

Cascades Gardens flying-fox colony enhancement & management



Cascades Gardens on the Gold Coast is an important roost and maternity site for grey-headed flying-foxes and the colony consists of a substantial number of grey-headed, black and occasionally nomadic little red flying-foxes. The Cascade Gardens site however is small and degraded and there was concern that the animals might disperse into neighbouring urban habitat and cause conflict with the residents. Bat Rescue Inc aimed to stabilise the existing roosting site at Cascade Gardens and to introduce an ongoing education program to enhance the image of flying-foxes.



Grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)

Commonwealth Status: Vulnerable (EPBC Act 1999)

Grey-headed flying-foxes are easily distinguishable from other flying-foxes by the band of rusty brown fur completely encircling the neck. They are found in a coastal belt all the way from Rockhampton to Melbourne and western Victoria, but their habitat has become fragmented by urban and rural development and numbers of the species declined by about 30% in the 1990s. This species is an extremely important dispersal agent for many rainforest trees and they also help pollinate many eucalypts, angophoras, tea-trees and banksias.

Project outcomes

Bat Rescue Inc put over 2000 person hours into stabilising and rehabilitating the Cascades Gardens site with weeding and revegetation. The work team, consisting of Community Services labour, Bat Rescue members and community volunteers, also planted 1800 trees within the colony and buffer area. As well as the vital on-ground works that have increased the health of the site, Bat Rescue have installed interpretive signs, held a community education day and conducted a survey of residents' and visitors' attitudes towards the bat colony. The results of this survey were overwhelmingly positive, with 75% of all participants recording a positive attitude towards the flying-foxes. Over 60% of visitors surveyed listed the colony as the main attraction of Cascade Gardens.

In December 2006, the group was awarded a Gold Gecko Environment Award by the Gold Coast & Hinterland Environment Council for their services to flying-fox conservation. Bat Rescue Inc continues to improve the site while also conducting their bat rehabilitation activities.

Outputs

Area better conserved: 1.5 ha

Area surveyed: 2 ha

Volunteers participated: 20

Person days worked: 250

Products

- Interpretive signs
- Visitor and neighbour surveys
- Newspaper articles

Expenditure

TSN grant funds - \$16,082.00

Proponent - \$56,339.00

Total project - \$72,421.00

Australian Government, Department of Environment and Heritage (2003) EPBC Act Administrative Guidelines on Significance – Supplement for the Grey-headed Flying-fox.

Bat Rescue Inc (2006) Final Report to the TSN on "Cascade Gardens Flying-Fox Colony Enhancement and Management" (TSN reference QLD02/104).

Strahan, R. (1995) The Mammals of Australia. Reed New Holland Publishers Pty Ltd, Frenchs Forest.