

Important Information Little Red Flying-foxes

Fact Sheet

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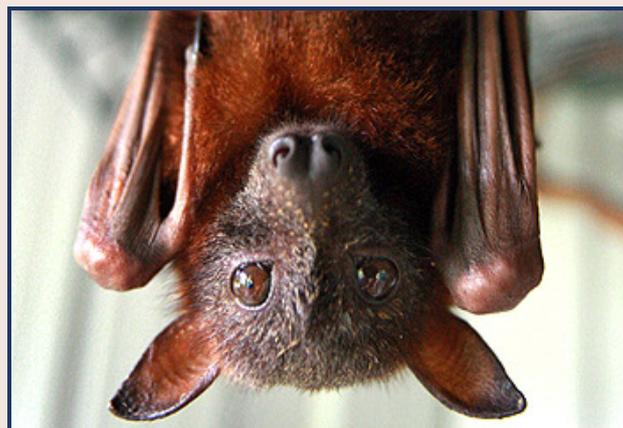
A large number of Little Red Flying-foxes (*Pteropus scapulatus*) have taken up residence nearby. These flying-foxes are not the same species as the others that are generally found in Logan. Although Little Red Flying-foxes visit Logan from time to time, we would like to assure you that their occupation is only temporary.

Little Red Flying-foxes are known to hang out at many different habitats. They are highly nomadic, taking up camp wherever their favourite flowers and fruits are in season. As part of their nomadic behaviour they are visiting Logan as they journey along the eastern coast of Australia following the flowering of eucalypts, bloodwoods and angophoras. They supplement their diet by eating fruit found in gardens, orchards, parks and streetscaping. Little Reds nomadic lifestyle takes advantage of local flowering and climatic conditions, with the species known to move on in search on new food sources every few months.

Like all flying-foxes, Little Reds play a vital role in the regeneration of native forest. The flying-foxes are currently taking advantage of a mass flowering event of native trees across south east Queensland Little Reds play an important role in the pollination of these tree species.

Little Reds are the smallest of Australia's megabats. What they lack for in size however, they make up in numbers. We understand that living near hundreds of animals, of any sort, can take some getting used to, particularly when they are active at night and eat the fruit from your trees. There are a number of strategies you can use that may help alleviate the impacts, including:

- Not leaving your washing out at night – bring it in before dusk,
- Park your vehicle under shelter or cover your car with a tarpaulin,
- Use a pool cover,
- Cover or move any under furniture under shelter at night,
- Use wildlife safe netting stretched over a home-made frame to protect small individual fruit trees,
- Try not to disturb them. This will cause stress and increase the noise and odour.



The Nomadic Little Red Flying-fox

Picture: Craig Borrow

Did you know?

Little Reds are the most widespread species of flying-foxes in Australia. Their travels for nectar, especially eucalypt, bloodwood and angophora nectar, takes them from Shark Bay in Western Australia, up and along the top of the Northern Territory, down the east coast all the way to northern Victoria and also inland. Flowering of eucalypt species, varies from year to year. The nomadic lifestyle of the Little Reds has enabled them to be accustomed to this unpredictability.

All flying-fox species have well developed sensory systems, enabling them to rely on eyesight, sound and smell to interact with their environment. Flying-foxes are very social animals, using sound as a means of social communication, eg during the defence of territories. Periods of noise occur mainly at dawn and dusk when the bats arrive at or prepare to leave the camp.

The smell associated with flying-foxes is not from their droppings. Odours are used by flying-foxes for identification, marking territories, attracting a mate during mating season and as a means of communication with each other.

For more information
Phone 3412 3412
Visit www.logan.qld.gov.au
Email council@logan.qld.gov.au

Your Flying-fox Myths Busted

Fact Sheet

Myth 1: Flying-foxes carry rabies

FACT: Flying-foxes do not have rabies. Flying-foxes are regarded as the natural reservoir of Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV). Only a very small percentage of flying-foxes (less than 1%) are infected with ABLV which is similar, but not the same, as rabies.

Myth 2: You can catch Lyssavirus (ABLV) from touching flying fox droppings

FACT: People (and their pets) will NOT be exposed to ABLV when flying foxes fly overhead, when they roost or feed in garden trees, or even from touching their droppings.

ABLV can only be transmitted through deep tissue bites or scratches from infected bats or saliva into an open wound. The best approach is to leave flying-foxes alone.

Myth 3: Humans can catch Hendra Virus from a flying-fox

FACT: People do not catch Hendra Virus from flying-foxes. People can only catch Hendra Virus from close contact with infected horses.

There is no evidence that Hendra Virus can spread directly from flying-foxes to humans. All human infections have been the result of very close contact with infected horses, in particular direct exposure to tissues and secretions from infected or dead horses.

Myth 4: Flying-fox droppings strip paint from cars and houses

FACT: Flying-fox droppings are actually less corrosive than bird faeces. Flying-foxes can defecate in flight, splattering objects beneath their flight path with excrement or guano.

Guano is easily removed by soaking the stain with a damp rag or newspaper and leave it soaking for about 30 minutes, then simply wipe it away. For particularly old or stubborn stains clean area again with a soapy water solution. Unless the paint is old or peeling, no permanent damage should result.

For health and hygiene reasons it is advised that disposable gloves and a mask be worn whilst cleaning the stain. Place gloves and rag in a rubbish bag and seal. Wash hands with warm soapy water after clean-up is finished.

Myth 5: Flying foxes are dirty animals

FACT: Flying foxes are exceptionally clean animals and they invert or hang right side up in order to avoid soiling themselves.

Myth 6: Flying foxes are pests and serve no purpose in our environment

FACT: Flying foxes play a vital role in pollination and in seed dispersal in our native forests. No me, no tree.

What should you do if you find a sick or injured flying-fox?

Do not touch the flying-fox. Instead contact your local wildlife carer (Bat Conservation & Rescue Queensland) on 0488 228 134, or RSPCA on 1300 ANIMAL (130 264 625), or the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection on 1300 130 372. Never attempt to rescue or handle injured flying-foxes. If you are bitten or scratched seek medical attention.

What should you do if someone is bitten or scratched?

If someone is bitten or scratched by a bat or exposed to bat saliva through the eyes, nose or mouth they are advised to follow these steps:

1. Wash the wound gently but thoroughly with soap and water for above five minutes. DO NOT scrub the wound.
2. Apply an antiseptic solution with anti-virus action such as iodine-based disinfectant (e.g. Betadine) or alcohol (ethanol).
3. If bat saliva has got in the eyes, nose or mouth, flush the area thoroughly with water.
4. Contact a doctor or the nearest hospital immediately to assess the need for further treatment.