



## FRIENDS OF BATS NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2025

### Education Update

Sunday 10th August saw the education team and our wonderful EdBats return to 'Science in the Scrub' at Western Sydney Parklands. This was rapidly followed by 'Science in the Swamp' in Centennial Park on the 17th. The Sydney Bats stand was a very popular stand at both events - drawing large crowds of people eager to meet a flying-fox. These events proved, once again, that attitudes to bats can change very rapidly when meeting the EdBats in person!



Photo above: Tim Pearson holds Sandi.

*Don't handle bats! The flying-foxes in these pictures are trained education animals kept under licence at The Australia Walkabout Wildlife Sanctuary; and the handlers are trained, licenced, and vaccinated. Never handle a wild bat! If you find a bat in trouble, call your local wildlife rescue organisation. #NoTouchNoRisk.*

### Ku-ring-gai Flying-fox Reserve Creek Stabilisation Project

The flying-foxes continue to camp in the gully near Taylor Street, but during very hot days they move down to the dense shade and moist vegetation at Stony Creek. Ku-ring-gai Council staff and Bushcarers have been alarmed by the severe erosion of the creek banks and the number of turpentine and coachwood trees which have fallen due to this erosion. Without action this process will continue, thinning the riparian forest canopy. Council has received a substantial grant to undertake creek bank stabilisation works, funded by the Urban Rivers and Catchment Program. "The project will stabilise 240 metres of Stony Creek to reduce erosion impact from high stormwater inflows, which are impacting the microclimate and habitat needs of the EPBC-listed Grey-headed Flying-fox camp in the reserve. In addition to the planned bank stabilisation works, the project will also undertake mixed-storey planting of local native riparian species, which will address the sediment movement into the Middle Harbour Estuary."

A feasibility study has been undertaken by Council. KBCS members, Tim Pearson, Jill Green (representing STEP Inc.), Nancy Pallin and Karen Sherwood attended several meetings. A key challenge of the project is to avoid disturbing the flying-foxes - especially over summer when they have their young. The nesting of the powerful owls in winter is also being taken into consideration. Council staff, with their chosen contract company, are seeking the most effective methods and timings to minimise fauna and vegetation disturbance.



### Weather radar and drones

At the April meeting of the Ku-ring-gai Flying-fox Reserve Technical Advisory Group, Matthew Mo, Senior Project Officer, NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, informed us of new ways of monitoring flying-foxes on a national scale. Weather radar can be used to estimate the number of flying-foxes flying out of 60% of roosts. Drones using thermal imaging have also been used to count flying-foxes in their camp without disturbing them. Matthew said a further 30% of camps could be captured by drones, leaving very little to be gathered by volunteers. This move towards a more automated and less manual form of counting, would reduce workload/time, as well as increasing accuracy. Western Sydney University (UWS) researchers are applying for funding for a program to monitor flying-foxes using drones. Training in drone-based flying-fox surveys would then be offered. UWS will be engaging councils as end users, and Ku-ring-gai Council has submitted an expression of interest (EOI). More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

### Tree in focus

The Yellow Bloodwood tree (*Corymbia eximia*) is coming into flower in Ku-ring-gai right now, providing a popular foodsource for Grey-headed Flying-foxes (and many other nectar-eating fauna). These trees can be recognised by their flaky, grey-brown, tessellated bark, which reveals a yellow bark beneath when peeled away. Their spectacular, large bundles of white flowers are followed by attractive urn-shaped fruit.





### Bushcare in Ku-ring-gai Flying-fox Reserve

Whilst the Saturday monthly group is currently on hiatus, the Tuesday morning group continues. With all the rain, the rainforest seedlings planted in the exclosures (and many that have self-seeded!), are thriving but need occasional rescue from native vines which threaten to strangle them.

*Picture right:* Jill stands beside the long exclosure which we planted in 2015 with long-stemmed coachwoods. Now these trees are over 3m tall.



### Flying-foxes in the reserve

The KFFR flyout count on 27 August estimated 1,230 bats between the 3 locations. This is down from the 2,900 counted in July. One hundred Black Flying-foxes (*Pteropus alecto*) were camped amongst the Grey-headed Flying-foxes. Thanks to Ben, Olivia and Sue for helping with the count, and Chelsea and Olivia for the walk through and extent map.

### Powerful Owl Update.....

The Powerful Owl pair in the reserve have had two owlets fledge this year. This good news was reported to Council staff on September 1 by Birdlife Australia volunteers. The Powerful Owl, *Ninox strenua*, is listed in NSW as being vulnerable to extinction and we are thrilled by their continued presence in the reserve.



### Great Koala National Park (GKNP)

KBCS welcomes the NSW Government's announcement of the declaration of the Great Koala National Park (GKNP). The formal announcement was made on Threatened Species Day (7 September), with an immediate moratorium on logging beginning on Monday 8 September. The boundaries of the park include 176,000 hectares of state forest, with connecting links to existing national parks for a total of 476,000-hectares of reserve. The GKNP will not only benefit koalas, but will be a lifeline for southern greater gliders, glossy black cockatoos, and many other species that are suffering from habitat decline, including flying-foxes. Legislative amendments to reserve the GKNP under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 are needed, and the government proposes to introduce the Bill to the NSW Parliament in 2026. Of further concern, is that the final creation of the proposed park is dependent on the successful registration of a carbon project under the Improved Native Forest Management (INFM) Method, which is currently under review by the Federal Government. We hope the NSW government can move quickly to finalise the enshrining of the GKNP into law. For now, we welcome the moratorium on logging in the area and thank our fellow conservationists, who have worked tirelessly over decades to bring this project to fruition.

### 18 years in the wild

"We report a case of a hand-reared Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) that was fitted with a metal identification band when it was released in 2004 and recovered alive in 2022. This information provides clear evidence of this individual having post-release survivorship of 18 years. The distance between the release and recovery locations was approximately 297 km, corresponding with the species' known nomadism. Based on the current scientific information on longevity in the Grey-headed Flying-fox, this individual would be considered an old animal." Further information can be found [here](#).

### Thank you Donors!

Members of Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society, and other donors, we sincerely appreciate your generosity. Since 1<sup>st</sup> June donations have totalled \$1,895.

These donations enable the Society to provide education opportunities with live flying-foxes, through our socials and via the [sydneybats](#) website.

Thank you to: Charles Shuetrim, Sarah Cooper, Audrey Michelin, Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame, Nancy Pallin, Patricia Martin, Keren Cox-Witton, Neil and Elza Wade, Yael Cohen, Harry Leung, John Burke, Bruce Taylor, Mary Warner, Jeanette Sinclair, Adam Jacquier-Parr, Susan Smith, Jane Gye, Mina Bassarova, Leonie Bayley and Nancy Rasmussen.

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