

Bat Trapping – Mt Leura

Details, and photos, of the bat survey of the Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf Reserves that several of our Friends of Mt Leura members attended on 1st and 2nd April 2012.

“To say it was brilliant would be doing it quite an injustice – best 2 days of my 20 year involvement with the project,” Graham Arkinstall.

From not knowing anything about bats on the reserves –ie – no recorded data on DSE files – our bat expert (Rob Gration from Melbourne) was able to provide us with heaps. Rob was a very inclusive expert – his introductory talks on Sunday and Monday afternoons/evenings prior to us helping set up the Harp Traps were very informative about his previous bat experiences and bats in general. The 2 night-time trappings proved to be very successful with 33 bats captured by the 3 Harp Traps - 1 set up on a track inside the crater; 1 on track to town water tank and 1 on track near Lower Shelter.

Rob undertook a full data collection/recording for each capture – species identification, age, gender, weight and forearm length. This allowed all the participants a very close up look at all the bats. All are tiny – but the Little Forest bat is just soooo tiny, weighing a massive 4gm!!!!All participants attended the night time Harp Trap inspections and collections.

Of the 10 bats possible to be found in our region the result of our survey was quite terrific – 8 different species were recorded as being present on the reserves. 7 species were recorded from the Harp Trap captures and 1 identified by Rob from being heard. The 7 trapped species identified were: Little Forest Bat, Southern Forest Bat, Large Forest Bat, Chocolate Wattled Bat, Gould’s Wattled Bat, Lesser Long-eared Bat and Eastern False Pipistrelle whilst the other bat heard (by some) was the White-striped Freetail Bat.

Rob was especially excited about the Eastern False Pipistrelle which apparently is quite uncommon and in Rob’s experience only ever found in very mature forest settings.

Overall the bat monitoring was a huge endorsement for all the years of work done by the volunteers who have assisted with the indigenous revegetation of the reserves. Well done everyone!!!!