



# HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

## ACTION ALERT

### Ask NSW Government to protect bats, not shoot them

14 April 2011

In recent days the newly appointed NSW Minister for Primary Industries has made some alarming statements regarding the grey-headed flying-fox. In her media release<sup>1</sup>, the Minister suggests that NSW may ask the Federal Government to reassess the listing of the grey-headed flying-fox under the EPBC Act and has also suggested further options are being considered for crop protection, which risks an increase in the barbaric and cruel practice of shooting of flying-foxes.

Flying-foxes are currently experiencing a protracted food crisis, resulting from higher than average rainfalls along eastern coastal areas since 2010, compounded by recent floods. As a result, many bats are turning up in areas where they have not historically been found, such as Orange in NSW. They are then taking advantage of readily available food sources such as those provided by orchardists due to the food crisis. It is this activity that has prompted the Minister to make her statements.

It is clear to HSI that the grey-headed flying-foxes in particular are under considerable stress. It is highly unlikely that numbers of the species have increased, in fact HSI suspects that the species may be in decline. Due to the nomadic nature of the species numbers of bats in an area can vary wildly from year to year. Increases in flying-fox sightings in one area or State cannot therefore be attributed to an increase or recovery of the species.

HSI needs your help to let the NSW Minister for Primary Industries and the NSW Minister for the Environment know the importance of the grey-headed flying-fox to the NSW environment, and to remind them of the need for rigorous independent scientific review before any decisions are made on the management of the grey-headed flying-fox.

HSI has written to the Ministers seeking an urgent meeting, but in the meantime we need your help. The NSW Government needs to hear your views.

#### ★ Action

Write to the Minister for Primary Industries, the **Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP** by email to [office@hodgkinson.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@hodgkinson.minister.nsw.gov.au) or by fax (02) 9228 5969

<sup>1</sup> Hodgkinson goes into bat for local farmers,  
[http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/385450/20110413-Med-Rel-Katrina-Hodgkinson-bats.pdf](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/385450/20110413-Med-Rel-Katrina-Hodgkinson-bats.pdf)

Write to the Minister for the Environment, the **Hon Robyn Parker MP** by email to [office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au) or by fax to (02) 9228 5763

Tell the Ministers that:

- the grey-headed flying fox was listed as vulnerable under State and Federal environmental legislation following a thorough, independent scientific process. Any decision about threatened species status must remain scientific and independent of politics.
- Flying-foxes continue to face a wide array of threats that will undermine their potential for recovery unless the NSW meets its obligations to conserve the species. Threats include continued loss of critical habitat (for both feeding and breeding), shooting, electrocution, barbed wire entanglements and more.
- The Government's election promise to support a grant for farmers to net their crops and to phase out shooting of flying-foxes was a sound conservation commitment. Full exclusion netting is the only proven method to protect crops from foraging flying-foxes. The simplistic approach of shooting bats is not effective, and is a barbaric practice with significant welfare implications.

Please write as soon as possible

*Please send us copies of any responses you receive.*

**Further information on HSI's campaigns at [www.hsi.org.au](http://www.hsi.org.au)**

***HSI concentrates on the preservation of endangered animals and ecosystems and works to ensure quality of life for all animals, both domestic and wild. HSI is the largest animal protection not-for-profit organisation in the world, with over 10 million supporters globally and has been established in Australia since 1994.***