

Squirrel Glider

(*Petaurus norfolcencis*)



Species description:

The Squirrel Glider is a nocturnal, arboreal marsupial. It has grey upperparts with a black midline that extends from between the eyes to the middle of the back. It has blackish patches around the eyes, and black and cream patches under the ears. Its underparts are white with the edge of the gliding membrane fringed black. Its tail has long, bushy fur that is grey with a black tip.

Distribution and habitat:

Squirrel Gliders are found along the east coast of Australia from northern Queensland into Victoria and South Australia. They live along the ranges and slopes in forest and woodland vegetation communities. In areas of inland NSW, glider populations are restricted to remnant patches of woodland or open forest, the majority of which has been extensively cleared for agriculture. Suitable habitat for Squirrel Gliders remains on travelling stock reserves, roadside habitats, private farmland and along watercourses.

Squirrel Gliders are hollow-dependent, which means they require large, mature or dead eucalypts for nesting and denning. To avoid predation, Squirrel Gliders have a number of den trees that they move between. It is thought that the number of dens ranges from between two and thirteen.

Squirrel Gliders primarily move throughout their home range by gliding from tree to tree. Gliding distance is generally between 20 and 40 metres but they have been recorded gliding up to 75 metres. If necessary, they will also travel across open ground to reach a food resource.



Conservation status and threats:

In NSW the Squirrel Glider is currently listed as Vulnerable under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. Squirrel Gliders are threatened due to the loss of mature, hollow-bearing trees, habitat fragmentation and degradation, loss of flowering understorey and midstorey foraging trees and shrubs, inappropriate fire regimes, collisions with barbed wire fences and predation by feral cats and foxes.

Retaining and protecting food resources, particularly sap-feeding trees and understorey acacias and banksias, is vital to the Squirrel Glider's survival. Old-growth den trees and recruitment trees (future hollow-bearing trees) are just as important. Any works to rehabilitate glider habitat, reduce edge effects, minimise the foraging distances that gliders must travel and increase the food resources available to them will help the species recover. Replacing the top one or two strands of barbed wire on fences with regular wire in areas adjacent to squirrel glider habitat also helps.



The Squirrel Glider Project is monitoring a local population of Squirrel Gliders and their use of nest boxes as alternative habitat near Crowther NSW. The nest boxes are specifically designed for Squirrel Gliders with an entrance hole just 4cm wide. They are fixed to mature eucalypts 3m from the ground, facing in a SE direction. A total of 99 nest boxes are currently monitored and 31 have been recorded being used by the gliders.