



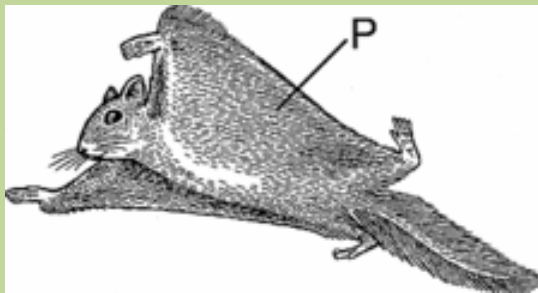
# **SUGAR GLIDER**

*Petaurus breviceps*

**Nestboxes for Sugar Gliders**

# Sugar Gliders

- The **Sugar Glider** is a small, **arboreal** (tree dwelling), **nocturnal** (awake at night), **marsupial** (mammals with pouches). They can grow up to 20cm long.
- They are wrist-winged gliders as their **patagium** (gliding membrane) extends from the wrist to the ankle. They can glide about 50 metres.
- Sugar Glider populations are stable. Their habitat is in wet and dry eucalypt forests, usually where **acacias** (wattles) are found.



# Where do they live?



# How do I Identify them?

## Some Local Possums



YELLOW-BELLIED  
GLIDER



GREATER GLIDER



SQUIRREL GLIDER



SUGAR GLIDER



FEATHERTAIL  
GLIDER



RINGTAIL  
POSSUM



BRUSHTAIL POSSUM

### Difference Between a Squirrel Glider and a Sugar Glider.

- Squirrel Gliders are up to twice the size of Sugar Gliders
- Squirrel Gliders facial markings are more distinct and narrow
- Squirrel Gliders are less vocal than Sugar Gliders
- Squirrel Gliders have a bushier tail



# What do they eat?

Sugar Gliders' diet includes insects; nectar and pollen; sap from certain eucalypts and gum from acacias, licked from gashes in tree trunks made with their lower incisors

**They are omnivores**



# What is their family life like?

- Sugar Gliders are social animals. They live in groups of 3-4 females, 2-3 males, and their young (joey).
- Usually two joeys are born, occasionally three, after 16 days gestation. These stay in the **pouch** for 40 days, then in a nest for another 50 days. They stay with their mum for 7-10 months.
- They live in tree hollows, where they huddle together in their family group.



# Why do they need nestboxes?

- Natural tree hollows form when fungus and termites eat out the dead centre of old trees but most Eucalypt species do not form these hollows until they are 100 years old. In our area Eucalyptus trees are typically harvested at around 60-80 years of age. So, of course, hollows haven't formed yet.
- Since European settlement, millions of trees and hollows have been lost to **urbanisation** (growth of towns and cities), **industry** (growth of businesses), **roads**, and **agriculture** (farming).
- **Introduced species** (from other countries) such as Honey Bees and Indian Mynas like to **colonise** (move in and live in) hollows that do exist.
- These factors have led to gliders trying to live in the fronds of banana trees; in mail boxes or in the electricity boxes on top of power poles. Often they end up living in house roofs.





# What are the benefits of building nestboxes?

- Nestboxes will help offset the loss of natural hollows, and the destruction of **habitat**.
- Building nestboxes can really make a difference; in our schools, suburban gardens, and rural properties.
- A single well-placed nestbox, which survives, ten years, can see a family of Sugar Gliders raise ten generations of joeys.
- Nestboxes are fun, easy and cheap to make and, once up, will provide a secure home for our furry friends for many years to come.





# How do we make a Sugar Glider nestbox?

**Height:** 40cms or more

**Width and depth:** 20cms

**Diameter of hole:** 4cm for Sugar and Squirrel Gliders

**Lid:** Needs to have at least 4cm overlap at sides and 8-10cms at the front.

- Your box is best screwed, rather than nailed together.
- The roof should be hinged, to allow opening and closing.
- The nestbox is quite tall so to allow them to climb in and out it is recommended that either a mesh ladder or a few thin strips of off-cut baton are installed on the inside front.
- Drill a few 5mm drainage holes in the base and throw a handful or two of wood shavings or leaf litter in the bottom.



# Where do we put the nestboxes?

Choose your position carefully...

1. Face the nestbox entrance facing away from most of the main winds.
2. Make sure that the box will have plenty of shade during the hottest part of the day.
3. Hang the box from the chosen tree by a piece of wire threaded through a scrap piece of garden hose, so that it doesn't cut into the tree.
4. Put the box at least 4 metres above the ground, but preferably higher.



# How do we make it cat- proof?

- Cats are a major predator of gliders.
- Once your nestbox has been installed, it is recommended that a collar of smooth metal or plastic is installed around the base of the tree to prevent cats from climbing up.
- If you own a cat give it 2 bells, keep it well fed to reduce its urge to hunt and restrict the time it spends outside, especially at night.



# What else can we do?

- Leave them alone.
- Don't feed them.
- Raise awareness - newsletter; youtube.
- Plant trees in your community -plant **native** (from this country), **endemic** (from this area) plants from this area that Sugar Gliders love i.e. local Eucalyptus and Acacia trees; local flowering natives.
- Increase the biodiversity in your school grounds.
- Join the Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers.
- Inform community about the hazards of barbed wire fencing to native wildlife.





# Which tree species do we plant?

## CANOPY

Northern Grey  
Ironbark  
Forest Red  
Gum  
Pink Bloodwood  
Grey Gum  
Red Mahogany

## UNDERSTOREY

Paper Bark  
Banksia  
Grass Trees  
Wattles  
Grevillea

# How will we know if we have Sugar Gliders living near?

- Check for scats.
- Recordings - noises ranging from shrill yapping (predator is near), a sharp shriek (when fighting) to a "gurgling chatter" when in their nest.
- Smell - Dominant male sugar gliders will scent other clan members and the territory around the nest.
- Camera trap.



**Extension:** an interview with environmentalists who successfully protected 100 hectares of VIC rainforest with a recent glider survey. They played the powerful owl predator bird call and counted how many gliders fled along a transect.

" we have recorded 10 yellow bellied gliders on transect-  
that's enough to get this area protected"

<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2016/s4408055.htm>

... and the LOCAL ABC NORTH COAST station had this on a recent breakfast program:

<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2016/s4408055.htm>



Good luck!  
The Sugar Gliders thank you



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