



# ORGAN PIPES NATIONAL PARK SUGAR GLIDER MONITORING

**June 2013**  
**(conducted 17<sup>th</sup> June)**

A nice cold and rainy day for our June check! Asha and I meet Terry at the park along with 10 other volunteers!! Grant Coverdale, Nicci Kneisel, and Rowan Walker from Deakin University, Sam Ellis from RMIT, Sam Guyett from LaTrobe Uni and Eva who also helps Robert with his bat checks. We also had some special guests from Bullengarook Landcare, Glenda Dodd, Ronelle Welton, Caitlin Skelton and her son Beau came along as their group has been successful in obtaining funding for a 'Communities for Nature Grant'. Their project will focus on nest boxes for arboreal mammals at Bullengarook. They were keen to learn about our project and how best they could help Gliders in their area.

More good news this month with Terry picking up our new nest box inspection camera! Terry opened up the VC and the group spent a few minutes inside getting to know each other and testing out the new camera.



***Asha setting up the new camera in the field***

It is yet to be attached to a pole, but we thought we could give it a test run out in the field during this check, so when we use it solely for nest box checks we will understand fully how it operates. It is extremely light weight and proved to be a great addition to our project.

We piled into our vehicles and made our way down to the pump shed, a few walked down also. Once there, we split into two teams and began checking along Main Flat.



***Sam, E, Nicci, Eva, Rowan, Asha and Grant trying out the camera on MF6.***

The cooler weather I think, has contributed once again to a number of covered over nests and lower glider numbers. There were a number of nests filled with nesting material but there was no sign of gliders. Terry, the Landcare group and Sam.G checked the left side of the track; they did not find one glider, which was disappointing both for them and our project.





***MF9 – old nest material***

SG6 still showed no signs of glider activity, a few months ago it was teaming with an active beehive, they soon disappeared and we cleaned the box out so it would be available for gliders.

Along the right side of the track, our group had a little more luck. Box 3 had two gliders inside; we used the new camera to look inside. It is able to take video footage as well as capture still images, so we took a few pictures. The only thing that is a little difficult is identifying how many gliders there actually are on the camera screen. This is where looking with our own eyes helps with accuracy. But as you can see from the picture below, technology is definitely the way to go.



***MF3- covered over, but empty nest***



***Box 3 – two gliders inside!***

SG3 had two gliders inside, the second sighting of them in this box since it was put up by Robert almost 2 years ago. Box 8 used to be home to a ringtail, but was empty again this month and will be taken down and repaired, making it available for sugar gliders.

Box 6 also had 2 gliders inside, and they were a nice unexpected surprise as we usually don't see gliders in this nest box.



***SG6- Completely empty and collecting cobwebs.***





***Box 6 – two gliders***

When checking SG1, Sam noticed a dead glider inside; this is the second one in this box this year. All the gliders that we have ever witnessed dead have been juveniles, there are number of obvious reasons but we are not too know why this is occurring. Are they being neglected, not enough food, temperature in the box not suitable? It really is just too hard to understand what element or combination of elements may be causing this. So, for the moment documenting these sightings is important.



***Small dead glider in SG1***

We met the other team at the last few boxes along main Flat, checking SG4 together. Once again it was filled with ants, it was propped open and we moved on to Red Gum Flat.



***SG4 – filled with ants***

Terry's team took the right side of the track and Asha and I took our team along the left side next to the creek. We checked the new boxes we had placed up last month. Both RG6 & 7 were completely empty, no signs of gliders just yet.

Terry and his team checked box 12, it was home to 2 gliders this month, two month ago there had been 4 in here including the female with the missing eye.



***Box 12 – a covered over nest, you can just see a glimpse of the gliders in the centre.***



They then checked box 11, and to their surprise there was a ringtail possum inside. I am not sure how it found its way in there, but it was definitely comfy.



***Box 11- A ringtail possum***

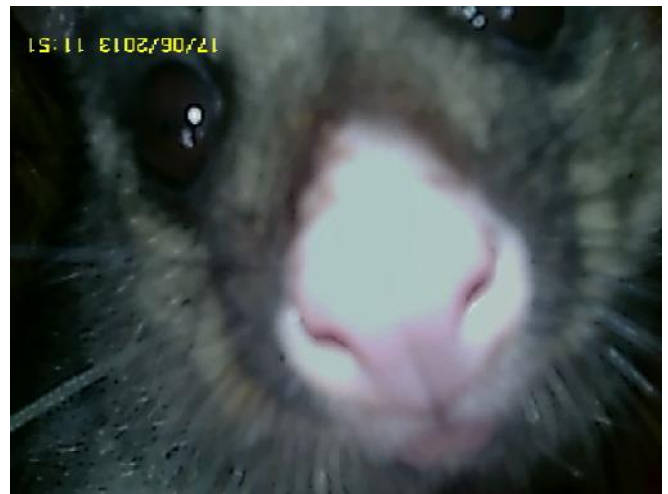


***Terry, Sam, Glenda, Ronelle, Caitlin and Beau looking inside box 12.***

Continuing along Red Gum Flat, Asha and I were keen to use the inspection camera to look inside RG8 & 9, both of these boxes have resident brushtail possums inside and are usually hard to check as the boxes are on a weird angle. Placing the camera in the boxes gave us clear picture of two relatively calm brushtail possums.



***RG8 – Hello!***



***RG9- an inquisitive brushtail***

We caught up to Terry and the team at RG11 where there were also 2+ gliders inside. The nest was extremely covered over, but we could see just a hint of a nose poking out of the leaves.



***RG11- A covered over nest with 2 gliders inside.***

We checked RG12 all together, it was full to the top with nesting material and it was too difficult to determine if anything was inside. Caitlin, Beau and Sam.G left us early.

Terry took some time to tell our volunteers about the history of Tessellated Pavement and how we plan to extend our project beyond it to Rubble Flat at some stage.

Although we didn't find many gliders this month, it was great meeting a number of new faces and introducing them to our project. We hope that we were helpful for the ladies from Bullengarook Landcare and would like to wish them all the best with starting up their nesting box project.

On the way back, we met Joe who kindly took the ladders back to the pump shed on his Ute. We made our way back up to the VC, made a cuppa and spent some time talking amongst ourselves. It was a great way to finishing off the cold day.

We would especially like to thank Parks Victoria and Brimbank Council for the funding for our new inspection camera; it really is appreciated and will no doubt help our project with efficiency and most importantly safety. So thank you!

Thank you too all our volunteers, who braced the cold rainy weather and helped us on the day. Next month we will be planting Black Wattles along Black Wattle Flat.

*~ Kara, Asha and Terry~*

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

Date - 19/04/13

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

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
2	-	Nest material	-
MF6	-	Nest material	Needs new lid
3	<b>2</b>	Nest material	-
5	-	Ants, Nest material	-
SG1	<b>1</b>	1 deceased	Propped open
SG2	-	Nest material	-
6	<b>2</b>	Nest material	-
SG3	<b>2</b>	1 GLIDER	-
8	-	Empty	No lid, to be removed
MF5	-	Nest material	-
SG5	-	Nest material	-
SG4	-	Ants	Propped open
MF4	-	Empty, nest material	-

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

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
<b>SG6</b>	-	Empty	-
<b>MF3</b>	-	Some nest material	-
<b>7</b>	-	Empty	-
<b>4</b>	-	Bees	-
<b>MF9</b>	-	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

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
11	-	Ringtail possum	-
12	2		-
RG5	-	Empty	-
RG6	-	Empty	
RG7	-	Empty	
RG8	-	Brushtail possum	Lid needs repair
RG9	-	Brushtail possum	Lid needs repair, reposition box
RG10	-	Old nest material	Lid needs repair, reposition box
RG11	2+	Nest covered over	-
RG12	-	Nest material, covered over too much to tell	-

TOTAL GLIDERS = 10

TOTAL BOXES CHECKED = 28

NEXT MONTHS CHECK : To be advised!



*The Team at Rosette Rock- (top from left) Rowan, Nicci, Grant, Sam, Glenda, Terry & Kara, (bottom from left) Ronelle, Asha and Eva*