

Sugar Glider Monitoring

July 24th 2012

Asha, Jill and myself met up at the park at 11am. Terry was unable to make it along this month and help was greatly missed. With another sunny day in tow, the 3 of us headed down to Main Flat to conduct the check.

Along the way we stopped to chat with Joe and help load up the old toilet block tank onto his vehicle. This month we were lucky enough to obtain a pole camera from the Darebin Council to trial for the day. We are hoping to purchase our very own pole camera to assist in glider monitoring and reduce the need for the ladders.

Jill, Asha and myself while waiting for the pole camera to arrive, started checking boxes along Main Flat.

First off the rank was MF9, which we repaired and placed back up in April. To our surprise this month there was finally a glider in there, however not one of nest material. Quite possibly taking refuge from previous night.



his

him



bit
the



MF9 with a lonely (and cold) glider

We then
2, which
Terry
were



headed straight across the track too box
Asha and I had put up one afternoon after
had made some repairs to the lid. We
delighted to see that once again gliders

have moved back in and were quite happy with their newly repaired home.....

Box 2 with 2 gliders

SG1 completely covered over, no chance of counting gliders inside

Once again counting individual gliders proved to be difficult as nests are continuing to be covered over by the gliders. We wonder how many are in there if any?

SG2 covered over as well.

There were a few boxes that had nest material in them but no gliders. It is good to see that they are being used but we wonder where all the gliders are hiding.



SG4 with material



nest

Halfway through our check, Brendan and Joe joined us down on Main Flat with the pole camera. Brendan spent some time explaining to us how it worked and certain methods we might consider using when checking for gliders. Once we had the basics Joe and Brendan left us to try it out.

To explain it simply... there is a camera on top of a pole that is angled to be able to look into a nest box. While one person manoeuvres the camera either through the hole at the front of the nest box or under the lid, the other person looks at a monitor showing a live infra-red image of the contents of the box.



Jill looking live on the monitor



box or inside at the feed

At first it was hard to comprehend the image but once we found a box with a glider inside, it was quite clear as to what we needed to look for. The only issue we found was that it was difficult to count individual gliders.

Jill and Asha using the pole camera

Kara testing out the pole

In preparation for further checks with a pole camera, the three of us walked around with the ladder and unlatched the lids on boxes that are inaccessible through the hole at the front. So hopefully next time there will be no need for a ladder except for when boxes need to be removed for repairs.



MF5 – Up to 3 gliders inside!

Our resident family in MF4, who have been there every month we have been checking, were not there this month. However, I just had a thought that maybe the above group of gliders we recorded in MF5 may be the family missing from MF4. Both MF4 & MF5 are located no more than 2metres away from each other. It's only a hunch that they are exploring another box close to home. As we are unable to identify individuals, it is also quite possible that it may not be the family from MF4. I will keep you updated on this theory; the male always in MF4 has a distinctive cloudy left eye so if we can identify him in this box then we will know for certain that he and his family have moved across from MF4.

After having some fun unlatching and checking boxes with the pole camera along Main Flat, we walked across to Red Gum Flat. A bit of extra work this month as we had to carry the ladder across rather than Terry drive it over!!! (haha)

Box 12 and RG5, which were placed up on either side of the road along Red Gum Flat last month both were empty this month. Box 11 was still home to two or three gliders.



RG11

RG8 still plays home for four gliders, and RG9 we did not check this month, usually has some possums inside.



RG8 – 4 or so gliders



Kara and Jill holding the ladder for Asha at RG8!!

This month Jackson's Creek was still a little too high to cross, so hopefully next month we will be able to check the 4 boxes across there. In the future, during winter when the creek is in flood we will not be checking across the creek at all, boxes will be checked only a few months per year.



We also managed to spot a sleeping Brushtail on the way back to the car. He was quite content, having built himself a home in the fork of a gum tree near Rosette Rock.

We finished in good time and returned the camera to Joe. We are looking forward to experimenting with the new camera when it is available and finding the best ways to use it for our glider checks. Thank you to Joe and Brendan for your help with the camera and to Jill for helping carry the ladder!

~ Kara & Asha ~

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action
2	2+		
MF6		Nest material	Lid
3		Nest material	
5		Empty	
SG1	?	Covered over nest material	
SG2	?	Covered over nest material	
6		Nest material	
SG3		Ants	Opened
8		2 Ringtails	
MF5	3	Some nest material	
SG5		Nest material	
SG4		Nest material	
MF4		Nest material	Lid
SG6		Bees	
MF3		Empty	
7		Honeycomb, no bees	Needs repairing
4		Bees	
MF9	1	No nest material	
BW6		N/A	
BW2		N/A	
BW5		N/A	
10		N/A	
11	2+	Covered over nest material	
RG8	3+		Lid
RG9		N/A	
RG10		Old nest material	
RG5		Empty	
12		Empty	



Next Checked to be confirmed!

Sugar Gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*)

Organ Pipes National Park

Date -24th July 2012

Total no. checked = **23**

Total Gliders= **11+**

