



Flying foxes in GPC parklands

WHAT ARE FLYING FOXES?

Flying foxes are the largest flying mammals in the world. There are four native species of flying foxes on mainland Australia and three of these reside in the Gladstone region – the grey-headed, the black and the little red flying fox.

They are highly social animals living in large groups that often include more than one species. They roost / sleep in communal camps, which can be occupied permanently, seasonally or temporarily, and the number of occupants often varies throughout the year.

FLYING FOXES AND OUR PARKLANDS

Flying foxes are known to roost in the mangroves lining Auckland Creek adjacent to our parklands. On occasion, they inhabit trees in the parklands. In 2020 and 2021, there was a change in the number and behaviour of the flying foxes, prompting community interest and enquiries. Data provided by the Queensland Department of Environment and Science shows that the number of flying foxes has increased from 5,000 in 2019 to 16,515 in 2020. In April 2021, little red flying foxes came to roost in the parklands including Spinnaker Park with approximately 273,000 recorded in June 2021.

WHAT IS GPC DOING ABOUT FLYING FOXES IN THE PARKLANDS?

The management of roosts must be undertaken under the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, which ensures acceptable welfare outcomes for flying foxes. It is an offence to harass, disturb or harm flying foxes without an approved permit.

GPC respects the important role of flying foxes in the environment and is working with a range of key stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to sustainably manage the situation in the Marina Parklands. We have engaged regional ecologists to monitor the roost and develop a Flying Fox Management Plan in consultation with the Queensland Department of Environment and Science and the Gladstone Regional Council.



Currently the little red and black flying foxes predominate the roost in our parklands. *Image courtesy of Gladstone Regional Council.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF FLYING FOXES

All three species located in the Gladstone region are protected under the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the grey-headed flying fox is also listed as 'vulnerable' under the Australian *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

It is an offence to harass, disturb or harm them.

Flying foxes provide essential services to the plants and forest ecosystems from which they get their food by pollinating flowers, and dispersing seeds.



Currently the little red and black flying foxes predominate the roost in our parklands. *Image courtesy of Gladstone Regional Council.*

FLYING FOXES AND HUMANS

As human land uses impact natural habitat for flying foxes, the gaps between forested areas become wider. This has resulted in flying foxes increasingly establishing new roost sites in urban areas and foraging for food in urban backyards and orchards.

This can bring flying foxes into conflict with people. Flying foxes may carry bacteria and viruses which can be harmful to humans, but the risk of infection is low.

The health and wellbeing of our community, employees and the flying foxes are our key priority. Please avoid using the areas of our parklands where flying foxes are roosting.

People who are not trained and vaccinated should not handle flying foxes.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you come across a sick or injured flying fox, call the RSPCA on 1300ANIMAL (1300 264 625).

In the event of a dead animal, the RSPCA can also advise on the best way to safely and appropriately dispose of the animal.

Members of the public should NOT HANDLE OR TOUCH flying foxes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT:

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