

# ORGAN PIPES NATIONAL PARK

## SUGAR GLIDER MONITORING

**October 2012**

(Conducted 8<sup>th</sup> November)

Once again we had a perfect sunny day for Glider checking! This month we were joined by Camilla Bartlett (she will be serving food at the anniversary on Sunday, so we made sure to be extra nice to her!) and our fellow Deakin students Lucy Carracher and Rowan Walker. Unfortunately Terry was unable to make it this time.



***The team walking over to Red Gum Flat!***

We decided to carry the ladder to the end of Red Gum Flat and work our way back from there, so the first box we checked was RG12. This was one of the new boxes that Terry put up last month. It was empty except for a few spiders. The next box to be checked was RG11, which was placed up back in August. We were surprised, but delighted, to find three adult gliders and a juvenile! As you can see by the photo it was absolutely gorgeous and only about ten centimetres long, not including the tail.

As sugar gliders usually give birth between July and August (so I have read, so please correct me if I am wrong) it would be expected that this juvenile would only be 2 – 3 months old! ( Very cute!).



***RG11- Hard to see in photo's but an extremely juvenile sugar glider with 3 family members(Bottom of photo)***



***RG11- One very cute juvenile sugar glider!***

RG8 and RG9 are both still home to Brushtail possums. We are leaving them be for now, but if they are absent next check we plan to fix the latch on the lid to give gliders a chance to reclaim the box. Not a great photo, but we didn't want to agitate him/her further!



***MG9- Brushtail possum***

Box 11 contained at least three gliders. One of these was a male (identified by the obvious scent gland on his forehead) with a partially clouded over right eye. We have seen this in a couple of other gliders before and we are not sure what could be causing it. There seems to be too many for it to be a coincidence, so it could be caused by a disease of some kind. As we have only seen this in male gliders, it's possible that it may be some kind of genetic disorder.



***Box 11 – 3 Gliders, You can just make out the cloudy right eye on this male.***

After checking all the boxes along Red Gum Flat, we then proceeded to Main Flat, taking it in turns to carry the awkward ladder!! We stopped numerous times along the way to observe some birds including Dusky Wood swallows and a Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike showing nesting behaviour. We also paid a visit to the new toilets, exciting times!!



***Black –faced Cuckoo-shrike nesting along Red Gum Flat***

Instead of splitting up to check boxes this month we decided to work as one team along Main Flat. Boxes 7, 4 and MF5 are currently taken over by bees. It's quite frustrating as only last month Terry had put newly repaired box 7 back up for gliders. SG6 was cleaned of honeycomb last month and left hanging upside down.

SG5 had six gliders snuggled up cosily in a tangle of faces, tails and tiny claws. It was an interesting find as there have never been any gliders observed in SG5 since Robert Bender put the box up in August 2011. The 'family' that Terry and Kara recorded last month in MF3 was not their month. So assuming it is the same group of gliders moving around utilising nest boxes, they have been recorded in MF4 from January to July, then MF5 in August, MF3 in September and now SG5 in October. All of these nest boxes are separated only by a few metres!



***SG5 – A happy family***



Box 2, SG3 and SG4 have also been invaded by ants. These boxes were propped open.

Next to be checked was MF4 which was only put up last month after being repaired. There was only one glider inside. We are so happy to see the gliders making use of the homes we put up for them! This one looked a bit alone in comparison to those in SG5, but perhaps it was happy to have some personal space!



***MF4 – a sugar glider’s mansion***



***Lucy up the ladder checking MF4!***

We headed across to check box 8, usually home to a Ringtail possum, this month there was nobody home!

Asha and Camilla had to leave us as they had other commitments to attend to. So it left Lucy, Rowan and Kara to check the remaining 10 boxes.

MF9 was checked first and to our surprise there was a little face staring at us as we opened the lid!



***MF9- Home to one glider***

The next few boxes to be checked MF6 and boxes 3, 5 & 6 had nesting material in them showing evidence of use by gliders at some stage. There are only a small number of our 30 nest boxes that actually don't have any form of nesting material in them. All the rest shows signs of it. This is great news!

SG1 was the 2<sup>nd</sup> last box to be checked and boy was there a good find in this box! A 'family' of four gliders were inside including another two juveniles!!! Both the same size as the one we had seen earlier in the day!



***SG1- two young gliders with a very protective family member***

This is such an amazing observation. Not only are the gliders starting to utilise nesting boxes, they are also showing great signs of breeding and population increase. This month all records were broken, we had our first sightings of juveniles and it was also the first time in 10 months we had recorded 19 gliders during one of our checks. We did not check boxes across the creek and assuming the gliders recorded their last month are still there this month, it would have taken our total to 20 -21 gliders!!

All in all we had a very successful day. Thanks to Lucy, Rowan and Camilla for coming along to help. Since there were so many cute baby gliders, I have added a few extra photo's below from our day! Until next month....

*~ Asha & Kara~*



*SG1- one of the curious juveniles*



*SG1 - Juvenile*





***RG11 - Juvenile***



***RG11- Juvenile***



***SG5 – Sleepy adult gliders***



***SG5 – Adult glider waving at us!***



***SG5- Adult glider that looks like a gremlin!***

## Sugar Gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*) Organ Pipes National Park

Date - 8/10/12

### Main Flat- left side of track from Pump shed

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
2	-	ANTS	Propped open with stick
MF6	-	Nest material	Needs new lid
3	-	Nest material	-
5	-	Nest material	-
SG1	<b>4</b>	2 adults and 2 juveniles ( approx. 10cm in length, not including tail)	-
SG2	-	Nest material, ANTS	Propped open with stick
6	-	Nest material	-
SG3	-	ANTS	Propped open with stick
8	-	Empty	-
MF5	-	Bees	Need removing
SG5	<b>6</b>	Nest material	-
SG4	-	ANTS	Propped open with stick
MF4	<b>1</b>	Nest material also	-

### Main Flat- Left side of track from Organ Pipes

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
<b>SG6</b>	-	No bees	Carpet on lid? Further clean out
<b>MF3</b>	-	Nest Material	
<b>7</b>	-	Bees	-
<b>4</b>	-	Bees	-
<b>MF9</b>	<b>1</b>	Some nest material	-

### Black Wattle Flat- Across creek from pump shed

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
<b>BW6</b>		N/A	
<b>BW2</b>		N/A	
<b>BW5</b>		N/A	
<b>10</b>		N/A	

### Red Gum Flat- Right side of track from Organ Pipes

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
11	3	Male with cloudy eye	Lid needs new latch
12	-	Empty	-
RG5	-	Empty	-
RG8	-	Brushtail	Replace at some stage
RG9	-	Brushtail	Replace at some stage
RG10	-	Empty	-
RG11	4	Including 1 juvenile	-
RG12	-	Empty	-

TOTAL GLIDERS = **19!!!**

TOTAL BOXES CHECKED = **26**

**NEXT MONTHS CHECK TO BE ADVISED!**



*Half of the team taking time by the creek after a long day (from left):  
Rowan, Lucy and Kara*

