

What's for dinner?

Project Officer, Lou Bull, snapped this beautiful picture of some flowering Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) on a recent site visit to Burrumbuttock. Yellow Box and other eucalypts provide nectar for Squirrel Gliders to eat as well as hollows to live in, making them an important tree in the landscape for these little mammals.



Photo: Yellow box heavy in flower

Nectar is just one component of the diet of Squirrel Gliders, which varies depending on seasonal availability of plants and insects.

Carbohydrates play a major role in the Squirrel Glider's diet and are mostly sourced from plant products such as nectar, pollen, acacia sap (especially from Silver Wattle *Acacia dealbata*), honey dew and manna.

Insects such as caterpillars, cicadas and beetles contribute to the glider's dietary needs for protein. Gliders may play an important role in controlling outbreaks of insect pests, which attack leaves on Eucalypts.

How's your site looking?

We aim to re-visit project sites annually after works are completed but in the meantime we are keen to hear from you on how your site is going. Give us a call and let us know if you are happy with your project site or if you have any concerns, such as, seedling survival, weed growth in your revegetated areas and possible damage to seedlings from rabbits, hares or kangaroos.

Round 3 Update

Funding on-ground revegetation projects has been a significant aspect of the Squirrel Glider LAMP Project. This year (2017/18) marks the third round of this aspect of the project. After expression of interest letters were sent to the target area (properties that adjoined the Burrumbuttock – Howlong Rd and within approximately 10 km south of Burrumbuttock), seven new landholders have joined the project.

This will see nearly 6000 new tubestock planted, approximately 6 km of new fencing and most importantly some major connections or new corridors which will create new habitat for Squirrel Gliders. In a high-quality area, 9 ha can support a whole social group of Squirrel Gliders. 6000 plants is the equivalent of 25 ha. The work being done in this round could potentially support three more groups of Squirrel Gliders but more importantly builds links to existing areas of remnant or young vegetation that will support even more Squirrel Gliders.



Photo: Connection using stock proof tree guards

Some of the focus in the third round is also on roadsides. Many of the existing roads in the area have great mature and maturing trees, are connected and also support trees with hollows. Gaps of greater than 20 m were identified and will be planted with trees in 2018. This will improve the opportunities for Squirrel Gliders to move through the landscape safely and access new habitat.

What's all that noise?

The Noisy Miner (*Manorina melanocephala*) is regularly confused with the introduced Common or Indian Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*). Both species are similar in size, distribution and behavior – quarrelsome, noisy and aggressive.

The Noisy Miner is a native Australian honeyeater; mainly grey in colour with a black mask (left) and the Common Myna is an introduced Asian starling, mostly brown with a dark head (right).



The Noisy Miner has a widespread distribution, occurring in eucalypt forest and woodland throughout temperate and sub-tropical eastern Australia, typically where eucalypts occur adjacent to grassy clearings.

Historic land management practices such as large-scale clearing and grazing have modified the rural landscape by creating small isolated native vegetation patches and corridors with modified shrub and groundcovers surrounded by crops and pastures. In creating our current rural landscape we have also created an environment ideally suited to Noisy Miners. Currently we are hard pressed to find a remnant patch in the local area that isn't dominated by Noisy Miners.

Overabundant Noisy Miner populations result in the exclusion of nearly all small birds in the immediate area. Many small woodland birds are insectivorous and when they are excluded from woodland areas insect numbers increase.

Therefore in woodland areas dominated by Noisy Miners, there are less insect-eating small woodland birds, more insects and over-time tree health can decline from insect damage and tree dieback can occur.

It is also thought that Noisy Miners may be aggressive to possums and gliders, hunting them out of tree hollows.

What can I do to manage Noisy Miners?

Habitat management is the first step to managing Noisy Miners. The addition of shrubs and ground cover native vegetation (especially dense spiky species such as Kangaroo Thorn, Sweet Bursaria, Bush / Bitter Peas) provides small woodland birds with protection from Noisy Miners. Noisy Miners also prefer to forage on the ground so managing grazing to promote native groundcover and planting groundcover vegetation makes a site less attractive to Noisy Miners.

Culling of Noisy Miners is a last resort, requires a permit and should not be undertaken unless there is suitable habitat for small woodland birds to re-establish themselves in. Culling alone without doing revegetation or small woodland bird habitat rehabilitation is ineffective as Miners from neighbouring areas will move back into the site, due to the sheer over-abundance of the species in our landscape.

For more information on Noisy Miner control permits contact NSW Office of Environment and Heritage:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifelicences/OccupierLicences.htm>

Successful Funding

Murray LLS and partners have been successful in receiving additional funding from the NSW Environmental Trust to undertake further Squirrel Glider conservation works in Burrumbuttock. The additional works will build on and add value to the great work we have already done.

This funding will focus on specific activities, including:

- Installation of nest boxes,
- Revitalising historic revegetation areas, and
- Planting paddock trees protected by wire mesh stock proof tree guards to create stepping stones between vegetation.



Photo: Squirrel Glider nest box

The Environmental Trust project will focus on specific areas within a 10 km radius of Burrumbuttock with a particular focus on installing nest boxes in areas with low numbers of natural tree hollows. Eucalypt trees can take more than 100 years to develop hollows and nest boxes may assist in providing a substitute den site.

For more information, please contact Tracy Michael, Land Services Officer, (02) 60 512 211.

Welcome “Matilda”

Matilda came to us after being discovered dead on a barbed wire fence. This is not an uncommon story sadly. This time we were able to turn the situation into a positive.

Wirramina did have Squirrel Glider specimens that had reached the end of their display life. Through the LAMP project communication funds, organising a new specimen to be taxidermized was prioritised. Having a real Squirrel Glider specimen gives us the opportunity to get a close-up indication of their size, features and minute details (did you know their feet have tiny little claws?).



Photo: “Matilda” - taxidermized squirrel glider

The process for organising the taxidermy is a great story and only made possible by the landholders who found Matilda on their fence. Cindy and Steven Scott are cattle farmers at Henty who have done extensive revegetation work on their own property. It was thanks to a friend of theirs that Matilda was able to catch a private jet to Hillston in Central NSW to begin the process of being taxidermized. After several months the return to Albury was made possible thanks to Petaurus Education Group Aboriginal artist David Dunn. David had been working in the area and Matilda now waits patiently for a glass case to help preserve her display life.

Matilda’s first public appearance will be made in February 2018 when we celebrate the work of the landholders and contractors involved in the amazing revegetation works this year.

Have you seen a Squirrel Glider? Wildlife Camera Monitoring Kits

Did you know we have wildlife cameras you can borrow? They are easy to set up and use, and take photos of anything that moves during the day or night. If you are interested in borrowing one of these cameras, please contact our project officers for more information.



Photo: Monitoring Kit (including camera, bracket/band for installing, battery charger, card reader)



Photo: Image taken on a wildlife camera. Can you see one or two pairs of eyes looking at you?



Photo: Squirrel Gliders caught on camera

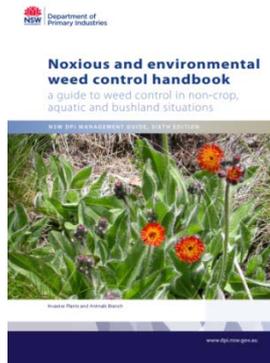
Community Survey

Please assist us with monitoring Squirrel Gliders in your local area as it helps us to better understand the local population and their distribution. You can download a survey from the link below or contact our project officers for a hard copy to be sent out.

<http://www.wirraminna.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Squirrel-Glider-LAMP-Community-Survey-Template-March-2017.pdf>

Publications available

Noxious and Environmental weed control handbook – free hard copy available from LLS or download at https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/123317/noxious-and-environ-weed-control-handbook.pdf



South West Slopes Revegetation Guide – free hard copy available from LLS or download at http://biodiversitygateway.com.au/SWSR_Guide/swsr-guide.pdf

Native Plants and Woodland Birds pocket size brochures - free hard copy available from LLS



Upcoming Events

For upcoming events, head to:

- Murray LLS Events Page <http://murray.lls.nsw.gov.au/resource-hub/events>
- West Hume Landcare Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/westhumelandcare>
- Ecoportal <http://ecoportal.net.au/events/>
- Greater Hume Shire Events Calendar <http://www.greaterhume.nsw.gov.au/Events/EventsCalendar/tabid/154/Default.aspx>
- Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/d/australia-albury/events/?crt=regular&sort=best>

More information

Lou Bull, Project Officer, Petaurus Education Group, 0458 240 634, loubullpetaurus@gmail.com

Tracy Michael, Land Services Officer, Murray LLS 02 6051 2211; tracy.michael@lls.nsw.gov.au

Or visit:

- Petaurus Website <http://www.wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/squirrel-glider-lamp/>
- Murray Local Land Services Website <http://murray.lls.nsw.gov.au/our-region/programs-and-projects/squirrel-glider-lamp-project>

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