

September 2012, Volume 10, Number 9
Shooting Australia's Flying Foxes

The state of Queensland in northeast Australia celebrated the country's Threatened Species Day on September 7 by reinstating fruit-growers' right to kill four species of flying foxes, including two that are threatened: the spectacled and grey-headed flying foxes. Conservation groups throughout Australia and elsewhere are urging the state to reconsider "and they need your help."

Queensland had banned the shooting of flying foxes four years ago after the state's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee ruled that it was inhumane. Many of these bats face a slow death after being wounded by shotgun pellets, and flying fox pups often die of thirst or starvation after their mothers are shot.

A new state regulation that exempts flying foxes from humaneness requirements under the Nature Conservation Act took effect September 7. Both species are listed as threatened under Australia's federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act of 1999.

Under the new regulation, up to 10,500 flying foxes can be shot legally each year. Conservationists warn, however, that many more are likely to be shot illegally and thousands of young bats will also die.

Australian bat experts note that appropriate netting is a more effective way to protect orchards from bats and birds than shotguns.

Bat Conservation International is calling for the immediate suspension of this shooting regulation and the establishment of a mitigation fund to help farmers net their orchards, protecting the fruit and the bats. This is a complex bat-conservation crisis and BCI is committed to working with Australia's conservationists, farmers and government officials to find a long-term solution.

Please let the government of Queensland know that people around the world are concerned about this tragic decision, which should be rescinded. Make your voice heard by sending an email or letter to Andrew Powell, Queensland's Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, at glass.house@parliament.qld.gov.au or GPO Box 2454, Brisbane, Queensland 4001, Australia. A sample letter is available [here](#).

All articles in this issue:

► [Shooting Australia's Flying Foxes](#)

The state of Queensland in northeast Australia celebrated the country's Threatened Species Day on September 7 by reinstating ...

► [A Webcast Full of Bats](#)

What can drive a famous bat biologist absolutely giddy with excitement? Or leave an experienced environmental educator speechless ...

► [Bats in the News](#)

Among many threats facing bats in Kenya is the common, age-old belief that the flying mammals are tied to witchcraft and evil. ...



*A grey-headed flying fox
pollinates a black-bean tree.
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