



ORGAN PIPES NATIONAL PARK SUGAR GLIDER MONITORING

Thursday 19th November 2015

9:00 am signalled the start of our latest Sugar Glider nest box check. We started earlier than normal to try to avoid the hottest part of a very hot day! It is interesting to note that many of the gliders were more active in the boxes than normal. They were more responsive to our presence and the presence of the pole camera looking in, which normally doesn't seem to bother them too much. This may have been due to the warm weather- we all know how hard it is to sleep when it's hot! We were careful to create as little disturbance as possible. For this reason we were unable to check RG12, however we know that at least one glider was using the box, as s/he poked their head out of the entrance hole as we approached.

Rowan and Robert were along to help us again, so we had a great team for the day. We ran into a bit of trouble with some unexpected flat batteries in the pole camera, so Terry kindly drove off to buy some while the rest of us started checking boxes with the ladder. Once Terry got back, we were able to split into teams to check

boxes with the ladder and pole camera at the same time.



Rowan and Asha checking Box 8 with the pole camera

The first box we checked with the pole camera had two adults and two lovely juveniles inside. We saw at least four young gliders in boxes throughout the day, but we suspect there may have been more, as it can be hard to distinguish bodies when using the pole camera. This is the time of year when we normally see high numbers

of juvenile gliders in the park- other years we have seen as many as fourteen in one box!



Two adults and two juveniles in Box 2



As you can see, the adults are much more inquisitive about the camera than normal!

If you look closely at the picture below, you should be able to see the rump of a juvenile glider in the top left corner.



Two adults and one juvenile in SG1

We found a few interesting surprises in boxes this check, including a bat in SG6. The bat flew out of the box as soon as it was opened, which meant we could prop it open to deter the ants that had also taken up residence. We also found a dead bird in an empty glider nest in SG5. It may have entered by itself, or been taken in by a glider for food. It was so decayed when we found it that it was unidentifiable.

We also found three birds nests in glider boxes. We have had birds build nests in glider boxes occasionally before, but this was more than we have previously seen. The nest material filled most of the box, with a hollowed centre. In one we were able to see three eggs.



Three birds eggs in a nest in Box 12

The pole camera wasn't able to show the colour of the eggs very clearly, so here is a picture we took of the same box last year:



Bird nest and egg in Box 12 (Nov 2014)

We're unsure exactly what bird species is building these nests- perhaps Tree Martins or Grey Shrikethrush? If anyone has any ideas, please shoot us an email!

A couple of other interesting observations were a rat in BW12 and a Ring-tailed Possum climbing around in broad daylight (not looking very well).

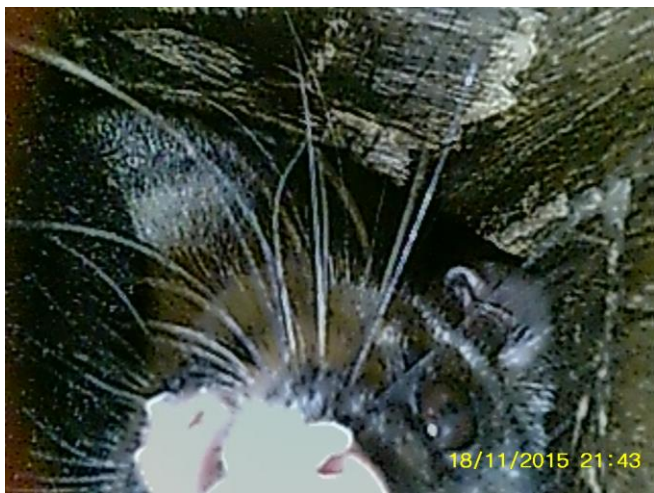


Rat in BW12 on Black Wattle Flat



Possum in broad daylight- right of the nest box

As always Brush-tailed Possums were in both RG8 and RG9, but we were excited to see two of our possum boxes being used. One contained a Brush-tailed Possum and the other was home to a Ring-tailed Possum and her juvenile.



Brush-tailed Possum in RG8



Juvenile Ring-tailed Possum in P2 with its mother

Our total Sugar Glider count for the day was 26 individuals- one less than last year. It was a great day, although a fair bit hotter than our checks usually are! We had a few coffee breaks to ease the day along and had a nice chat with the local Green Army team. Many thanks to Robert and Rowan for all their help, many hands make light work!



Terry and Rowan checking a nest box using the pole camera



Our team for the day- Kara, Rowan, Asha, Terry, and Robert- at Rosette Rock

Our next monitoring day is going to be in February- we'll send out an exact date closer to the time. We hope everyone has a magical holiday season and we look forward to seeing you in the new year!



~ Asha, Kara, and Terry ~

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

Date – 19/11/2015

Main Flat- Left side of track from Pump shed

| Box | Gliders | Comments | Action Required |
|-----|---------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 2 | 4 | 2 adults, 2 young | - |
| MF6 | - | Nest material | - |
| 3 | - | Nest material | - |
| 5 | - | Fresh nest? | Remove |
| SG1 | 3 | 1 juvenile | - |
| SG2 | - | Nest material | - |
| 6 | - | Bird nest, empty | - |
| SG3 | - | Nest material | - |
| MF5 | - | Old nest material | - |
| SG5 | - | Dead bird | - |
| SG4 | - | Covered over nest material | - |
| MF4 | - | Nest material | - |
| MF2 | - | Nest material | - |
| | | | |

Main Flat- Left side of track from Organ Pipes

| Box | Gliders | Comments | Action Required |
|-----|---------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| MF1 | 3 | 2 adults, 1 young | - |
| SG6 | - | Ants, 1 bat, nest material | Propped open |
| MF3 | 5 | Nest material | - |
| 7 | 3+ | Nest material | - |
| 4 | - | No bees anymore | Remove |
| MF9 | - | Old leaves | Latch needs fixing |

Black Wattle Flat- Across creek from pump shed

| Box | Gliders | Comments | Action Required |
|-----|---------|---------------------|-----------------|
| BW1 | 2 | Nest material | - |
| BW6 | - | Removed due to bees | Replace |
| 8 | - | Empty | - |
| BW9 | - | NA | - |
| 10 | 2 | Nest material | - |

Black Wattle Flat Continued -

| | | | |
|-------------|---|-------|---|
| BW11 | - | NA | - |
| BW12 | - | 1 Rat | - |
| BW13 | - | NA | - |

Red Gum Flat

| Box | Gliders | Comments | Action Required |
|-------------|-----------|---|-----------------|
| 11 | - | Nest- bird or ringtail possum? | - |
| 12 | - | Bird nest with 3 eggs | - |
| RG5 | 1 | Nest material- possibly an overheated box? | - |
| RG6 | 2 | Grass amongst nest material | - |
| RG7 | - | Upside down | Fix |
| RG8 | - | 1 Brush-tailed Possum | - |
| RG9 | - | 1 Brush-tailed Possum | - |
| RG10 | - | Nest material | - |
| RG11 | - | Empty nest- suitable for pole camera | - |
| RG12 | 1+ | Not checked- glider head seen in entry hole | - |

Possum Boxes – Located on Red Gum Flat

| Box | Possums | Comments | Action Required |
|-----------|----------|--|-----------------|
| P1 | - | Old nest material | - |
| P2 | 2 | Ring-tailed possums- 1 adult, 1 juvenile | - |
| P3 | 1 | Brush-tailed possum | - |

TOTAL GLIDERS = 26

TOTAL BOXES CHECKED = 36 + 3 possum boxes

NEXT CHECK: February 2016

