

Activity One – making a Squirrel Glider paper plane

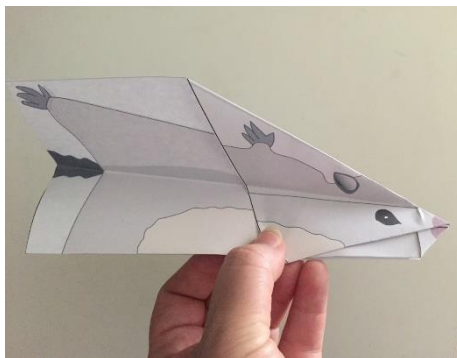
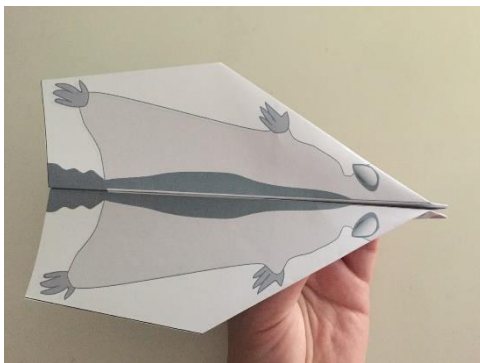
You will need:

- Copies of the Squirrel Glider paper plane (one for each child), with at least one copy of instructions/Squirrel Glider facts for the presenter to reference
- Grey lead pencils

Follow the instructions on the Squirrel Glider plane document to create a Squirrel Glider paper plane. With a group of children, it works well to sit in a circle and take them step-by-step through the folding instructions. As you construct the paper plane, discuss with the children facts about the Squirrel Glider's identification, diet, habitat, threats and gliding ability, these are listed on the back of the instructions.

You can download the Squirrel Glider paper plane and find out more information about Squirrel Gliders here:

www.wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/squirrel-glider-lamp/.



These Activity Sheets were developed by Petaurus Education Group (March 2018). This project is supported by Murray Local Land Services with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



Activity Two – understanding threats and management actions

You will need:

- Folded Squirrel Glider paper planes
- Cat mask (to wear on the child's forehead)
- Fox mask (to wear on the child's forehead)
- Barbed wire (rope with pipe cleaners attached, each end held by a child)
- Picture of car
- Picture of nest box
- Wooden frame (to represent hollow)
- Picture of Barking Owl (natural predator)
- Green party hats (tree)
- Bull dog clips and elastic (for attaching pictures to children)

Set the scene: Squirrel Gliders emerge on dusk from their hollows, scramble to the top of the tree and then make their way across the paddock to feed. They need to watch out for the cat, fox, owl and car and avoid being caught on the barbed wire fence. If they make it to the hollow tree/nest box at the other end of the paddock they are safe.

The set up for this activity will depend on the amount of space available. In a class room setting, choose one child each to play a cat, fox, owl, barbed wire, and car and choose either the hollow tree or nest box. They must remain standing in position for the activity. If outside or in a room with more space, you may choose to have multiple children representing each threat and extra trees scattered throughout the room that are safe. The hollow tree or nest box stands at one end of the room. In the middle of the space, have a cat, fox, owl, barbed wire and car. At the opposite end of the room to the hollow tree or nest box, one-at-a-time, children will fly their paper planes and try and glide their way to the safety of the hollow tree/nest box without being caught by any Squirrel Glider threats.

Extension activity: Record the number of Squirrel Gliders that are safe and how many are captured by each of the threats. Discuss each of the threats below and the management actions that can be taken to improve the outcomes for Squirrel Gliders.

Foxes: Squirrel Gliders often glide to the ground when there are not enough trees in the landscape for them to glide between. This is when predators such as foxes prey on Squirrel Gliders. A coordinated baiting program with neighbouring farmers and land managers can reduce fox numbers.

Cats: Similar to foxes, cats are a threat when Squirrel Gliders find themselves on the ground. An education program for cat owners can be undertaken, encouraging owners to keep their cats inside at night when Squirrel Gliders are active.

Barbed wire fence: Squirrel Gliders can get caught and tangled on barbed wire as they glide past a fence. A simple step is to put metal tags or flagging tape on barbed wire fences to make them more visible however replacing barbed wire plain wire fence is the best option. If you come across a Squirrel Glider on a fence, please call your local WIRES contact.

Car: Squirrel Gliders are often hit by cars when gliding from one side of the road to another. Install glider crossings on major roads where movement is a problem (glide poles or rope bridges, rope bridges preferred).

Barking Owl: Barking owls prey on Squirrel Gliders and young. No management action required – these are natural predators and vulnerable as well.

Discuss: What else can we do to help Squirrel Gliders (e.g. protect paddock trees, plant more trees, plant corridors etc.)? For more background information on actions to help Squirrel Gliders, refer to the Squirrel Glider Habitat Management Guide which can be downloaded from: www.wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/squirrel-glider-lamp/.

Activity Three – how far can your Squirrel Glider glide?

You will need:

- Folded Squirrel Glider paper planes
- Measuring tape
- Wooden frame to represent hollow

Set up the wooden frame hollow on the floor at one end of the room. Multiple children at the same time attempt to glide their Squirrel Glider paper plane to the safety of the hollow tree. Each child measures and records the distance travelled by their glider and how many attempts it took to reach the hollow.

Ideas for how to use this game for maths:

- Percent success rate
- Averages (distance, number of attempts to reach hollow)
- Greater than, less than (distances each turn)
- How do variables affect results (e.g. wind, glider plane design, height of child and construction)?



Photo credit: Peter Merritt