

Australasian Bat Society Flying-fox Expert Group Update 2019

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About the FFEG

A primary source of reliable, accurate information on Australian flying-foxes. The FFEG comprises flying-fox specialists representing research, advocacy, government, industry, education and carer networks. The FFEG encourages a scientific and sustainable approach to flying-fox management and conservation in Australasia.

Formed in 2014 as a subcommittee by the Australasian Bat Society (ABS) Executive to assist with:

- engaging in public debate
- issues concerning flying-foxes
- ensuring the ABS' position is defensible and based on published science and expert advice.

FFEG update

- Involvement in the 2018 National Flying-fox Forum



Community Engagement

Australasian Bat Night Program

- Main community engagement tool of the Australasian Bat Society
- Designed to raise awareness about bats in Australasia
- Annual series of local community events held throughout Australia and New Zealand
- Can take many formats:
 - Simple bat talks and walks
 - Flying-fox flyout picnics
 - Bat Festivals
 - Citizen Science projects and workshops
- Grown from 10 events in 2012 to 67 official events in all states and territories and New Zealand



The screenshot shows the website for the Australasian Bat Society, specifically the 'Australasian Bat Night' page. The header includes the society's logo, name, and navigation links: Home, About Us, About Bats, Grants, News, Events (highlighted), Get Involved, Resources, and Members. Social media icons for Twitter and Facebook are also present.

Australasian Bat Night

Time to get inspired!

The inaugural Australasian Bat Night was held in 2012. Each year since, bat specialists have teamed up with community and local government groups to hold over 100 bat events during March, April and May throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Join this fantastic community event where we debunk the myths and fears associated with bats, and demonstrate how better conservation measures can not only help protect our native bats but also assist people to live alongside our nocturnal neighbours!

How do I get involved?

Have a great idea for a bat night event but don't know how to get it started? Or are you an organisation or community group who are ready and rearing to go and just need to advertise your event?!

Register your event or contact our Bat Night Coordinator Maree Kerr at batnight@ausbats.org.au. Please include dates, location, and provide us with links to any advertising you do.

Click here to find a Bat Night event near you!



Help make 2018 even better!

There are so many things to do on a Bat Night! How about a bat walk looking for microbat activity or watching a fly-out from a flying fox colony! Building bat boxes is always fun or even better hold a Bat Festival! We are inviting everyone from local councils and community groups to zoos and museums to participate by running bat activities throughout autumn from March to May.

ABS has invited community and local government organisations and individuals to register events and activities but we need your help to make it even better and bigger through promotion of Bat Night.

REGISTER YOUR EVENT



FFEG update

- SFF HSE response – 23,000 died November 2018 (~1/3 of the population)



Photo credit: David White, published by ABC

FFEG update

- On-ground response - rescue and rehabilitation



Photo credit: David White, published by ABC

FFEG update

- Media

Ecologist, Dr Justin Welbergen from the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment (Western Sydney University) is [collating the numbers of bat deaths](#) and said it was the second-largest mass die-off of flying foxes recorded in Australia and the first time it had happened to this species.

"These are certainly very serious wildlife die-off events and they occur at almost biblical scales," he said.

"[The biggest] was in south-east Queensland back in 2014 where about 46,000 animals (predominantly black flying foxes) died.

"The population size of the spectacled flying fox in Australia is estimated to be about 75,000 individuals, give or take, so for all intents and purpose that means we have lost close to a third of the entire species in Australia.

"Losing a third of the species on a hot afternoon I would argue certainly strengthens the case for both the Federal and Queensland Governments to consider lifting the species from 'vulnerable' to 'endangered', if not 'critically endangered'."

Local weather forecast

Check the current and seven-day forecast, temperatures and warnings for your town on the [ABC Far North Qld weather page](#).



PHOTO: An army of wildlife volunteers removed thousands of rotting bat carcasses from around Cairns last month. (Supplied: David White)

Dr Welbergen said it was also the first time there had been mass deaths of flying foxes from heat stress in far northern Australia where conditions were typically hot and humid but usually remained below 40 degrees.

"Science pretty much agrees this is a sign of things to come," he said.

"Extreme heat events are increasing in frequency, also in terms of intensity and duration, and we can expect more extreme temperatures to occur increasingly frequently further north.



CAIRNS BATS TO FEATURE IN NEW BBC CLIMATE PROGRAM

Thousands of flying foxes that died in the Far North's heatwave have been highlighted in a new Sir David Attenborough documentary, as being a symptom of climate change.

FFEG update

- Urged governments to uplist from Vulnerable to Endangered

THREATENED SPECIES SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Established under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

The Minister approved this conservation advice on and transferred this species from the Vulnerable to Endangered category, effective from 22 February 2019.

Conservation Advice

Pteropus conspicillatus

spectacled flying-fox

Taxonomy

Conventionally accepted as *Pteropus conspicillatus* (Gould 1850). Known as the spectacled flying-fox, also known as the spectacled fruit bat. Two subspecies are recognised: *P. c. conspicillatus* (Australia and south-eastern New Guinea) and *P. c. chrysauchen* (north-western New Guinea and nearby islands) (Flannery 1995). Within its Australian range, Fox (2011) reported substantial genetic distinction between the Wet Tropics and Iron Range subpopulations; however further analysis in Fox et al. (2012) concluded that there was occasional gene flow between these subpopulations.

Summary of assessment

Conservation status

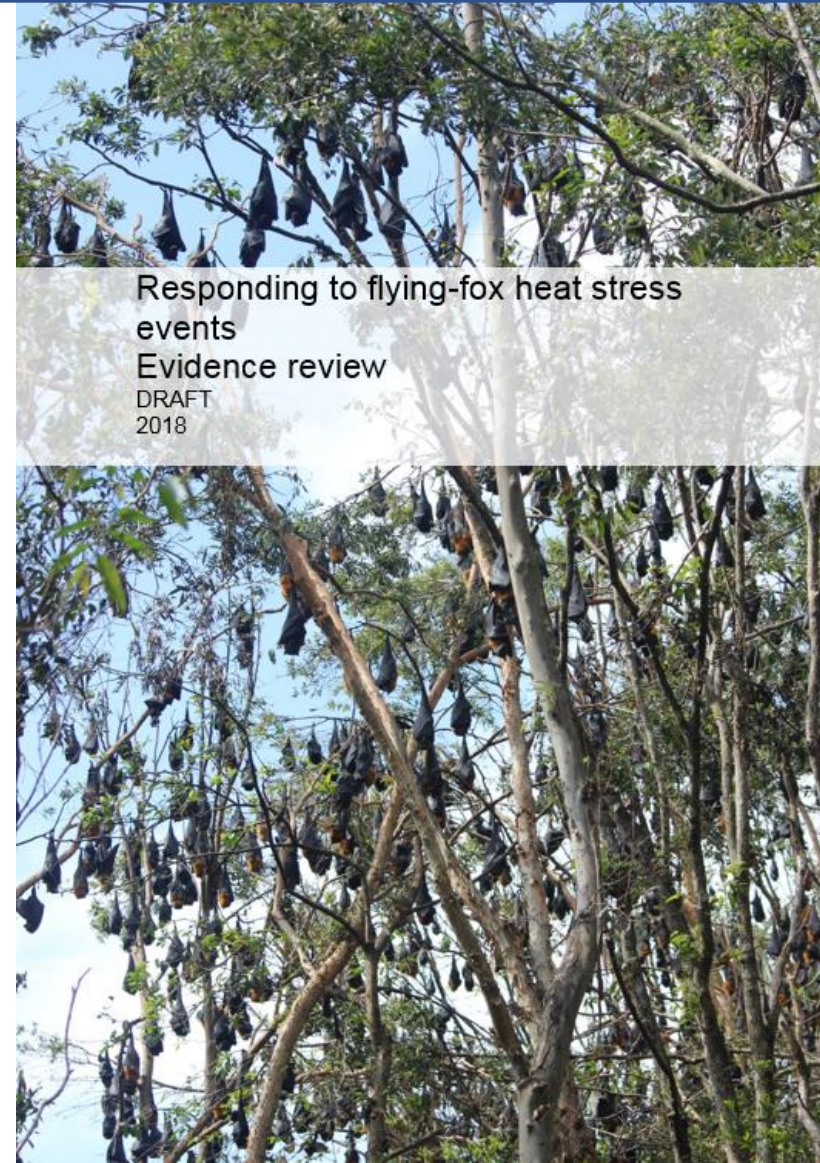
Endangered: Criterion 1 A4(a)(c)(d)

The spectacled flying-fox was listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act in 2002. Following a formal review of the listing status of the species, the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (the Committee) has determined that there is sufficient evidence to support a change of status of the species under the EPBC Act from Vulnerable to Endangered.

Species can be listed as threatened under state and territory legislation. For information on the listing status of this species under relevant state or territory legislation, see <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl>

FFEG update

- Ongoing input into Heat Stress Guidelines



FFEG update

- Updating IUCN Red List profiles



Names - common, scientific, regions etc...



Advan

Grey-headed Flying Fox

Pteropus poliocephalus

CITATION

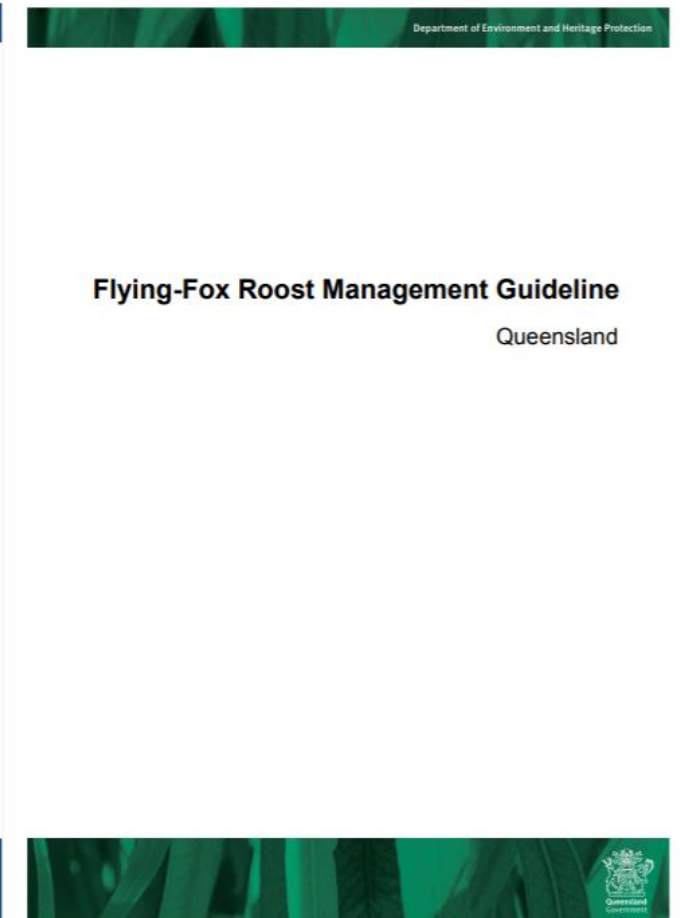
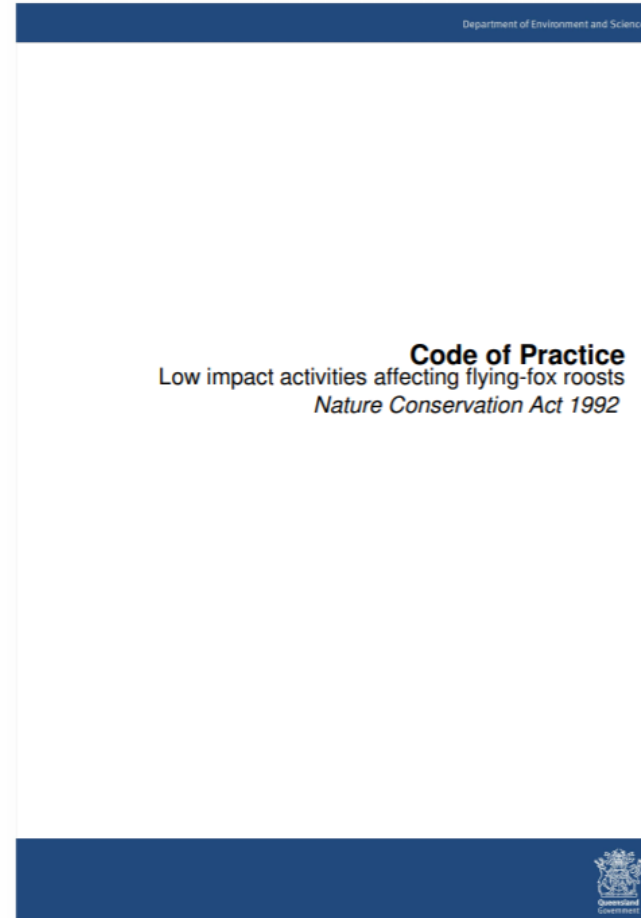
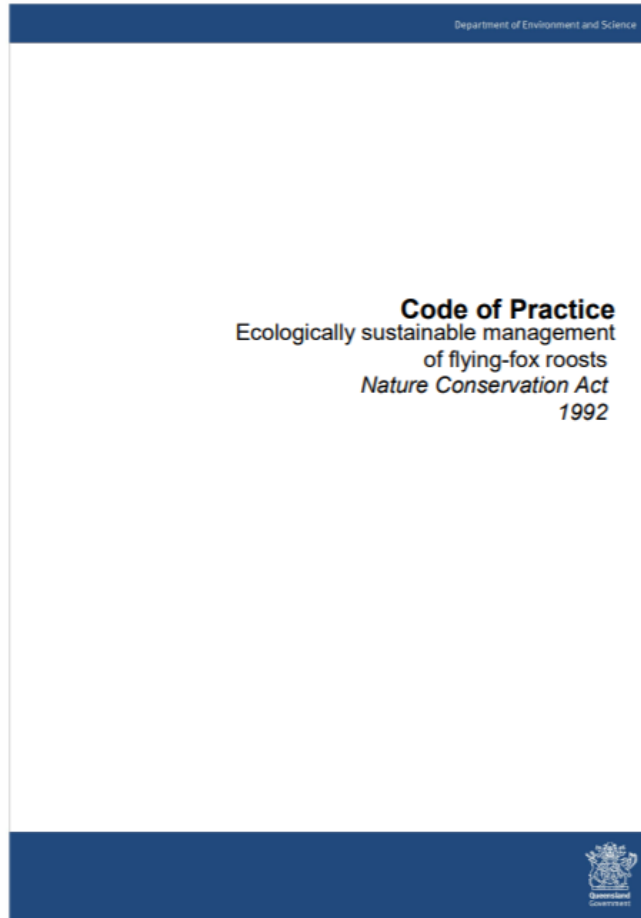
Lunney, D., Richards, G. & Dickman, C. 2008. *Pteropus poliocephalus*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2008: e.T18751A8554062.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T18751A8554062.en>. Downloaded on 07 November 2019.



FFEG update

- Submission and consultation



Where to from here

Ongoing actions

ABS strategy, position statements, forums, ongoing advocacy, submissions, education, support.



Image: Australian Bat Clinic

FFEG objectives

- Reduced flying-fox-human conflict
- Nationally coordinated management of flying-foxes based on scientific evidence
- Conservation outcomes
- Funding for research into flying-fox behaviour and ecology
- Consistent and effective community engagement and education

Only by working together, using evidence-based methods, can we achieve nationally coordinated management for the benefit of both people and flying-foxes.



Thank you

Conveners: Maree Treadwell Kerr and Jess Bracks. Support and facilitate contact between members, the ABS community and other interested parties, and to drive a collaborative approach to achieving FFEG actions.

First Vice-President: Dr Monika Rhodes. Responsible for information flow between the FFEG Conveners and members of the Executive, as well as coordinating the FFEG Conveners.

Advisors: Dr Justin Welbergen (ABS President), Dr Tania Bishop, Dr Carol Booth, Dr Peggy Eby, Jennifer Davis, Nick Edwards, Prof Stuart Parsons, Jo Towsey, Dr David Westcott, Trish Wimberley, Kevin Pierson (Honorary member) Dr Merlin Tuttle (Honorary member).

General members: Amanda Lo Cascio, Jess Mitchell, Dr Martin Cohen, Janine Davies, Jan Davey, Naomi Downey, Caroline Greco, Una Greco, Barbie Lindsey, Jenny Maclean, Debra Melville, Sue Morris, Beth Noel, Lucy Norman, Tim Pearson, Glenda Pym, Dr Hugh Spencer, Narawan Williams, Dr Andrew Breed, Judith Hopper, Imelda Jennings, Sarah Curran.

The FFEG Conveners can be contacted at flying-fox@ausbats.org.au.