

Squirrel Glider (Pixie) Updated 1 December 2019

We were asked to bring some samples of local flora from the vicinity of Pixie's nest box to her carers in Kangaloola and see her progress.

She now weighs 103g, a far cry from the 30g when we found her on 1st October. She is about 19 weeks old now. She has a beautiful long bush tail which she can hold vertically erect when climbing upside down, very impressive.

Her carers take her out at about 8.30pm and release her into the netted enclosure for her to practice her climbing and hopefully gliding. She now has a "vase" of local flora which included some bottlebrush which she latched onto immediately sucking the nectar from the flower heads.



She scrambled up the netting across the roof of it, up and down the walls like she was in heaven, they said they hadn't seen her that active before.

Her Rescuer went into the enclosure and Pixie hopped onto his knee and checked him out, not at all perturbed by his presence, hopefully she remembered his scent from when he found her and carried her home in his T-shirt.

Just a beautiful sight to see how far she has come and what amazing care and accommodation she has been given by Kangaloola Wildlife carers.

During the day she is returned to a box where she sleeps the day away.

They have asked for more flora and live insects to start transitioning her off the formula and onto her natural food supply, so we will make a few more trips and keep you updated on her progress.

She did attack a slater which was on the ground of the enclosure which sounded like someone cracking peanuts, obviously enjoying it.



Some notes of interest about the Squirrel Glider (Petaurus)

Adult Squirrel Gliders:

Have a head and body length of about 20 cm. They have blue-grey to brown-grey fur above, white on the belly and the end third of the tail is black. There is a dark stripe from between the eyes to the mid-back and the tail is soft and bushy averaging about 27 cm in length. Its body is 18–23 cm long and its tail measures at 22–33 cm long. It weighs about 230g.

They have a flying membrane that extends from their 5th front toe to the back of their foot on both sides. When they glide their prehensile tail can act as a rudder, allowing them to steer which direction they want to go.

They can glide up to 50m from tree to tree. Squirrel Gliders are up to twice the size of Sugar Gliders, their facial markings are more distinct and they nest in bowl-shaped, leaf lined nests in tree hollows. Squirrel Gliders are also less vocal than Sugar Gliders.

Habitat and ecology:

Inhabits mature or old growth Box, Box-Ironbark woodlands and River Red Gum forest west of the Great Dividing Range and Blackbutt-Bloodwood forest with heath understorey in coastal areas.

Prefers mixed species stands with a shrub or Acacia midstorey.

Live in family groups of a single adult male one or more adult females and offspring.

Require abundant tree hollows for refuge and nest sites.

Diet varies seasonally and consists of Acacia gum, eucalypt sap, nectar, **honeydew and manna, with invertebrates and pollen providing protein.**

Activities to assist this species:

Retain dense trees and recruitment trees (future hollow-bearing trees).

Retain food resources, particularly sap-feeding trees and understorey feed species such as Acacias and banksias.

Replace top one or two strands of barbed wire on fences with regular wire in and adjacent to habitat.

Retain and protect areas of habitat, particularly mature or old growth forest containing hollow-bearing trees and sap-feeding trees.

In urban and rural areas retain and rehabilitate habitat to maintain or increase the total area of habitat available, reduce edge effects, minimise foraging distances and increase the types of resources available.