

What are they called?

Scientific: *Pteropus anetianus*

Other English:

White flying-fox, red flying fox,

French:

Bislama: Waet flaeng fokis

Vernacular (local name):

There are lots of local names. Here are a few: Togol (Vanua Lava), Gelei berass (Ambrym) Nalvahan (Aneityum).

A little bit about them:

The Vanuatu flying foxes can be found in the same areas as the bigger black flying fox but the black ones tend to roost in large groups in big canopy trees such as the nabanga (banyan) whereas the Vanuatu flying foxes roost in small groups in smaller trees often coconuts. They feed on fruit and flowers of trees such as figs, bananas, breadfruit and coconut. They can be seen flying during the day more often than the other flying foxes in Vanuatu. They live on many islands in Vanuatu: Ambae, Ambrym, Aneityum, Aore, Efate, Emae, Emao, Epi, Erromango, Espirito Santo, Gaua, Lopevi, Maewo, Malakula, Malo, Moto Lava, Nguna, Pentecost, Tongoa, Ureparapara and Vanua lava. There are seven different subspecies.

What do they look like?

They have a yellow fur all over their bodies, black wings, no tail and large eyes.

This is a medium sized flying fox and their bodies are 18-20 cm in length. They are bigger than the Bank's flying foxes and have bigger teeth but are smaller than the pacific flying fox (black flying fox).



Did you know?

- They are culturally significant: On Vao, Malekula, they have links to myths about the origin of men.
- There are sand drawings and custom stories about flying foxes.

Vanuatu flying fox are classified as Vulnerable (VU) on the IUCN Red List.

Why are they threatened?

- Their range (where they live) is very small and fragmented.
- They are hunted for food by people, especially after cyclones.
- Their habitat is threatened by agriculture, being cut down to make new gardens and other development.

What do they do for us?

- They pollinate many plants including food producing plants.
- They disperse seeds. This can be important for reestablishing vegetation after disturbance such as cyclones.
- As they fly they can cycle nutrient around the forest.
- The guano can be used as a fertilizer.
- Roosting sites could be tourist attractions.

What can we do for them?

- ✓ Identify roosting sites and protect them.
- ✓ If people want to eat flying fox they should hunt the pacific flying fox (also know as the black flying fox) as it is not threatened with extinction and not eat the flying foxes that are threatened including the Bank's Flying Fox

Want to know more?

- ❖ Read their profiles in the Book ***Mammals of the South-West Pacific & Moluccan Islands***. By Tim Flannery
- ❖ Visit: www.iucnredlist.org

