly important Little Aussie Battlers.

BATTLING FOR SURVIVAL

Sadly, grey-headed flying-foxes are vulnerable to extinction federally. With their numbers declining dramatically at a national level, we need to find ways to co-exist with this incredibly important native species, now more than ever.

If you are affected by flying-fox camps in your area, please contact your local council on the bat-line, or get all the facts on flying-foxes at: littleaussiebat.com.au

Let’s give these Little Aussie Battlers of the Great Australian Bush a fair go.
AUSSIE THROUGH AND THROUGH

SPREADING SEEDS, NOT DISEASE

Like all wild animals, flying-foxes carry disease, but the risk of spreading those diseases to humans is extremely low. In fact, they pose no major health risks unless you are scratched or bitten by one.

Even then, the Lyssavirus is only present in about one percent of the entire population, and it is not spread through droppings or urine. Provided basic hygiene measures are taken, and you never touch a flying-fox unless you are trained and vaccinated against Lyssavirus, there is no reason for concern.

Hendra virus outbreaks are also very rare, and there is no evidence humans can contract the virus directly from flying-foxes. Hendra can however be transferred to horses from flying-foxes and then from horses to humans. It is important to remove horses and their food and water troughs from areas where flying-foxes roost or feed.

FIFO WORKERS ON THE NIGHT SHIFT

Flying-foxes are hard-working little Aussies.

They work the night shift – flying out from their camps at dusk to feed on flowering or fruiting plants and trees. Then they do the incredibly important job of spreading those seeds – up to 60,000 seeds each, along a 50km stretch of land every night!

When their crucial work is done, they head back to camp before dawn to sleep through the day, ready for their next shift.

Their contribution to the health of our native forests cannot be understated.

CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT THEM

Throughout the year, flying-foxes migrate to wherever their feed plants may be flowering along the east coast of Australia. That means local camp numbers can increase and decrease dramatically from season to season, year to year. Surging numbers can also increase the noise and smell for nearby residents.

But while flying-foxes can be a noisy, smelly bunch to live with, we really can't live without them – our native forests simply would not survive.

So here are some tips to help you live with these noisy neighbours.

- Don't disturb flying-foxes – they make more noise when stressed.
- Never directly handle flying-foxes. If you must dispose of a dead flying-fox, always wear thick gloves, wrap it in a plastic bag and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.
- If you are bitten or scratched, wash the site immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention.
- Don't keep food and water for pets underneath trees, particularly for horses.
- Cover your cars, washing and outdoor areas. Their droppings and urine are not a health hazard to humans, but they are quite pungent and corrosive.
- If you find an injured flying-fox, contact your local wildlife rescue group. Don't attempt to rescue it yourself.
- Remove horses from paddocks where flying-foxes are roosting or feeding.