



Photo: Mason Crane - Australian National University

## Squirrel gliders in the Riverina

Squirrel gliders are a nocturnal tree dwelling mammals that are found across eastern Australia. The squirrel glider is a medium sized (40-53 cm) nocturnal gliding possum. They are blue-grey to brown grey above with a white belly. They also have black marking that runs between the eyes and down its back. The squirrel glider has a long bushy tail that sometimes is black tipped. They use a gliding membrane that extends from the fifth front toe to the back of their foot on both sides.

### Where do they live?

During the day squirrel gliders will rest in leaf lined nests in tree hollows. During the night they emerge to forage in tree and understory canopies, almost never coming into contact with the ground. Within the Riverina region, gliders prefer open forests and woodlands especially box-ironbark and riparian woodlands.

Squirrel gliders prefer open forests and woodlands and vegetation fringing waterways. They live in tree hollows, generally in eucalyptus. Squirrel gliders find homes in cup-shaped, leaf-lined nests in tree hollows (dens). They sleep in these hollows during the day and emerge at night to hunt for food. Squirrel gliders can have numerous den sites and can use up to 19 trees within one area.

Key habitat requirement for the squirrel glider include:

- abundant tree hollows (for refuge and nesting)
- multiple eucalypt species
- acacia understory
- trees less than 50m apart.

### What do they eat?

Squirrel gliders have a varied diet that is often dependent on the season and availability of food sources. They are known to feed on:

- insects
- sap, gum, pollen and nectar of eucalypts and wattles
- seeds and fruit
- small roosting birds, eggs and mice are occasionally eaten.

The diet and nature of gliders they require year round access to nectar, pollen, invertebrates. Some important nectar producing trees within the Riverina regions include Yellow Box, White Box, Grey Box, Mugga Ironbark and Blakely's Red Gum. When eucalypt nectar is scarce squirrel gliders prefer to eat acacia nectar and live as close to food sources as possible.

### Why protect our squirrel gliders?

Squirrel gliders are considered vulnerable in New South Wales (NSW) however; the Wagga Wagga local government area (LGA) population is considered endangered. The local population is small and isolated. Current records show that there is a significant population in the Livingstone National Park area, south of Wagga Wagga. This area has been significantly cleared for agriculture and as a result there is limited ability for this population to disperse into the broader region. When squirrel glider habitat is in poor condition they are at greater risk of predation. While squirrel gliders have natural predators in owls and goannas, introduced predators such as foxes and feral cats can have a devastating impact.

### Did you know?

**When their limbs are extended squirrel gliders can travel distances of up to 50 metres. Depending on food availability they can travel up to 1.6 kilometres or an area of four hectares**



Local Land  
Services

## What work is being done?

Riverina Local Land Services has received funding from NSW Government for the Protection and connectivity for endangered Wagga LGA squirrel gliders project.

This project aims to improve breeding and foraging habitat through the planting of new corridors and protection of core breeding habitat.

This project works with land owners within the project area to restore existing vegetation and create new vegetation corridors that will provide new and improved foraging and nesting habitat.

This project will also help coordinate pest control activities for foxes. A coordinated approach to baiting will lead to a greater reduction in their numbers and reduce the impact of predation.

In conjunction with these on ground works we will also be running community based monitoring in the form of spotlighting events.

## How can you help?

If you have squirrel glider habitat on your property, there are several ways you can help to improve foraging and nesting sites:

- keep existing vegetation on your property, especially hollow-bearing trees
- revegetate areas with a mixture of native species to allow for hollow-bearing and feed trees in the future
- allow natural regeneration to occur
- keep paddock trees on your property - they act as great stop-over points between sparse vegetation where appropriate
- install nest boxes if you don't have hollow-bearing trees.

## Project Area

The project area (see below) is located south of the city of Wagga Wagga and centred around Livingstone National Park and Nest Hill Nature Reserve.



## Eligibility to apply

- Existing Agreements - all previous works funded by Riverina Local Land Services or Catchment Management Authority must be completed
- Contractual Arrangement - You must be willing to enter into an agreement with Riverina Local Land Services for 10 years
- Local Land Services rates - You must have no outstanding debts to Local Land Services
- Locality - Your property needs to reside in the Riverina Local Land Services region and within the project area (see map below)
- Insurance - You must have public liability insurance for a minimum of \$10 million to be considered for funding

If you are looking to create or improve squirrel glider habitat on your property, try planting some or all of the following species to create a year round food source:

Species	Habitat	Food sources in:
Yellow Box	✓	spring/summer
White Box	✓	winter
Grey Box	✓	autumn
Mugga Ironbark	✓	winter
River Red Gum	✓	summer
Blakeleys Red Gum	✓	summer
Red Box	✓	spring
Long-leaf box	✓	autumn
Apple Box	✓	late summer/autumn
Red Stringybark	✓	summer/autumn
Silver Wattle		winter/spring
Golden Wattle		winter/spring
Lightwood/Hickory Wattle		summer/autumn
Black Wattle ( <i>Acacia mearnsii</i> )		summer

## Want to know more?

Allie Hendy | Senior Land Services Officer - Riverina Local Land Services, based in Wagga Wagga NSW

P. 6923 6364 or 0427 662 811  
Email [allie.hendy@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:allie.hendy@lls.nsw.gov.au)

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