



**Bat Conservation  
& Rescue QLD. INC.**  
RESCUE . EDUCATION . CONSERVATION . HABITAT



## **Barbed wire and Bats**

### **Senseless suffering!**

Every year thousands of bats suffer cruel and preventable deaths as a result of barbed wire entanglement. The barbs inflict horrific wounds and in their struggle to break free, bats often bite the barbs and their own flesh, causing even greater damage. Unless rescued, they will inevitably die, often after several days. Many need to be euthanased because their injuries are so severe.

“Barbed wire has tragic consequences for many species of native animals,” said Dr Tania Bishop from RSPCA Qld’s Wildlife Hospital. “From flying-foxes to gliders and birds of prey, the injuries inflicted by barbed wire are extensive and the suffering endured by animals prior to rescue is immense. The most distressing part of dealing with the treatment of animals entrapped by barbed wire, is that every incident could have been prevented. There are many suitable alternatives to barbed wire these days.”

The number one cause of barbed wire entanglement is the planting of native flowering/fruited trees and exotic Cocos palms next to barbed wire fences.

Louise Saunders, President of Bat Conservation and Rescue says that flying-foxes are naturally drawn to these food trees.

“In the dark they’re unlikely to see the fence and they become caught by their wing membrane as they fly in or out. Please, never attempt to remove a flying-fox from your fence. Our members are vaccinated and trained to handle distressed animals and our 24/7 service is free of charge. Bats that are frightened or in pain are likely to bite or scratch, so please do not risk harm to the bat or yourself by handling them.”

RSPCA Qld and Bat Conservation and Rescue are urging people to call 1300 ANIMAL or the 24 hour Bat Rescue hotline 0488 228 134 ASAP .

“In the meantime carefully place a towel over the bat to help to keep it calm until help arrives,” says Dr Bishop.

### **How to make your fences safe for wildlife**

Take one or more of the following actions to prevent further catches of bats on your fence. (Further information can be found at [www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com](http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com))

- (a) Remove the top strand of barbed wire and replace it with plain wire. This reduces the risk of entrapment by as much as 80%.
- b) Remove trees from near the fence that bear fruit or flowers that are eaten by bats (including bottlebrushes, paperbarks, grevilleas)
- (c) Remove Cocos palms (if not possible then remove all fruit) - they invade our native bushland and result in the death of many flying-foxes.
- (d) Cut shrubs down to below the barbed wire and maintain a pruning regime.
- (e) Attach flagging tape or reflective materials to the barbed wire to improve visibility.
- (f) Split polypipe or hosing and place it over the top strand to cover barbs.
- (g) Investigate alternative security options and replace barbed wire with wildlife friendly fencing.

#### **Media Contacts**

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