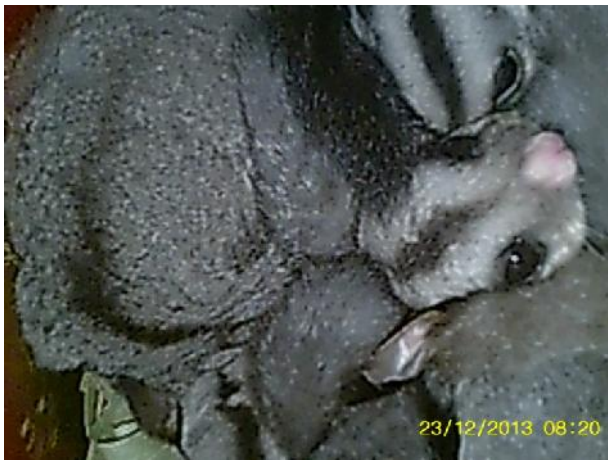


ORGAN PIPES NATIONAL PARK SUGAR GLIDER MONITORING

December 2013
(conducted 23rd December)

We were lucky to have had a lot of helpers for our Sugar glider nest box check two days before Christmas. Terry and Kara started off by checking the boxes over the creek on Black Wattle Flat while Cath, Micah, Lloyd, Fenella, Talitha, Lawrence, Jeremiah and I walked down from the car park to meet them at the pump shed. We were thrilled that there were at least five gliders using Box 8, which was repaired and put up on Black Wattle Flat only a couple of months ago.



A family of gliders in Box 8

We then started to check the boxes on Main Flat together. As we walked we were kept entertained and in the Christmas spirit by jokes that Micah and Lloyd made up, such as:

Q: What do you call someone who is afraid of Santa Claus?

A: Claus-traphobic!

We found Sugar gliders present in seven of the boxes on Main Flat and nesting material in seven others. Two males in SG6 had the cloudy eye which we have seen in Sugar gliders at Organ Pipes NP often in the past. One had a cloudy right eye, the other a cloudy left eye.



Box 3- the scent gland on the head of the right glider indicates that he is a male



Sugar glider nesting material



SG1- this male made it clear that he was not happy to be woken up!



SG6- two males present with cloudy eyes

We stopped by the Organ Pipes to take a group photo, and nearby we spotted a very full nest of Dusky wood swallow chicks toughing out the wet weather. Their parents were perched nearby keeping a close eye on them.



Three Dusky wood swallow chicks in their nest

After that everyone had to head off except for Kara and me, so the two of us headed to Red Gum Flat to check the remainder of the boxes. On Red Gum Flat we found seven gliders, as well as a Ring-tailed possum, a Brush-tailed possum and even a bat using the boxes.



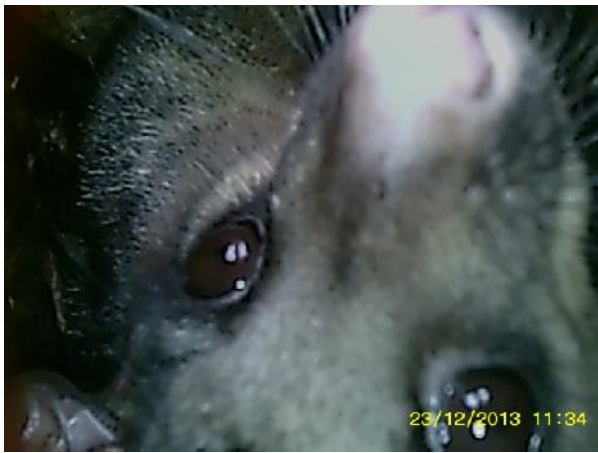
RG6- Four Sugar gliders, one with a missing right eye



Box 11- a bat taking shelter in an old Ringtail possum nest



RG10- Ringtail possum



RG9- Brushtail possum (photo taken using the pole camera)



Photo of Asha and Kara checking boxes using the pole camera

When we finished checking Box 11, we turned around to see one of the resident Swamp wallabies munching on an acacia behind us. He/she was unconcerned by our presence, so we watched him/her for a bit and took some photos.



Swamp wallaby looking very relaxed and happy

As those of you who regularly read our reports may remember, quite a few of the Sugar gliders at Organ Pipes NP show signs of cloudy or missing eyes. We cannot know for sure if the cloudy and missing eyes are connected in any way, as the missing eyes may have been lost in glider disputes. However, we have considered the possibility that the cloudy eyes could be an infection or genetic disease which leads to loss of the eye. While looking at the gliders in RG12, we noticed that one of the gliders was showing symptoms that we have not observed before. His left eye was swollen and weepy, but not yet cloudy. We wonder if this could be the beginning stages of the other eye problems. We are hoping to find out what is causing these symptoms soon if we can.



RG12- Three Sugar gliders including one male



RG12- Closer view of the male with a swollen and weepy eye

Overall for the day we observed twenty-six Sugar gliders using nest boxes. We all got a bit wet at some points, but everyone had a good time.

Thank you to our volunteers for coming along and helping out. We hope that everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a happy new year.

~ Asha, Kara & Terry~

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

Date - 23/12/13

Main Flat- left side of track from Pump shed

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
2	-	Nest material	-
MF6	-	Fresh nest material	-
3	2	1 male	-
5	-	Nest material	-
SG1	1	Nest material	-
SG2	-	Nest material	-
6	-	Nest material	-
SG3	2	NEST MAERIAL	-
MF5	-	Nest material	-
SG5	1	Nest material, 1 male	-
SG4	-	Empty	-
MF4	2	Nest material	-
MF2	-	Empty	-

Main Flat- Left side of track from Organ Pipes

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
SG6	5	1 male cloudy left eye 1 male cloudy right eye	-
MF3	1	Some nest material	-
7	-	Empty	-
4	-	Bees	-
MF9	-	Nest Material	-

Black Wattle Flat- Across creek from pump shed

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
BW1	-	Empty, needs re-positioning	Re-position
BW6	-	Old, nest material	Shorten pipe
BW2	-	Empty	Replace
8	5+	Empty	-
10	-	Nest Material	Needs new bolt

Red Gum Flat

Box	Gliders	Comments	Action Required
11	-	1 bat, old Ringtail possum nest	-
12	-	Nest material	-
RG5	-	Empty	-
RG6	4	Possibly young present, 1 missing right eye	-
RG7	-		-
RG8	-	N/A	Being replaced
RG9	-	Brushtail possum	Lid needs repair, reposition box
RG10	-	1 Ringtail possum	Lid needs repair, reposition box
RG11	-	Nest material	-
RG12	3	1 male swollen left eye	-

TOTAL GLIDERS = **26**

TOTAL BOXES CHECKED = **32**

NEXT MONTHS CHECK : To be advised!



The group taking some time down by the Organ Pipes, enjoying the spectacular view.

Don't forget to like us on Facebook, you can even see some video footage of the gliders in their nest boxes!

www.facebook.com/FriendsofOrganPipes

