



**Bat Conservation
& Rescue QLD. INC.**
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Media Release

For Immediate Release

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SEQ flying-foxes suffering food shortage: Rescue groups call for community compassion

RSPCA Qld and bat rescue groups today warned that flying-foxes in the Brisbane and Gold Coast areas are suffering food shortages and that young flying-foxes in particular are at risk of starving to death.

The groups urged members of the public to contact a wildlife rescuer if they observed a flying-fox in their backyard during the day.

“If you see a flying-fox in your yard during the day, it probably means they’re in trouble,” said Louise Saunders, President of Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld.

“They may not have enough energy to fly back to their roost or they may be injured. Please call a professional rescuer – the service is free.

“For the sake of your own safety and the wellbeing of the flying-fox, it is vital that you do not attempt your own rescue or touch the flying-fox,” Ms Saunders said.

RSPCA Qld spokesperson Michael Beatty urged people to be compassionate and to exercise a duty of care.

“Flying-foxes are suffering at the moment. Last year’s young are being hit particularly hard because they are the least experienced at finding food. The shortages will also make things difficult for pregnant females, who will start giving birth in a couple of months. “

Gavin Miles of Bats Qld, a rescue service located on the Gold Coast, said that calls to Brisbane and Gold Coast bat rescue groups had quadrupled over the past three weeks.

“What this tells us is that flowering eucalypts and paperbarks are not producing much nectar at the moment. It means that flying-foxes are going to be more reliant on less-preferred food sources such as unripe fruit.

“Please make sure that if you net fruit trees that you cannot stick your finger through the weave. If the holes are bigger than finger-width, the net can entangle flying-foxes and result in a very cruel death. There are safe alternatives.”

The species affected by the food shortage include grey-headed flying-foxes, which are nationally threatened, black flying-foxes and little red flying-foxes.

Queensland Health advises that people should not try to assist flying-foxes themselves. Call trained and vaccinated rescuers. Anyone who is bitten or scratched by a flying-fox should seek medical advice. Flying-foxes are not a health risk when they feed in backyards or roost nearby. Humans can only become infected with Hendra virus from sick horses.”

Numbers to call for rescue services:

Queensland-wide: RSPCA - 1300ANIMAL (1300 264625)

Greater Brisbane: Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld Inc., 0488 228 134

Gold Coast: Bats Qld, 0447 222 889

Contact for interview:

Louise Saunders, Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld: – 0425 73 4008

Michael Beatty, RSPCA Qld: 0415 385602

Gavin Miles, Bats Qld: 0414667456



Photo: Marg Snowden

Images of flying-foxes are available on request. Flying-foxes in care are available for photographs or footage.