

Fact sheet

April 2023



Purpose

This fact sheet provides advice to local councils on managing the threatened microbat, Southern Myotis (*Myotis macropus*), when undertaking demolition, replacement and other works on timber and concrete bridges and culverts.

This information sheet should be read in conjunction with the Transport for NSW (Transport) [Microbat Management Guidelines](#).

Southern Myotis roosts and breeds in bridges & culverts

Timber and concrete bridges as well as culverts often support breeding habitat for the threatened microbat, Southern Myotis (*Myotis macropus*). Potential impacts of construction activities on this species include:

- abandonment of important breeding sites
- local extinctions of Southern Myotis populations
- disruption to key lifecycle stages (breeding, birthing, raising young)
- mortality or injury during construction
- cumulative impacts (several projects being undertaken within 20 kilometres at the same time).

If the project is located east of the Great Dividing Range and is located over or within 200 metres of water (e.g., river or creek), then it is likely that the threatened Southern Myotis will be found roosting and breeding in the bridge or culvert. The species may also be found inland along major rivers. Other threatened microbats can be found roosting in bridges and culverts, but only the Southern Myotis breeds in them.

Environmental impact assessment

When undertaking an “activity” under Part 5 of the [Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979](#) (EP&A Act), Councils must assess whether the “activity is likely to have a significant impact on threatened species and their habitat”.

If habitat for threatened animals is damaged (or removed) this could constitute an offence under s2.1 of the NSW [Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016](#) (BC Act). However, defences include actions undertaken in accordance with Part

5 of the EP&A Act “after compliance with that Part” and so proper consideration of likely impacts of activities on threatened microbats is important.

The following steps will minimise the risk of significant impacts to the Southern Myotis and should be undertaken as part of environmental impact assessment process:

1. Engage a suitably-qualified ecologist to survey the structure for the presence of microbats, the extent of habitat and assess the likely significance of potential impacts in accordance with s7.3 of the BC Act. Transport can provide a brief template to assist council to engage a suitably-qualified ecologist to undertake this work.
2. Where Southern Myotis are present or likely to be present, potential impacts should be mitigated. The [Microbat Management Guidelines](#) provide a useful resource and includes triggers when a microbat management plan (MMP) prepared by a microbat specialist is warranted.

Management strategies

There are many strategies that can be put in place as part of a MMP to protect Southern Myotis using bridges including:

- careful timing of works to avoid impacts during the breeding period from October to April
- excluding microbats from their habitat prior to impacts
- providing alternate ‘bat box’ habitat nearby
- creating habitat in new structures
- staging construction activities over time
- noise mitigation.

MMPs require input from a microbat specialist. A microbat specialist is a person who has:

- minimum of three years’ experience as an ecologist with extensive microbat experience
- a NPWS scientific licence and Animal Care and Ethics Committee approval
- current Lyssavirus (ABVL) vaccinations.

For more information and to obtain a copy of the brief for microbat survey and assessment contact Julie Ravallion (Senior Specialist – Biodiversity) julie.ravallion@transport.nsw.gov.au.