



Media Release

For immediate release

20 May 2010

Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld., President, Louise Saunders is alarmed by the large number of reports about hungry flying-foxes staying by food trees through the day and not returning to their camps.

“This is of huge concern as bats will stay by food trees until the food runs out. They will then be too weak to fly further afield and will die in people’s gardens like we saw in the winter of 2007. This is starvation”. Louise said.

“This current starvation crisis is in relation to the decrease in available food especially the lack of nectar flow in eucalypt and other nectar producing plants. Other wildlife groups are also experiencing increases in the number of lorikeets coming into care. With the low night time temperatures the nectar feeders, flying-foxes and lorikeets, are unable to find enough food to sustain them”. Louise said. “This year’s shortage of food for flying-foxes had seen mass mortalities of Little red flying-foxes near Mackay and also at Charters Towers”. We are also hearing of shifts in the range of Grey-headed flying-foxes with reports of bats in South Australia and also in Tasmania. These are historic movements, bats are hungry and in search of new food resources”. Louise said

Members of the public are urged to report any flying-foxes they notice alone during the day. Medical authorities advise people not to handle bats but to call for assistance from experienced bat handlers. If frightened or in pain they have the potential to bite or scratch.

Louise Saunders said, “Please report bats found alone through the day as this is not normal behaviour, we can save them if reported in time. Be compassionate and humane, please do not use netting during these seasonal downturns hungry bats will be caught if the netting is not erected properly. Our volunteers are trained in the rescue and care of bats so please call us as soon as possible for assistance”.

Important information:

- *Neither you, nor your pets, can catch diseases from living near a bat colony or from bat urine or faeces. Less than one percent of bats may have Australian Bat Lyssavirus, a preventable but potentially deadly disease. It can only be contracted from a deep bite or a scratch from a bat. An effective vaccine is available, so anyone bitten or scratched by a bat **must** contact the Qld Population Health to obtain this vaccination immediately.*
- *There is no known risk of contracting Hendra Virus (equine morbillivirus) from a bat. All human cases have been contracted from contact with horses. Bat carers have very close contact with bats and no one has ever contracted Hendra.*

For further information and for any rescue assistance call Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld’s rescue helpline on 0488 228 134. Visit our web site to find out more about these amazing mammals: www.bats.org.au

Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld inc.
Rescue Mobile 24hr: 0488 228 134
Enquiries B/H Only: (07) 3821 2341
Information Message: (07) 3321 1229
Website: www.bats.org.au

Attached photo:

A starving and unwell Grey-headed flying-fox stays in a fruiting Cocos Palm through the day.

Photo: Andrew Smith.

