

Yellow Bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*) detection report

Pikes Hill track – Webbed Feet coupe - 830-507-0020

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Surveyors:

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Abstract:

This report details the detection of a number of Yellow Bellied Gliders *Petaurus australis*, within coupe 830-507-0020 (Webbed Feet) East Gippsland, on 16th February 2016.

A survey was undertaken by volunteers from Goongerah Environment Centre (GECO). Weather conditions were poor with strong winds and intermittent light drizzle.

5 Yellow Bellied Gliders were detected over a distance of approximately 750m, during a period of 2 hours 12 minutes.

Method:

A transect of 1 kilometre was walked within the Webbed Feet Coupe, between 21:40 and 23:52 hrs. At approximately 200m intervals along the transect, a powerful owl territorial call (source: 'Nightlife of Australia') was played using an mp3 player and a mega-phone. Spotlighting was conducted continually during playback, and between playback intervals. A listening period of between 2 and 3 minutes was undertaken after playback of the owl call. Detection locations were recorded on a handheld GPS in GDA 94. Direction of detected gliders was estimated using a handheld Silva compass. Vocalisations of Yellow Bellied Gliders were recorded where possible, using an Olympus sound recording device.

Spotlights employed were a 12V halogen handheld spot of generic design, and a Led Lenser P14 torch of at least 185 lumens. 1 pair of 10x42 binoculars was on hand. A Cannon 5D DSLR camera with a 55-250mm lens was used to take photos.

There was evidence of rain in the previous 12 hours, the sky was overcast and there was intermittent light drizzle. Wind was strong at times and persistently moderate.

Transect Start GDA 94: 55H 0657361 5843 943 Transect End GDA 94: 55H 0658061 5844047

Results:

Yellow Bellied Gliders were heard calling at 4 locations along the transect within a distance of approximately 750m. A call was heard from waypoint PYB160216-2 and recorded on a device. Another call was heard at waypoint PYB160216-3 while walking on the transect, the calls heard from these locations were from separate individuals as they were calling from different directions.

At least two individuals were heard calling from way point PHT 160216-4 and one individual was sighted and photographed. These vocalisations were recorded on the recording device. The location of the individual that was photographed was recorded precisely; by walking under the tree it was sighted in and recording a waypoint with a GPS, marked as waypoint YBG. This individual is likely to be the same individual as the first call that was heard calling from PHT-160216-4 and possibly the same individual that was calling from PYB160216-3. The call heard from PYB160216-3 was recorded coming from a bearing of 210° at a distance of 80m, the call of the individual that was photographed was recorded approximately 40m from PYB160216-3 and came from a similar bearing direction. This indicates these records are the same animals.

The fourth location calls were heard at, was waypoint PHY3 where two distinct calls were heard from two individuals. The second individual heard calling at waypoint PHY3 was observed gliding and landing in a tree on the edge of the log landing. Photographs of this individual were taken at waypoint YBG2. In total 5 Yellow Bellied gliders were recorded on the transect. Other species recorded were Sugar Glider and Southern Boobook.

Figure 1: Yellow Bellied Glider (YBG) Survey data from Webbed feet coupe 16.2.16

Time	Species	Waypoint	GPS location	Bearing	Distance(m)	No.	YBG detection number	Notes
22:18	YBG	PYB160216-2	0657667 5843893	130°	80	1	1	Vocalisation (recording)
22:26	YBG	PHT-160216-3	0657623 5843812	210°	80	1	2	Vocalisation
22:51	YBG	PHT-120216-4	0657579 5843707	150°	40	1	3	Vocalisation (recording)
22:51	YBG	PHT-120216-4	0657579 5843767	200°	40	1	3	Vocalisation (recording) (potentially same individual as PHT-160216-3).
22:50	YBG	YBG	0657597 5843744	N/A	N/A	1	3	Visual, potentially same individual as PHT - 120216-4, Photo taken
23:49	YBG	PHY3	0658047 5844061	120°	15	1	4	Vocalisation
23:50	YBG	PHY3	0658047 5844061	180°	30	1	5	Vocalisation, Call heard very shortly after call of other YBG at PHY3, in different direction.
23:57	YBG	YBG2	0658126 5844017	N/A	N/A	1	4	Visual, seen gliding from over log landing to tree at YBG2.



Legend

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------|
| Yellow-bellied Glider detection locations | Approximate survey transect | Watercourses |
| Aural detection | Scheduled Logging Coupes (VicForests, TRP) [Approved_TRP_August_2015] | Contours |
| Visual detection | Roads | |

Projection: EPSG: 28355
GDA94/MGA Zone 55

Map Scale:
1:5,500



25 February 2016

Results:



Image: Yellow Bellied Glider at GPS location – 0657597 5843744 (GDA 94). Photo: Ed Hill.



Image: Yellow Bellied Glider at GPS location - 0658126 5844017 (GDA 94) Photo: Ed Hill

Discussion:

The results indicate a significant number of Yellow Bellied Gliders within the 'Webbed Feet' coupe. Conditions were poor for spotlighting and call play back surveying with strong winds and intermittent light drizzle. If conditions were more favourable and the survey transect was extended it is quite possible the survey would have recorded more individuals.

The section of the survey transect that Yellow-bellied gliders were detected was approximately 750m in length. If an extra 250m was walked on the survey transect it is likely another individual may have been detected and more than 5 would have been recorded within 1km. However, due to deteriorating conditions it was decided to conclude the survey at the transect end point recorded above.

Yellow bellied gliders were heard calling on the night of Saturday February 13th on Pikes Hill rd, adjacent to the Webbed Feet coupe at the following approximate location 55H 0658212 5843724. The calls were heard coming from the forest on the eastern and western side of the road. If conditions were more favourable on the night of the survey and the transect was extended, it is quite possible the gliders heard on the February 13th may have been heard again and more than 5 would have been detected on the survey transect.

Based on this clear evidence of a significant number of Yellow Bellied Gliders within the area surveyed, we recommend DELWP protect the Webbed Feet coupe within a Special Protection Zone.

Appendix:

Other species recorded on transect



Image: Southern Boobook, Photo: Ed Hill



Image: Sugar Glider, Photo: Ed Hill