

## **Batting for Australia 1 Feb 2004**

DAILY MAIL, U.K. A 2 page article about Tolga Bat Hospital was published in the Daily Mail on 14 January. It was written by Roland Seitre, a French vet-photojournalist, who visited us a few years ago. It will also appear in a paper in Miami, Florida later in January. We have had a good response from the English article - 5 emails, \$200 in sponsorships, sales of 3 tshirts/singlets and 4 postcards. It may also lead to a donation from The Synchronicity Foundation. [www.synchronicity.bm](http://www.synchronicity.bm)

**SINGLET'S FOR SALE** While in Brisbane I bought up big in the post-Christmas sales! We have many Tolga Bat Hospital singlets for sale, men's and women's styles.

**NIUEA** This email arrived 22 January: "I currently work as a biodiversity consultant and have done several contracts with the Niuean Government in recent years. I have been asked to travel there next week to do an assessment of the impacts of the recent devastating Cyclone Heta on the biodiversity. One immediate question is whether anything can be done for the flying foxes (*Petropus tonganus*) that are struggling to find any food. There are no facilities to hold any animals in a temporary captive situation and I understand that there is talk of establishing feeding platforms in the forest and providing tinned fruit. I would appreciate comments from anyone with experience of such an issue. I imagine that it will be difficult to do anything useful in the wild, but would like to hear what has been tried. It may be possible to establish some makeshift holding facilities but access to any expertise, husbandry advice, drugs, etc. will be very difficult so it would be good to have some experts to communicate with on this." I wrote back suggesting tinned fruit smoothie - made on milk powder and water.

**HEAT DISASTER** Thousands of Grey-headed flying foxes at the Bellingen colony in northern NSW died in early January from high temperatures. **FFICN** The Flying-fox Information & Conservation Network (FFICN) is a loosely knit, informal group of individuals with a common interest in the welfare of Australian flying-foxes. The aims of the group are: o To collect and analyse information to improve the care and rehabilitation of flying-foxes o To educate wildlife carers and the public o To disseminate information relating to flying-foxes within the scientific and conservation communities o To encourage the protection of flying-foxes and their environment To join the email list for this group, apply to [robjenj@ozemail.com.au](mailto:robjenj@ozemail.com.au):

**WWF PROJECT** Kerryn Hislop the Queensland Coordinator for Threatened Species Network (a program of the World Wide Fund for Nature) visited us in early February with Mike Gregory from QPWS to see how our WWF-funded project is progressing - Abating Threats to SFFs and their Mabi Habitat. We took them to a very impressive flyout of Little Reds one night at Tolga Scrub. We estimate there were close to a million bats. Our WWF project is on track. The Mareeba Environment College students did the bulk of the planting on Thursday 26 February. The weather held for us and then it bucketed down 30-40mm of rain that night. The Wet Tropics Treeplanting Scheme dug the holes, provided the trees (also from TREAT) and finished the planting the following day. There

will probably be an article in the Cairns Post next week. The plantings are on the north-east and south-east sides of the Scrub. The trees have tree guards so are easily seen. Anyone interested in helping with maintenance please let us know.

**COCKATOO / BAT PROJECT** Sylvana Spina is doing her B. App Sc at JCU and her Honours thesis on Bats and Cockatoos in the Tolga Scrub. Sylvana will feature in the Cairns Post article as she helped on both days of tree planting.

**CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER TOURISM** We were approached by Alexandra Coghlan, a PhD student from JCU in Townsville, to help with her research on the motivations and experiences of volunteer conservation tourists. She came up for a few days and trialled her questionnaire on volunteers. She is now helping us fine-tune our draft questionnaire that is sent to prospective volunteers.

**ORPHAN RELEASES** We began taking our orphans out to the release cage on 7 January and took the last ones out 24 February. We will continue to feed them daily till about the end of March and then gradually reduce the food.

**VOLUNTEER SMALL EQUIPMENT GRANTS** I have just posted off a grant application for equipment to improve the lives of the live-in volunteers - large fridge and storage space for clothes etc so they don't need to live out of a suitcase.

**AUSTRALASIAN BAT SOCIETY CONFERENCE** The last conference was held in Cairns in 2002. This time it is being held in Toowoomba. There is a one day workshop on Managing Flying Fox Camps that I have been invited to speak at. Details about the conference are at <http://abs.ausbats.org.au>

**NRM** Our 3 Committee members attended a seminar in Atherton on the 24 February held by the Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management. They are looking for community participation to develop an action plan to better manage our natural resources in this region. Rowena Wallace from the Wet Tropics NRM visited the bat hospital a few days later to learn about our work and how we fit into the region. Documents and future session details are available at [www.nrmboard.org.au](http://www.nrmboard.org.au) OR [www.rainforest-CRC.jcu.edu.au](http://www.rainforest-CRC.jcu.edu.au) or can be obtained by contacting FNQ NRM Ltd on phone 40616477, Fax 40614677 or email, [nrmboard@znet.net.au](mailto:nrmboard@znet.net.au).

**NEW BAT POSTER** Laila Whiting from QPWS in Cairns has designed us a wonderful bat poster. I am happy to email a PDF file of it to anyone interested. (file size only 170 K). Please feel free to print it out and use it. We are laminating them in A3 and A4 sizes. The exquisite artwork is by Fran Davies.

## **Batting for Australia 2 July 2004**

I've had a lot of positive feedback about our first newsletter. Keep it simple I've been told.

**LANDCARE** We are now an official Landcare group. This helps us immensely as Landcare groups are automatically covered with 'free' public liability, personal accident and professional indemnity insurances. We would be paying about \$1300+ for this otherwise. Thankyou Sue Mathams for giving us the idea to

apply! Our eligibility hinged on the habitat restoration work at Tolga Scrub and other campsites, as well as the intrinsic 'natural resource' value of the flying fox.

**SYNCHRONICITY FOUNDATION** In the last newsletter I mentioned a possible donation from the Synchronicity Foundation after they saw an article about our group in a local English newspaper. [www.synchronicity.bm](http://www.synchronicity.bm) We have been donated \$2854.59, all of which will go towards a new microbat cage.

**MICROBAT CAGE** We have needed a microbat cage for some time. It is vital that injured or juvenile microbats get safe flight and feeding practice before being assessed for released. The Americans have found that juvenile microbats need about 6 weeks in a large enough flight cage. We decided on an 8 metre octagonal design. The requirements of a microbat cage are quite different to a megabat cage, especially in terms of the softness of the materials that line the cage on the inside. The skeleton is galvanised pipe, joined with Universal Fencing System fittings. It will be lined with 6mm by 6mm wire mesh (snake or mouse wire) on the outside, with a 2 metre diameter tin hat at the apex of the roof. The inside will be lined with 6 mm by 6mm polyethylene plastic mesh on the walls and soft netting on the ceiling. We are still undecided about the floor. Gary and Lyn from NetPro in Mareeba have donated the ceiling netting as well as some 95% shadecloth as a water-resistant wind break for the weather sides. See more about NetPro later in the newsletter.

**GRANTS** We were unsuccessful in the Volunteer Small Equipment Grant first round but successful in the second. We have been given \$1159.09 for a large volunteer fridge.

**VISITORS SHMULIK YEDVAB** We were consulted by Shmulik on ideas for a new megabat cage for a zoo in Jerusalem. He then decided to visit Australia and spent 2 days here looking at our new cage and getting ideas about flying fox husbandry. The day he arrived, a juvenile Spectacled flying fox came into care. He has since been named Shmulik.

**KATE HUBBARD** Kate spent a few days with us in late May. She won a Churchill fellowship in England to develop an educational, photographic, 'soft' conservation exhibition called Flying Foxes in Focus. Her intention is to motivate people, especially those living in Fruit Bat regions, to recognize the importance & value of fruit bats.

**CHRISTINE BAEUMIER** Christine visited us originally with a CSIRO Earthwatch team, but wanted more of a bat experience so came back. She does fabulous artwork, often incorporating bats. Go to this website and then click on staff art. <http://artept.umn.edu>

**MICHEAL GAYLE** Michael is an associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at a university in New York. He visited last year with a group of students and has done again this year. The focus of his guided trips to Australia is to learn about the flora, fauna, & culture of the country. He brings a diverse group of students, from different universities and different study areas.

**BATTY IS BEAUTIFUL** This is the slogan on a new t-shirt being produced by a fledgling mad pride movement in Australia! There's a picture of a little bat, and underneath it is the word Insane Australia - the name of the group wanting to reclaim the language of mental illness. We have a shirt at the bat hospital if anyone would like to see one - its great. They can be ordered from Greg Mutter at [cpnnp@nursing.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:cpnnp@nursing.unimelb.edu.au) but only in sizes small and xlarge. Seems a bit batty!

**TKMG (Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group)** had a very successful Flying Fox night on 19 May in Malanda The speakers were Sam Fox, Louise Shilton and Jenny Maclean. There were a large number of people and it helped considerably to raise the profile of bats and bat research on the Tablelands.

**ABS CONFERENCE** The Australian Bat Society's (ABS) 11th conference was held in Toowoomba after Easter. You may remember the last conference 2 years ago was held in Cairns. A highlight was the flying fox management workshop held the day before the conference started. We were asked to present a paper on the Spectacled flying fox perspective. There is a copy of the proceedings here if anyone is interested.

**MELBOURNE BATS** There were 3 speakers at the ABS conference from Yarra Bend Park. Many of you will be aware of the traumatic times at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens over the last few years. The Gardens were intent on removing the Grey-headed flying foxes and began shooting them. This is a recent email from Lawrence Pope, President of the Victorian Animal Welfare Association, and a major campaigner for the welfare of the bats: "Enduring good news for our upside down friends. This coming thursday at 9.30 am (29 April) the Minister for Environment and Conservation, John Thwaites, will meet with media and other bat stakeholders at Bellbird reserve, Yarra Bend Park, in Kew, the site of Melbourne's grey-headed flying fox colony, to formally declare the reserve and its more than sixty acres of bushland on the Yarra a permanent home for the colony. The gov't will disclose its ongoing involvement in the project and will commit around a million dollars to ensure that the Yarra Bend colony is, and remains, a Victorian wildlife and community success story."

**COCKATOOS** Atherton Shire Council has again been issued with a permit to use birdfrite to move the cockatoos out of the Tolga Scrub. We will be monitoring the impact on the resident Spectacled flying foxes, as we did last year. Last year the bats seemed relatively unaffected during the firing (in terms of their behaviour at the time), though their numbers dropped by a half. This year their numbers have actually increased. We have been working with an honours student from James Cook University looking at the impact on the Tolga Scrub from the cockatoos and bats.

**VOLUNTEERS** We have a good number of live-in volunteers for this coming tick paralysis season - Melanie Lijnsdag from The Netherlands for 10 weeks, Mary Wenzel from USA for 4 weeks (Mary was here last year too), Billie Roberts from Australia for 4-8 weeks, Cordula Ihring from Germany and Becky Strong from the UK for 4 weeks, Andrea Kingston from USA for 2 weeks, Antony Mould and Abie Meddings from the UK for 4 weeks. This means we will have at least 2 volunteers continuously from late September to February. We have applied to be a Work

for the Dole project. This would enable us to have a volunteer for 15 hours a week for 26 weeks. It also gives us up to \$1800 per participant. If successful, we could easily handle 2 a year, and so pay for most of the bat food bill.

**NYCTIMENES** We had an unusually large number of tube-nosed bats (*Nyctimene robinsonii*) come into care recently, 5 over a March, April and May. All came off barbed wire and only one was releasable. We are hoping to have a visit from Nancy Irwin in August who is doing a PhD on *Nyctimene* in PNG.

**HONOURS STUDENTS** We have been in contact with quite a few tertiary students wanting to do their Honours, Masters and possibly PhDs on Spectacled flying foxes. It is exciting to know there will be ongoing work on the species.

**TOLGA SCRUB WWF PROJECT** The revegetation side of the project has progressed well. The initial weed / rubbish removal as well as the subsequent planting and erection of tree guards was done by our partners the students of Mareeba Environmental College and Eacham Shire Community Revegetation Unit. The project has had one major set-back. The large numbers of Pademelons in the northern end of the Tolga Scrub have eaten back a lot of the trees that were planted. We anticipated this problem but not the severity of it. The tree guards that were purchased were inadequate for the job. We have since been making our own from wire mesh, as well as purchasing the opaque plastic growing tubes. Anyone interested in seeing the planting and the elaborate tree guards? Access to the north-east planting is along the railway line once you exit the Industrial Estate, and the south-east planting from the road off to the right as you enter the Scrub from Atherton. The trees in the southern end are in excellent condition. There are also trees planted throughout the Scrub.

**QUEENSLAND WILDLIFE REHABILITATION COUNCIL** The Council is being set up 'to direct, guide and improve outcomes and standards relating to wildlife rehabilitation and release throughout Queensland'. There was a meeting held in Cairns 5 June 2004 to discuss its role. Annabelle Olssen is our official representative from this area. The 15 member Council consists 11 carers as well as representatives from Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI), the RSPCA, the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS).

**IRAQ BAT RESCUE** On Worldbatline a few months ago, came a story about a bat rescued by an American soldier in Iraq. I have edited some of the Yahoo messenger text between 'Jane' the soldier and Amanda from Batworld in Texas. batworldsanctuary: are you there? Jane: yes batworldsanctuary: great! Do you have a web cam or a way I can see the bat? Jane:: i tried to email the pic i dont have a web cam either, she is small, brown hair batworldsanctuary: how small--an inch or two long? batworldsanctuary: okay--it's an insect eating bat. They eat quite a bit for their size. Bland meats are okay, baby food beef would be good if you can get it. Mix it with banana- about ¼ banana and ¾ beef. Too much fruit will give her diarrhea. Jane:: if i can get onto my military email i will try to send the pic again batworldsanctuary: What about her injury--is it an open wound? Jane:: no... not until she chews at it, she tries to fly but the whole right wing is gone half way up her arm Jane:: i water down peroxide to clean it out, it looks good until she chews at it batworldsanctuary: the chewing isn't good. That

usually means the wing is dying and she's trying to get rid of it. can you get oral antibiotics, like cephalixin or penicillin? batworldsanctuary: Do you have any antibiotic cream? Jane:: yes, i have triple antibiotic batworldsanctuary: The triple antibiotic is good. Don't put any more peroxide on it. Peroxide actually destroys tissue and prevents healing after the first use. It's basically only good to initially clean wounds. Use the antibiotic cream two to three times a day--that should help quite a bit. batworldsanctuary: Can you get Cephalexin? Jane:: i can get that tomorrow morning..how much do i give her batworldsanctuary: wonderful! okay, mix two tsp. water with one tsp. cephalixin powder, and give her two drops from a medicine dropper (0.05ml) twice a day.. It's usually Cherry or bubblegum flavored so she'll like it. Jane:: she is so gentle even when i was cleaning her limb, she has never once tried to bite me batworldsanctuary: If you get bitten you will need to get post exposure shots to be safe. It's best to continue using gloves and not take chances. batworldsanctuary: How hard will it be to send supplies to you? Jane:: not hard...we get mail everyday....except sundays batworldsanctuary: Well, you (she) needs mealworms. Can you order some from there? I'll put some other supplies together for you. Jane:: i will try to get one of the workers to get me some in the morning batworldsanctuary: <http://www.sunshinemealworms.com> batworldsanctuary: order size large batworldsanctuary: you'll need to keep them in some grain and in the fridge batworldsanctuary: okay. what about the baby food--or very bland dog food? Jane:: there is none on the place where i am at...i will get my mom to send me some...which kind do I have her send batworldsanctuary: any type of baby food beef. Have her send some baby food banana as well. I'll also send some literature and vitamin supplies and a roosting pouch. batworldsanctuary: How fast can you get mealworms? Jane:: a day or two at the most batworldsanctuary: great! That's perfect. Feed her as many as she will eat. She may eat as many as 25 to 50 a day. Also, go to [www.batworld.org](http://www.batworld.org) and click on "worldbatline", "local rescue", "found a bat? And "orphan rescue". Those pages contain detailed info on housing that you can use. Be sure to go to the worldbatline archives--it has loads of info you might find helpful. If you want to join the list let me know. It's very busy--about 20 to 50 messages a day. You can also read the messages on the worldbatline web site. 24 HOUR BATLINE UK The phone number is 0845 1300 228, for the Bat Conservation Trust. See the website at <http://www.bats.org.uk/batinfo/helpline.htm> Outside of office hours, for any bat emergency within the UK, there is a team of about 12 people staffing it evenings and weekends through the summer.

**BACKYARD NETTING** The Kuringai Bat Conservation Society (KBCS) in Sydney has been doing some good work on raising awareness of the danger to wildlife and bats in particular from fine plastic netting. They get a lot of rescue calls each year. Visit the KBCS website to find information on how to net a backyard fruit tree. [www.sydneymbats.org.au](http://www.sydneymbats.org.au) A brochure PDF file is available to download. From this site you can also link to NPWS site and check out their netting info. One of Sydney's local councils is having the netting brochure translated into Italian. We get called out to 1-2 netting rescues a year.

**ORCHARD NETTING** A very exciting development has been the discovery that netting culture has well and truly arrived in the far north. NetPro, a company based in Stanthorpe, now has a team based in Mareeba. Gary and Lyn Higson

approached us to see if we'd like to participate in a float for the Mareeba procession last week. We provided some bat costumes for them and took photos on the night. They did a great job with the float and came second. Lots of catcalls from the crowd about 'did they want their bats shot?' They have also generously donated us any netting off cuts that might be useful for carers' bat cages.

### **BATTING FOR AUSTRALIA 3 Nov 2004**

**2004 TICK SEASON 04** This newsletter comes towards the end of our largest tick paralysis season for many years. We have had so many orphans that airlifting them south seemed the only option. In total we have sent 140 out to Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane. Carers in all these locations have done a tremendous job finding homes for the bubs. In particular, Leanne Baird and her team have received 90 bubs in 4 airlifts and fostering them throughout south-east Queensland. We are now all planning the best means of getting them back up. We have had a lot of support in terms of donations and volunteering. Feeding about 300 orphans during crèche and release will use up all these funds though. Going out to the release cage each day with 300 apples and about 15 litres of banana smoothie will be no easy task! Some of the people who coordinated the airlift from the Brisbane end are coming up in January with the last shipment of orphans.

**HEAT STRESS DISASTER** We have had our own tick disaster to deal with, but please spare a thought for the carers and grey headed flying foxes at Singleton, and to a lesser extent Bellingen, in NSW. Temperatures reached 45 degrees on 2 consecutive days and the bats, especially babies, started dropping from the trees. They collected 190 live babies in 30 hours, though about 60% died over the following few days from heat stroke. It is estimated that about 1000 babies died.

**MICROBAT CAGE** The cage is looking very good and is almost finished.

**GRANTS** We are applying for 3 grants over the next month – Reef Casino, Gambling Community Benefit Fund and Envirofund 2. We need to re-build the old original cage, and we thought to apply for money for rabies vaccinations. The new cage will be able to link into the existing cleaning system, all waste going to the septic tank. It will also be steel construction instead of wood.

**TKMG** We have been involved in 2 very successful education ventures with TKMG this year. The first mentioned in the last newsletter was a Bat Forum evening with Andrew Dennis, Louise Shilton and Sam Fox. The second was trialling a PNG bat education kit with Chris Doyle from the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program (USA). Chris had used the kit in PNG for a few months, and we spent a day with Herberton State School children. We complimented the day by bringing some education bats and talking about Tolga Bat Hospital and local species of bats .

**OTHER BAT EDUCATION EVENTS** We had 2 education events in September. One with a group of Natural Resource Training students in Malanda and a night talk at Upper Barron State School for the CAFNEC (Cairns and Far North Queensland Environment Centre) bike ride

HONOURS STUDENTS Leisa Fisher and Jen Parsons are both doing their Honours with Spectacled flying foxes at the moment. Both have been a big help to the hospital as they have been picking up tick bats and bubs whenever they've been in the colony. Leisa is looking at mother-baby communication, and Jen at seed dispersal.

7.30 REPORT and AUSSIE ANIMAL RESCUE We were involved in filming about Spectacled flying foxes by the 7.30 Report (ABC television) with Sam Fox, Andrew Dennis and David Westcott. Unfortunately we got very late notice by the 7.30 Report on 3 November. However you may be able to catch us on the new series of Aussie Animal Rescue starting soon. It was filmed this time last year.

MAIZE FESTIVAL Well we did it; we won best non-motorised float 2004 and \$250! Some friends from Kuranda had made 2 giant bat costumes to be worn on stilts – it seemed a waste not to get a public showing. As well, we had Killarney from Yungaburra on stilts with baby wings, and invited a few other environmental groups to join us. It was a very enjoyable night. This is another email story from worldbatline. Lisa, who I met in USA 2 years ago, had corresponded last year by email with a Japanese woman named Izabela who had rescued a microbat. Izabela had never seen a bat before, named him Fu and eventually released him in her yard. This year, Izabela had a friend call about a bat that had been clinging to a wall, in the same spot for 4 days. Lisa again coached by email. This is one of Izabela's emails: "I just wanted to let you know I released the bat tonight. I felt he was ready. I let my sister name him...she gave him the name To-Fu (in memory of little Fu, and because he liked the tofu and chicken paste!) I had kept To-fu for 8 days. He was warm and ate very well. I couldn't do the 10-minute flying without tiring test you advised for Fu, as there simply is no safe place for that here...but I felt he had become stronger and regained some physical power... Yesterday was a warm day and at twilight, one solitary bat was flying near my house. I wondered whether To-Fu was ready to go back home. Today was even warmer, and so I asked my friend to drive me and To-Fu to where he had been found. I was very nervous and couldn't decide if it was the right thing to do or not. It was very hard to make the decision...I feel so tired now! Anyway, I stood on the balcony, in front of the wall To-Fu had clung to for 4 days, and I pulled him out of my shirt. I let him sit in my hand for a while. He seemed to be looking around. Then he crawled to the edge of my hand, spread and stretched his wings; first the right one, then the left...and took off in a north-easterly direction. I really hope he is back with his colony now, telling them the amazing adventures he has had. I should feel happy, but I feel a little sad and bewildered. I am also 100% certain that both Fu and To-Fu are pipistrelles...it was easier to tell this time because To-Fu was older and bigger than Fu. So that is a good thing to know. For next time?"