

**FLYING - FOX / MICROBAT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**REVISED 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2011**POLICY**

*In the interest of safety and successful rehabilitation, only Wildlife Rescue carers who comply with the detailed policies and procedures laid out in this document are authorised to rescue and/or rehabilitate Flying Foxes and Microbats.*

**POLICY GOALS:**

The aim of this policy document is to successfully Rescue, Rehabilitate and Release orphan, juvenile and adult Megabats (including: Grey headed Flying Foxes *Pteropus poliocephalus*, and Little Red Flying Foxes *Pteropus scapulatus*) And all species of Microbats that are endemic to the Wildlife Rescue area.

**DETAILED POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- (1) The Wildlife Rescue Head Co-ordinator is ultimately responsible for the placement of all Mega and Micro bats.
- (2) A Flying fox / Microbat co-ordinator / weight recorder will be appointed by the Wildlife Rescue Committee from within the pool of bat carers before each baby season. This co-ordinator will be responsible for;
  - (a) Training Courses.
  - (b) Record Keeping,
  - (c) Education,
  - (d) Flying Fox supplies and appointing Stabilising Carers to the Wildlife Rescue group.
  - (e) Monitoring all bat care within the group,
  - (f) Reporting to the Head Co-ordinator and Wildlife Rescue Committee as required.
  - (g) Arranging and advising all bat cares of crèche dates and fees payable.
- (3) All Bat carers must have been vaccinated against Australian Bat Lyssavirus. Titre Levels must be maintained as deemed necessary by the Health Department for the effective protection against the virus.
- (4) All flying-fox carers must have attended at least a basic training course as approved by Wildlife Rescue. To be a 'stabilizer' a member must have attended an advanced training course and be an experienced flying fox carer.
- (5) Upon rehabilitation, all flying-foxes must be returned to the colony of origin if known, or nearest colony to point of rescue. Orphans are to be released at the nearest colony site, which has a flying fox approved release program. Micro bats must be released within 5 kilometres of their rescue point.
- (6) Due to the specific requirements of flying-foxes, only in matters of extreme emergency are flying-foxes be taken to a vet before contacting the flying fox co-ordinator.
- (7) Under no circumstances is a flying-fox to be placed in an aviary alone. In the event of a bat that is in care alone, the bat must be transported to an aviary where there are other flying foxes the same age.

**ORPHANED FLYING FOXES**

- (8) All baby flying foxes babies that come into care must be examined by an experienced Stabilizer, be in good health, and feeding well before being passed on to an inexperienced carer.
- (9) New carers must record the milk being consumed each feed, baby's weight and take forearm measurements each day. Notes must also be taken on any medication, wormers etc. Experienced carers must record all of the above at least once per week and all carers will contact the flying fox co-ordinator each week with these details.

- (10) Crèche is the socialising stage of development for orphans and under normal birthing conditions (young born October/November) will occur January (Grey-headed & Black Flying-foxes). Variations due to seasonal circumstance, e.g. late or early births will be determined by the flying fox co-ordinator and Wildlife Rescue head co-ordinator.
- (11) Orphans must not be crèched below 300g, earlier than 12 weeks of age, or later than 16 weeks of age.
- (12) Orphans born under normal birthing conditions (October/November) are to be crèched for a minimum of 3 weeks. Variations due to seasonal circumstance (e.g late or early births) will be determined by the flying fox co-ordinator.
- (13) The minimum number of animals in a crèche is five (5).
- (14) Orphans are to be crèched in aviaries of minimum dimensions; length 5m, height 2m, width 2m, (15ft x 6ft x 6ft) for 5 to 15 animals.
- (15) The Wildlife Rescue Committee / flying fox co-ordinator will determine the location of the crèche.
- (16) All orphans are to be banded prior to release.
- (17) A release program is to be developed between appropriate carer groups, with the final decision on release location made by the flying fox co-ordinators and committee.

#### **JUVENILE SUB ADULT / ADULT FLYING FOXES / MICROBATS**

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 an adult.

- (18) All juvenile, sub-adult and adult flying-foxes must be transported to an experienced carer for assessment, the flying fox co-ordinator or head co-ordinator will advise where the said animal will be placed (based on the assessment).
- (19) All juvenile, sub adult and adult flying-foxes not euthanased on the day of rescue are to be held in isolation cages for Lyssavirus observation for a minimum of 3 days.
- (20) No rehabilitating juvenile, sub adult or adult flying-fox is to be housed with permanent care animals.
- (21) Due to the highly nomadic nature of Little Red Flying-foxes, they will be released at the nearest colony containing other Little Reds. This may mean transporting considerable distances.
- (22) All releasable juvenile/sub adult Grey-headed and Black Flying-foxes rescued between May and August where the exact colony of origin is not known and/or they cannot be released within 4 weeks of rescue; are to be transported to an appropriate branch approved holding facility, containing animals of the same age and are to be released the following season at the closest release facility to where the animal was rescued, which has branch approval.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

This document draws upon the Flying fox policies from Native Animal Trust Fund, For Australian Wildlife Needing Aid, Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers and Wires NSW.

*Throughout this document "Wildlife Rescue" refers to Wildlife Rescue South Coast Incorporated, Association number NSW Y1612344 ABN: 49616307526*