

Supporting Flying-Fox Rehabilitators in NSW

Shona Lorigan, Ron Haering, Dr. Aditi Sriram— DPE NPWS



Independent Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel

“There is a strong expectation from the community that the service provided by wildlife rehabilitation groups to sick or injured individual animals is valued and maintained.”

“NSW Government must continue to regulate this service and facilitate more effective strategic support for the sector.”



NSW Demographics and contribution

Who they are



40 service providers

Primarily home-based care groups, a few independents, facilities e.g. zoos and Wildlife hospitals



Volunteers – about 8,600

(>50% of all states)

37% 51 – 65yr

79% Female



Photo: Janine Davies: Sydney Wildlife

NSW Demographics and contribution



What they do



Rescues ~110,000/year

Species >450 species

Calls ~200,000/year



Releases ~25% all species

Contribution ~\$27 million per annum (costs based on 1,000 respondents*)

Other services

- Community education
- Problem solving for community (wildlife issues)
- Emergency response

Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy 2020-23

Principles

Wildlife rehabilitation – provides benefits to the people, environment and community

The strategy – is a living document, focused on continual improvement of the sector

Actions – will be co-designed in collaboration with the rehab sector

Vision

Volunteers – acknowledged, supported and respected

Services – delivered with agreed standards

Wildlife rehabilitation – recognised as a contributor to species population and conservation management



Volunteer support and culture



Standards of care and training



Knowledge and information access



Community awareness and recognition



Government support and regulation

Volunteer Support and Culture

- Governance training – 16 courses
- 3 Governance training courses via WIRES online portal
 - free for all wildlife rehabilitators
- Conflict Management toolkit
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Health and Safety resources
- Wildlife Heroes - Caring for Carers



Guide the culture of the sector and ensure groups and volunteers are well-supported, stay involved, reduce conflict and burnt out

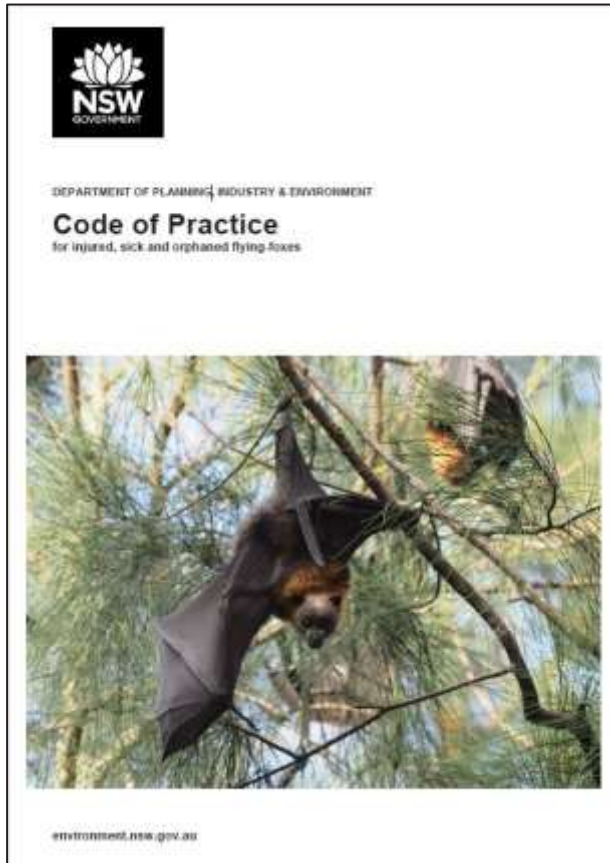
Funding assistance



- \$61,850 - structural repair of pre-release enclosure in Sydney
- \$63,752 - new pre-release enclosure on Central Coast
- \$14,476 - portable cool room for storing fruit in Northern Rivers
- \$7,510 - portable enclosures in Northern Tablelands
- \$41,508 - 41 lyssavirus vaccinations or boosters across 9 groups
- \$56,556 - PPE equipment to 19 groups including nitrile gloves, protective arm gauntlets & Lyssavirus vaccinations/booster.



Standards of Care and Training



Review of Code of practice for injured, sick and orphaned flying-foxes

- developed in collaboration with the sector
- addition of the rehabilitation principles
- addition of work health and safety standards including Australian Bat Lyssavirus specific protocols
- format changes to maintain consistency with other species codes (e.g. Monitoring split into 2 categories)
- more detailed standards for monitoring orphaned juvenile flying-foxes
- inclusion of minimum housing measurements as standards rather than guidelines

Standards give greater certainty about the quality of care afforded to wildlife in rehabilitation by volunteers and increase future release outcomes

New resources for flying-fox rehabilitators



Standards give greater certainty about the quality of care afforded to wildlife in rehabilitation by volunteers and increase future release outcomes

Professional development



Flying-fox videos
Coming soon

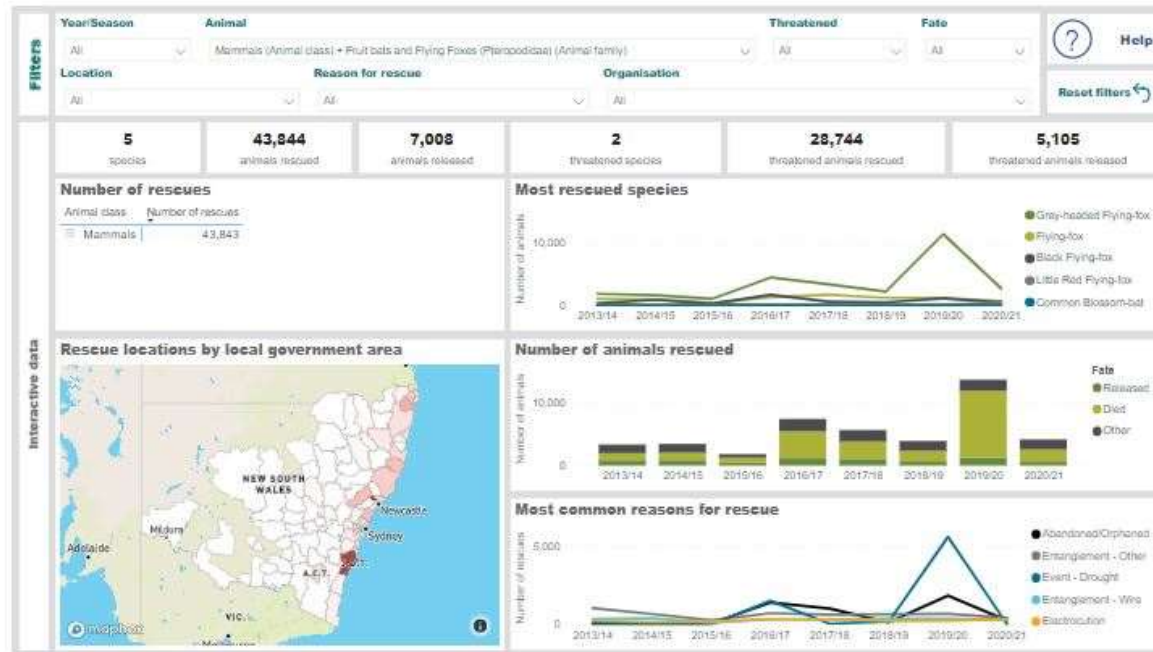
- Professional development webinars in key skills and knowledge areas
- New video content for specialist species

Standards give greater certainty about the quality of care afforded to wildlife in rehabilitation by volunteers and increase future release outcomes

Knowledge and Information Access

NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation dashboard

Wildlife rehabilitation data current to 30 June 2021.



- Improved data quality and access
- Over 500,000 records available for research, planning and environment assessment
- 5 annual reports highlighting trends and promoting volunteers
- 5 peer reviewed scientific papers

Using wildlife carer records to identify patterns in flying-fox rescues: a case study in New South Wales, Australia

Matthew Mo ^{A C}, Mike Roache ^A, Ron Haering ^B and Alan Kwok ^B

Wildlife rehabilitation data has value and can contribute to government's natural resource management objectives and promote community awareness of the sector

Community Awareness and Recognition



- 2019-2020 bushfire, drought and flood
- 12,751 Grey-headed flying-fox was most rescued species
- 66% concentrated in the Maitland and Shoalhaven Local Government Areas
- Reason for rescue
 - 5596 Drought
 - 1919 abandonment of pups
 - 1109 Fire

Wildlife rehabilitation data has value and can contribute to government's natural resource management objectives and promote community awareness of the sector

Government Support and Regulation



Services provided by the wildlife rehabilitation sector are consistent, reliable and in accordance with set standards

- The Policy outlines how government regulates the sector
- Introduced quality assurance – 6 standards of operation
- Cut red tape for licensed groups

Where to next...



Photo: Shona Lorigan/DPE

- Rescue numbers are increasing as are threats to wildlife
- Socio-economic changes will impact services in the medium to long term
- Training provided is variable and unstructured
- Veterinary services are stretched and under resourced
- Wildlife rehabilitation is not considered a priority in all jurisdictions

Useful Links



Wildlife rehabilitation standards

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/rehabilitating-native-animals/wildlife-rehabilitation-standards>

Data and reports

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/rehabilitating-native-animals/wildlife-rehabilitation-reporting>

Wildlife Heroes podcasts

<https://wildlifeheroes.org.au/wildlife-heroes-podcast/>

Professional development webinar series

<https://wildlifeheroes.org.au/caring-for-australian-wildlife-carers/>

Practical techniques in wildlife rehabilitation

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/10463974>

Photo: Shona Lorigan/DPE



Thank You

Shona Lorigan
Wildlife Programs & Regulation Unit
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service