

Flying Fox Rehabilitation Policy



The following policy refers to the rehabilitation of Grey-headed (*Pteropus poliocephalm*), Little Red (*Pteropus scapulatus*) and Black (*Pteropus alecto*) Flying-foxes and must be read in conjunction with the

- NPWS Rehabilitation Policy
- NATF General Licence Conditions
- NATF Rescuers' and Rehabilitators' Policy

NATF Flying-fox rehabilitators are authorised to hold, for the purpose of rehabilitation, sick, injured or orphaned flying-foxes and release successfully rehabilitated or hand raised flying-foxes into a suitable colony site or NATF approved release program.

The minimum requirements for the care and rehabilitation of flying-foxes include

- Completion of the Introduction to the NATF and Basic Rescue workshops
- Completion of a NATF approved flying-fox rehabilitation training course or equivalent one-on-one training
- Competence in the techniques of rescue, transport and appropriate handling and housing of sick, injured and orphaned Flying-foxes
- Undertaking appropriate vaccinations for Australian Bat Lyssavirus
- Undertaking annual checks of titre levels to ensure adequate cover against ABL

Flying-fox rehabilitators' responsibilities include:

1. Providing optimum levels of care and animal welfare

- (i) All rescues must be reported to the appropriate Adult or Orphaned Flying Fox Coordinator as soon as possible.
- (ii) All rescues to be carried out expediently to minimise injuries and stress to trapped flying-foxes.
- (iii) Develop a working relationship with a vaccinated veterinarian interested in flying-foxes.
- (iv) Ensure no flying-fox suffers undue pain or distress.
- (v) Ensure appropriate rehydration and nutrition, including access to natural foods where possible.
- (vi) Provide appropriate facilities that:
 1. Keep the flying-fox safe, minimise stress and prevent further injury.
 2. Are well-maintained, clean and hygienic.
 3. Provide the flying-fox with the opportunity to express a range of natural behaviours, including social interaction with peers especially for injured juveniles and adults.
- (vii) Ensure all juvenile and adult flying-foxes are rehabilitated with an appropriate companion group.
- (viii) Ensure that the flying-fox can fly prior to release.
- (ix) The appropriate Flying Fox coordinator to be contacted to advise of suitable placement.

2. Providing for an optimum level of survival in the wild

2.1 ORPHANED FLYING-FOXES

a. Rearing

- i. The Orphaned Flying-fox coordinator is responsible for the placement, monitoring and overseeing the rearing of orphaned young.
- ii. All orphaned flying-foxes that come into care must be examined by an experienced rehabilitator, be in good health, and feeding well before being passed on to an inexperienced rehabilitator.
- iii. Rehabilitators must maintain accurate records including the quantity of milk being consumed daily and the weight and measure of forearm weekly. Records must be kept on any medication, wormers etc.
- iv. All rehabilitators must report to the Orphaned Flying-fox co-ordinator weekly with progress details.



b. Crèche

- v. Crèche is the socialising stage of development for orphans and normally occurs Jan/Feb. The Flying-fox coordinator/s will determine the location and size of the crèches.
- vi. Rehabilitators are to ensure that orphaned young are ready for crèche by the time they are 14 weeks of age. This includes appropriate behavioural development, weight and dietary intake.
- vii. The minimum number of animals in a crèche is five.
- viii. Orphans are to be crèched in aviaries of minimum dimensions: length 5m, height 2m, width 2m.

c. Banding

- ix. All orphans are to be banded by an accredited banded prior to release.
- x. Orphans are to be released at a NATF approved Release Facility.
- xi. Data of orphans release is to be provided to the Flying-fox Database Officer by the Orphaned Flying-fox Co-ordinator.

2.2 JUVENILE/SUB ADULT AND ADULT FLYING-FOXES



A flying-fox aged 3 months to 6 months is termed juvenile, from 6 months to 18 months is sub adult, and over 18 months is adult.

Rehabilitation

- i. All juveniles, sub adults or adult flying-foxes must be transported to the flying-fox rehabilitation centre for assessment and treatment by the Adult Flying-fox Co-ordinator.
- ii. Any flying-fox suspected of having ABL must be kept in isolation, to be determined by the Adult Flying-fox Co-ordinator in consultation with an approved vaccinated vet.
- iii. All rehabilitating flying-foxes should be housed with a companion group as soon as their injuries allow, maximising their chance of recovery.
- iv. Injured pregnant females should be placed with the companion group as soon as possible to reduce the risk of miscarriage.
- v. Injured adult females with young should be placed with the companion group as soon as possible to reduce the risk of lactation ceasing.

- vi. All releases of rehabilitated Flying-foxes shall be authorised by the Adult Flying-fox Co-ordinator.
- vii. All rehabilitated Grey Headed flying-foxes must be returned to their colony of origin.
- viii. All rehabilitated Little Red Flying-foxes will be released at the nearest colony containing other Little Reds.
- ix. Data on injured juvenile, sub adult and adult flying-foxes is to be provided to the Flying-fox Database Officer by the Adult Flying-fox Co-ordinator.

3. FLYING-FOX DATA

- i. Detailed Flying-fox data for orphaned young is to be maintained by the Orphaned Flying-fox Co-ordinator and passed on to the Flying-fox database recorder when the orphans are transferred to the approved release facility.
- ii. Detailed Flying-fox data for sub-adult and adult Flying-foxes is to be maintained by the Adult Flying-fox Co-ordinator and passed on to the Flying-fox database recorder at regular intervals.
- iii. The Flying-fox Database recorder must forward Flying-fox data to the NATF Database Officer to be included on the general species database.

4. PERMANENT CARE

Flying Foxes are a colony species with a structured social hierarchy and defined roles.

- i. To provide for optimum rehabilitation of juveniles, adults and pregnant females flying-foxes, 15 GHFF will be held in permanent care. (see 2.2: iii; iv; and v)
- ii. Males and females will be housed separately.

5. EUTHANASIA

- i. All flying-foxes assessed as non-releasable must be euthanased.
- ii. Euthanasia must only be conducted by a qualified veterinarian.

Behaving at all times in a manner which reflects favourably with the NATF including:

- i. Comply with the General Licence Conditions and NATF Rescuers' and Rehabilitators' Policy.
- ii. Access ongoing training opportunities to keep abreast of current procedures and rehabilitation methods.
- iii. Undertake annual checks of titre levels to ensure adequate coverage against ABL.