

## Flying-foxes return to Adelaide

A small number of Grey-headed Flying-foxes, sometimes known as fruit bats, have once again been seen at various locations across Adelaide.

Grey-headed Flying-fox colonies have not been seen in Adelaide since last June, when a colony of about 1,200 roosting in trees at a private property in Fullarton dispersed and were thought to have returned to their traditional range in the eastern states.

However, individual animals have been sighted on four separate occasions in Adelaide's southern, northern and eastern suburbs in recent weeks.

The northern report was of a dead animal, electrocuted on powerlines in Salisbury. When the animal was retrieved for identification, it was found to have a young, dead pup attached – the first evidence of the species breeding in South Australia.

A small colony, containing about 30 bats, since discovered in the Adelaide Botanic Garden, includes several young and will be monitored closely by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

DENR Regional Ecologist Jason van Weenen said Grey-headed Flying-foxes are quite large bats, with a body size and wingspan about that of a crow.

He said the department was keen to learn if any other colonies of Flying-foxes were present in Adelaide.

"If people see any Grey-headed Flying Foxes, particularly when they are roosting during the day or leaving their roosts on dusk, we ask that they contact the DENR Adelaide Regional Office," he said.

"Flying-foxes are considered threatened both nationally and here in South Australia, and have experienced a serious decline in numbers in recent times, so it's important we look after them.

"It is very important that members of the public do not attempt to handle, disperse or frighten flying-foxes.

"If people find a sick or injured flying-fox or one trapped in fruit-netting, they should not touch it, but instead call DENR for advice.

"All sick or stressed wild animals can scratch or bite when handled and a very low percentage of flying-foxes carry diseases including Australian Bat Lyssavirus.

"In the unlikely event someone is bitten or scratched by a flying-fox, they should immediately wash the wound thoroughly with warm soapy water for five minutes and then seek medical advice as soon as possible."

Mr van Weenen said visitors to the Adelaide Botanic Gardens who see Flying-

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foxes should simply observe the bats quietly as disturbing them may cause the young to fall.

“Once the young flying-foxes are old enough to fly, it is likely the colony will be moved on,” he said.

“This is because flying-foxes have caused damage to historic plantings in botanic gardens interstate once colonies have become established and we are keen to avoid this in South Australia.”

Anyone who sees a Grey-headed Flying-fox, particularly when they are roosting during the day or leaving the roost on dusk, is encouraged to call the DENR Adelaide Regional Office on (08) 8336 0926 or email [FlyingFoxWatch@sa.gov.au](mailto:FlyingFoxWatch@sa.gov.au).

