



A female grey-headed flying fox carries her small pup as she heads for cover. Its habitat is slowly diminishing, raising concerns Adelaide's colony may die off. Picture: Supplied

HOLDING ON TO WHAT'S LEFT

MICHELLE ETHERIDGE

ABOUT 150ha of threatened species habitat has been cleared in Adelaide over the past two decades, a report shows, amid calls for a cash injection to save animals hanging on by a thread.

The Australian Conservation Foundation report shares the plight of 22 threatened plant and animal populations in Adelaide.

It says more than 7.7 million hectares of habitat was lost across the country over the past 20 years. In Adelaide, the cleared habitat is the size of 84 Adelaide Ovals. The grey-headed flying fox and Australasian bittern, both found in Adelaide, were among the most affected species.

Flinders University Professor Corey Bradshaw said climate change threatened the Botanic Garden's flying fox colony's future. "We've had several heatwaves since 2010 and lost a substantial proportion of the colony. We're going to

see lots of mass die-offs – we could lose the colony entirely." Many of the state's native bird species have been threatened by mismanagement of the Murray-Darling Basin, Prof Bradshaw said, along with the removal of large trees.

He said the city needed better linkages between parkland habitat, stronger legislation to guard against native vegetation clearance and policy changes to select street trees for habitat.

A cash injection for environmental agencies and councils throughout the country would help ensure environmental damage was accurately measured and addressed, he said.

The Australian Conservation Foundation is calling for a \$4.5bn National Environmental Fund to support the long-term protection and recovery of threatened species across Australia.

It also wants stronger environment laws and an independent regulator.

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