



SIGNIFICANT FAUNA IN LOGAN

GLIDING MARSUPIALS (Gliders)

Bushland in Logan City provides important habitat for five of the six species of gliding marsupials (gliders) in Australia.

The five glider species found in Logan City are:

- **Yellow-bellied Glider** – *Petaurus australis*
- **Sugar Glider** – *Petaurus breviceps*
- **Squirrel Glider** – *Petaurus norfolcensis*
- **Greater Glider** – *Petaurioides volans*
- **Feathertail Glider** – *Acrobates pygmaeus*

Gliders are arboreal nocturnal marsupials, meaning they spend most of their lives above the ground, nesting, feeding and breeding in shrub or tree layers of forests and woodlands.

Gliders are a unique species as they contain a gliding membrane that extends from their elbows or wrists to their ankles or knees, which allows them to “glide” in the air between trees. Some species such as the Sugar Glider and the Squirrel Glider can glide up to 90 metres and distances of over 100 metres have been recorded for the Yellow-bellied Glider.

The increased mobility afforded by gliding means that food can be harvested quickly and efficiently. This is critical since food like eucalypt sap and wattle gum can be hard to find.

Gliding is also a benefit as it is less energetically expensive than running, climbing and jumping. The gliding membrane can also be wrapped around the body to keep the gliders warm and limit heat loss in cold weather. Gliders also play an important role in pollinating a number of Australian plants and controlling insect pests.

Where do we live?

Most of the glider species live in a range of habitats ranging from tall wet forests to tall open forests and woodlands. In Logan, most species are located in large remnant bushland areas such as Greenbank Military Reserve and Cornubia Forest Park.

What do we look like?

Feathertail Glider

The Feathertail Glider is the smallest of the gliders. It is the size of a mouse and has a feather like tail. Its fur is grey-brown on the back with a white belly. On average its body is 6-8cm long and weighs around 12g. The Feathertail Glider has the ability to run up a vertical pane of glass; this obviously helps it run up smooth barked gum trees. It mainly eats nectar, sap and insects.



Greater Glider

The Greater Glider is the largest gliding marsupial in Australia and is the size of a cat. It is mainly solitary and silent. It has big fluffy ears, shaggy fur, a long tail and the body colour can vary between charcoal-brown and creamy white. Greater Gliders are entirely dependent on large tracts of undisturbed, tall open forest with suitably large nesting hollows. Each animal requires approximately 1.5 hectares of habitat to live and reproduce. It mainly eats eucalypt leaves and occasionally gum blossoms.



For Further Information:  www.logan.qld.gov.au,  3412 3412 or  council@logan.qld.gov.au





Squirrel Glider

This is one of Logan's more common glider species, yet it is rare to endangered through the rest of its eastern range. The Squirrel Glider has a large rat sized body with soft grey fur, black strip on the head and body and a dense bushy tail like a squirrel, which never has a white tip. It mainly lives

in dry forests, woodlands, parks and gardens and eats eucalypt sap, gums from wattle trees, insects, pollen, nectar and invertebrates. It can be identified by its contact call of a repeated 'Nwarr' sound.

Sugar Glider

The Sugar Glider is very similar to the Squirrel Glider in its appearance, habitat requirements and eating habits. The Sugar Glider is smaller, has a much less 'fluffier' tail and makes a higher call than the Squirrel Glider. The Sugar Glider can have a white tip on its tail. They live in clans of up to seven gliders that share a nest and call to each other with a 'yip-yip-yip' sound.



Yellow-bellied Glider

This species is not commonly found in Logan. The Yellow-bellied Glider has a cat sized body with charcoal coloured fur on its back and yellow, orange or white belly. Its ears are large and bald. The presence of it can often be revealed by its characteristic loud gurgling calls made after dusk. Notches and cuts made in eucalypt trunks used for sap feeding are signs of its presence. It mainly eats eucalypt sap, invertebrates, pollen, nectar



and flower parts.

Why are we threatened?

The main threat to the glider populations in Logan City is habitat destruction through the clearing of large remnant areas. The Greater Glider and the Yellow-bellied Gliders are becoming uncommon in Logan City and therefore are locally significant species. Many populations in areas of Logan have become locally extinct due to the removal of bushland containing large nesting hollows. More common species such as the squirrel and sugar gliders are facing decreasing food sources due to the clearing of wattles. This is a common understorey plant which is often thought of as a "weed" species by landowners.

Other threats include being attacked by cats and dogs, firewood collection, habitat fragmentation and inappropriate forms of timber harvesting.

What is Council doing to protect them?

These glider species are an important part of Logan City's natural heritage. Council contributes to its protection through:

- increasing public knowledge of native plants and animals;
- encouraging nature conservation on private land;
- supporting environmental projects;
- protecting significant vegetation and habitat through local laws and planning requirements;
- promoting sustainable development;
- protecting and managing natural areas and important wildlife corridors in parks and reserves; and
- participation in regional conservation programs.

What can you do to protect them?

You can help conserve these glider species through the preservation of food sources (such as wattle and eucalypt) and habitats in the Logan area. Between dawn and dusk be careful when driving and keep your pets safely restrained when wildlife is in your backyard. You can get involved in or assisted by a number of Council's community programs; these include Bushcare, Conservation Incentives Program and the EnviroGrants Program.

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Photos are courtesy of the Queensland Museum (QM) and John Bowden (JB)

