

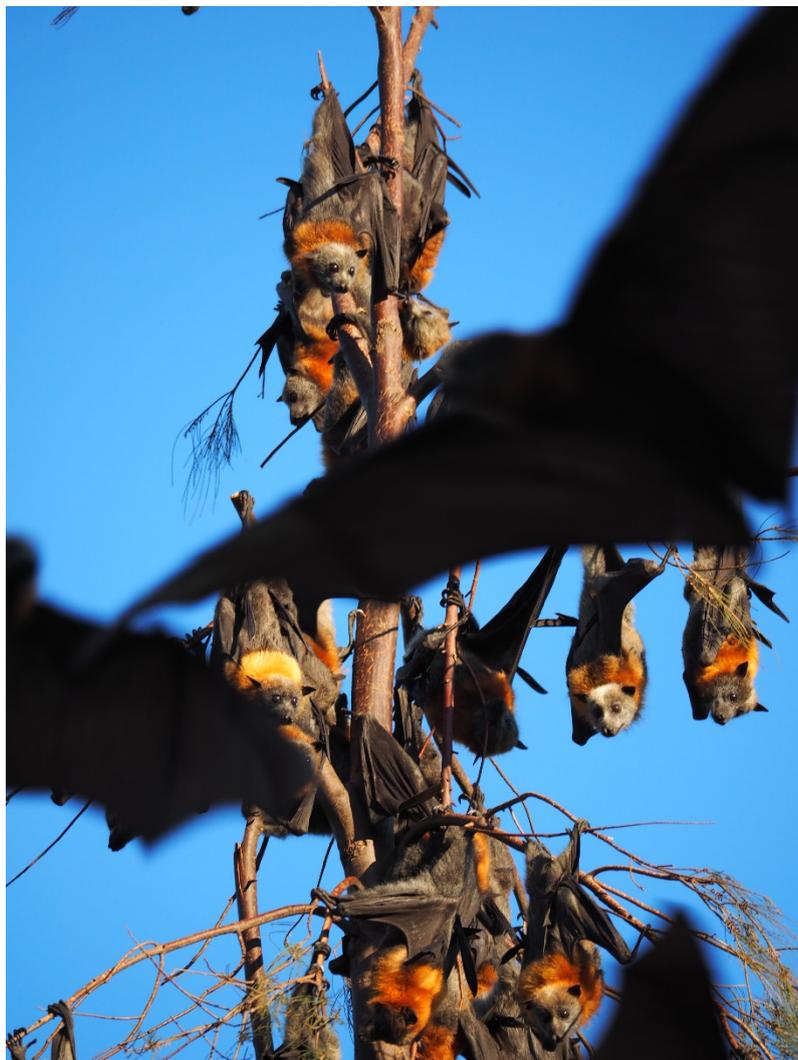
## The National Flying-fox Monitoring Program

### Report on the February 2017 survey

#### Background

The National Flying-Fox Monitoring Program (NFFMP) is a collaborative program that brings the community and local, state and the Commonwealth governments together to provide quarterly snapshots of the size and distribution of flying-fox populations in Australia. The data collected provides unique insights into the ecology and dynamics of flying-fox populations and represents an essential underpinning for their conservation and management.

Monitoring of flying-foxes is useful for a variety of reasons but is especially important because flying-foxes are so often in conflict with humans while at the same time being of conservation concern. Two species, the grey-headed flying-fox (GHFF) and the spectacled flying-fox (SFF), are listed as threatened under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and legislation in some states. The NFFMP provides key data for decision making not just for flying-fox conservation but also to inform responses to public concerns about the impact of flying-foxes on industry, amenity and public health.



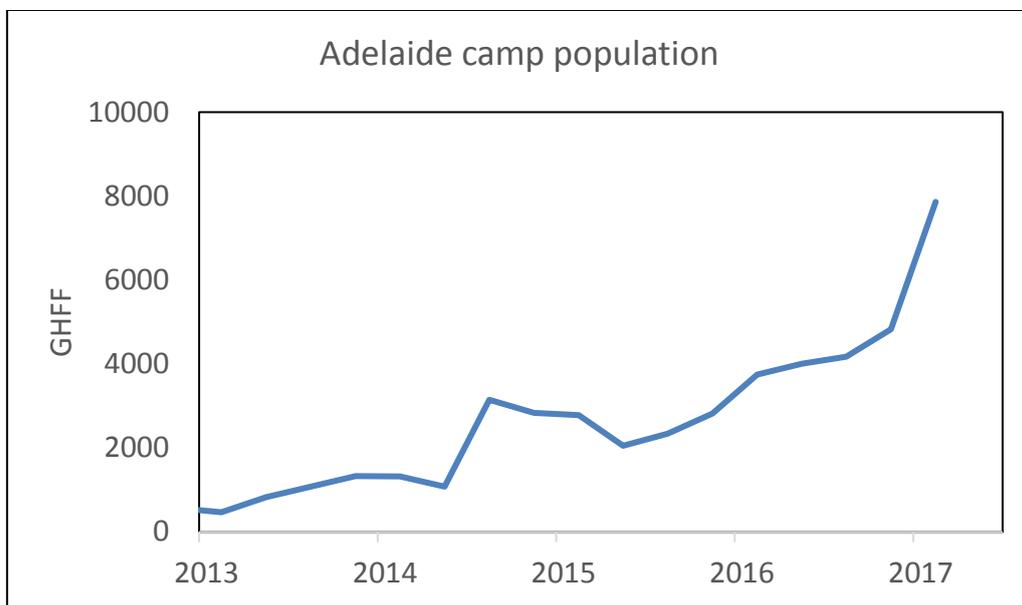
GHFF roosting

**The February 2017 Survey Results - a Summary.**

The February 2017 survey was the 19th count of the project. During the February count, 290 camps were surveyed, 151 in Qld, 115 in NSW, 22 in Vic, and one each in the ACT & SA.

The total number of GHFF counted in these camps was 580,000 animals and these were recorded from 124 active camps across the species' range. The majority of the animals were in NSW (81%), with 10% in Vic, 8% in Qld, and the rest in SA and ACT. Maclean was the only camp with >50,000 animals, however there were several camps of more than 20,000 animals including Bellingen, Uki, Murwillumbah, Glenreagh, Wollli Creek, Centennial Park and Yarra Bend.

Interestingly the population of the Adelaide camp continues its steady rise; this time with a 62% jump in numbers in February from its previous high. There are also now reports of a second South Australian camp at Naracoorte.

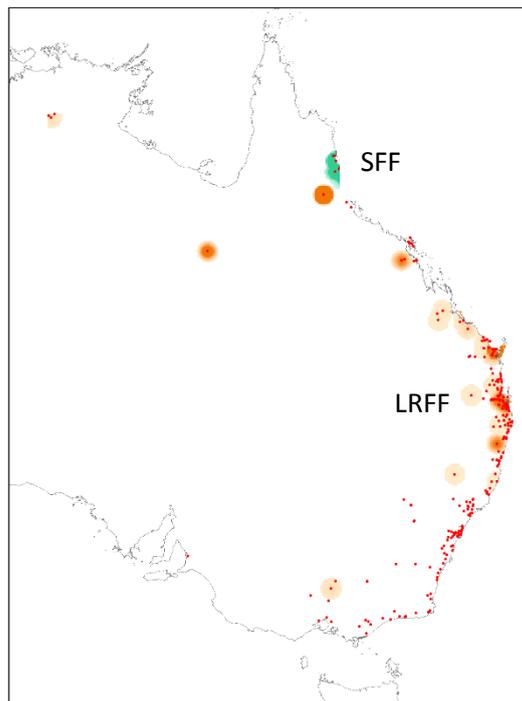
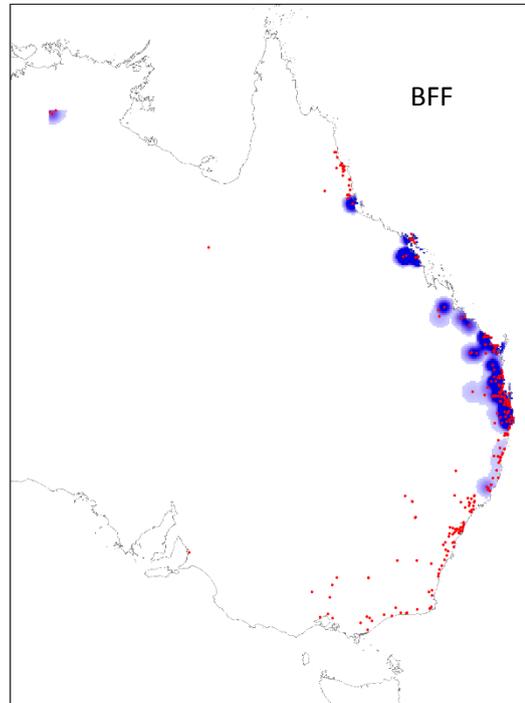
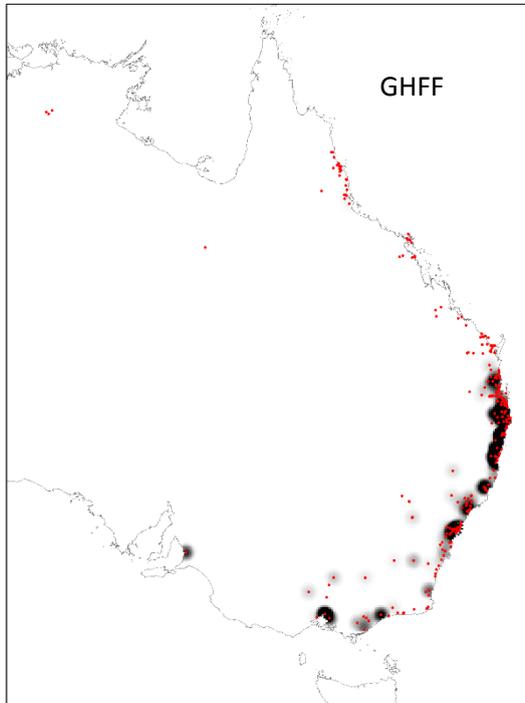


SFF numbers were low in this count with just 72,000 animals recorded from 9 active camps. This is low numbers for this time of the year.

The NFFMP covers only a part of the ranges of the black flying-fox (BFF) and the little-red flying-fox (LRFF). This means that our estimates for BFF and LRFF are indicative only of the survey region and not of the entire population, however we are extending the area and are now getting data from the NT & WA. In total 230,000 BFF and 590,000 LRFF were recorded.

**Where were the flying-foxes in February?**

The heat maps below show the distribution of the different flying-fox species across the region of the NFFMP. The darker the colour the greater the abundance of flying-foxes in an area, black shading refers to GHFFs, blue to BFFs, green to SFFs and orange to LRFFs. Red dots indicate visited camps



### **NFFMP data in use**

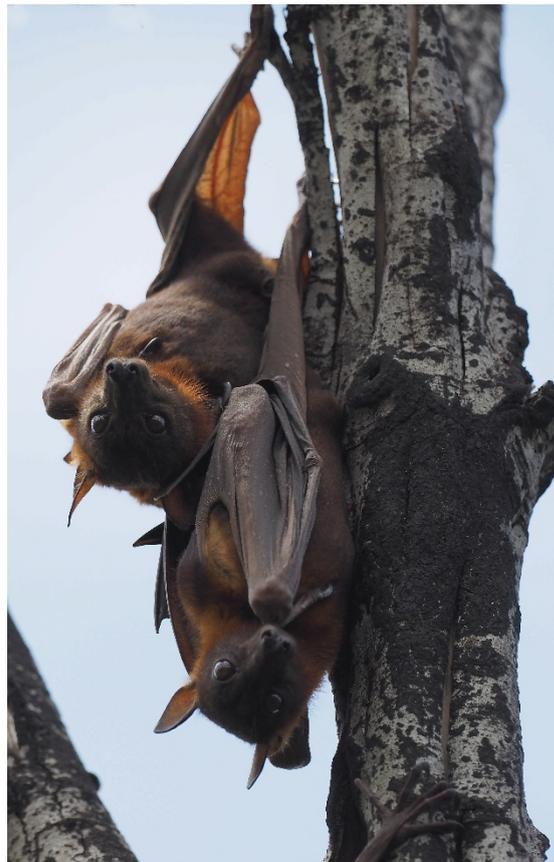
In the November report we described how the data collected as part of the NFFMP formed a key component of a number of submissions to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy's "Inquiry into flying-fox management in the eastern states". The committee has now published its report and this is available at

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Environment\\_and\\_Energy/Flyingfoxmanagement/Report\\_1](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Environment_and_Energy/Flyingfoxmanagement/Report_1)).

The Inquiry led to four major recommendations:

1. The establishment of a Working Group to the Council of Australian Governments to coordinate and harmonise the approach to flying-fox management and conservation across the country.
2. The establishment of a dedicated funding pool for flying-fox research and conservation actions, and specifically calling for ongoing support for the NFFMP.
3. The development of tools to assist councils in their decision making processes.
4. The development of educational materials regarding flying-foxes and their management, and the promotion of these materials in areas impacted by flying-foxes.

The recommendation that continued support be made available for the NFFMP is an indication of the important role it this program is playing in the conservation and management of flying-foxes in Australia and clear recognition of the impact of your efforts in participating in the program.



LRFF

## The NFFMP

A map of the camps covered in the NFFMP surveys can be viewed at <http://www.environment.gov.au/node/16393>. Clicking on a camp icon will show a plot of species composition and numbers recorded at that camp during NFFMP surveys.

The aim of the program is to establish a reliable baseline estimate of the flying fox populations and over time to estimate trends. This will take a number of years since each quarterly count will be subject to various factors which will influence the results, making assessment of population size more difficult. A report reviewing the data from the first phase of the program can be viewed at the Australian Government Department of the Environment's website at <https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/status-and-trends-australias-epbc-listed-flying-foxes>. This analysis suggests that while the GHFF population appears to be at approximately 700,000 individuals, the population of the SFF has declined by as much as 50% over the last decade to approximately 100,000 individuals.

In order to achieve the best possible estimate it is important that surveys are performed using the methods correctly. We are continuing to conduct training sessions and the CSIRO urges any counters who have any questions or concerns about count methodology to contact David Westcott at [david.westcott@csiro.au](mailto:david.westcott@csiro.au) or Adam McKeown at [adam.mckeown@csiro.au](mailto:adam.mckeown@csiro.au).

Thank you to all the counters who put in the hours to assist the program. Your effort is greatly appreciated.

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If you would like to participate please contact:

New South Wales – [Mike.Roache@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Mike.Roache@environment.nsw.gov.au)

Queensland — [Pauline.Fitzgibbon@ehp.qld.gov.au](mailto:Pauline.Fitzgibbon@ehp.qld.gov.au)

If you know of additional camps or have questions about the counts please contact:

[david.westcott@csiro.au](mailto:david.westcott@csiro.au) or [adam.mckeown@csiro.au](mailto:adam.mckeown@csiro.au)

Additional information about the program can be found at:

[www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/species/flying-foxes-monitoring-program.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/species/flying-foxes-monitoring-program.html)

The National Flying-fox Monitoring Program is a collaboration between the Australian Government, the South Australian, Victorian, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Queensland governments, CSIRO, local governments and volunteers in New South Wales and Queensland. This project is funded by the Commonwealth of Australia, the State of New South Wales, the State of Queensland and CSIRO.