

RESEARCH

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Spectacled flying foxes: solutions for management

Project Leaders: Dr David Westcott (CSIRO) and Mr Peter Latch (QPWS)

Conservation and management of spectacled flying foxes represents one of the most pressing and contentious issues facing natural resource management in the Wet Tropics. Listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act due to a significant population decline and continued high levels of mortality, the species also causes significant damage to crops resulting in economic losses to industry. However, there exists:

- (1) a real and limiting lack of basic information on spectacled flying fox ecology and behaviour
- (2) a need for research into flying fox damage mitigation and relief, and
- (3) better consultation between and information delivery to stakeholders. This information is critical in order to develop and implement workable management solutions acceptable to all stakeholders.

This project broadly aims to develop management solutions that will enable spectacled flying fox conservation and a viable economic fruit growing industry to co-exist in the long-term. To achieve this the project will work closely with stakeholder groups in delivering research and management outcomes. Despite spectacled flying fox issues being north Queensland in nature, there is no regional forum for stakeholders to seek information, to express needs, discuss or coordinate. The project will establish a stakeholder forum to meet this need. The forum will

- coordinate information transfer
- link projects and efforts
- identify stakeholder research needs and participate in gaining research support for research in these areas (particularly 1 & 2 above)
- coordinate Institutional Planning workshops

A specific objective of the project is to identify the Rainforest CRC as an objective provider of scientific research and a reliable and objective broker of information. By drawing a diverse group of stakeholders into the process of designing a research strategy for management of a vulnerable species this project will represent a radical departure from the traditional adversarial public discussion of flying fox issues. The project will provide a forum for stakeholder concerns as well as providing a means for addressing those concerns through research and

collaboration. Because conflict between diametrically opposed interest groups is a common feature of conservation issues in Australia, the participatory design of this project will serve as a model for resolving similar conservation issues.

POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Leisa FISHER (UQ) Hons

Vocalisations and behaviour of the Spectacled flying-fox (Pteropus conspicillatus)

Jennifer PARSONS (JCU) Hons

Seed dispersal and pollination by Spectacled flying-foxes (Pteropus conspicillatus)

Silvana SPENA (JCU) Hons

Changes in the key characteristics of the threatened Tolga scrub (Mabi forest) due to the disturbance caused by the yellow crested cockatoo and flying foxes



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