

Easy Reference Sheet

Caring for Gliders

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There are six species of gliders in Australia, five of which can be found in South-east Queensland. Australian gliders range in size (head and body) from 6.5 - 8cm long (Feathertail Gliders) to 35 - 45cm (Greater Glider). All Australian gliders are nocturnal. Most species have a highly specialised diet, comprising some or all of the following: nectar, pollen, insects, the sap of certain eucalypts and the gum from acacias. However the Greater Glider has a diet similar to the koala, eating only the foliage of certain species of eucalypt.

Do I need a Permit to care for gliders?

Yes. You will need a REHABILITATION PERMIT to care for gliders.

A Rehabilitation Permit can be obtained from a licensed wildlife care group such as Wildcare.

Remember all Australian native wildlife is protected in Queensland. You cannot keep them without an appropriate Permit.

Do I have to do any training to care for gliders?

Yes. Gliders have highly specialised dietary and housing requirements. They often come into care due to loss of habitat, injury or as a result of being orphaned. You must have a good understanding of their biology, be able to recognise signs of illness and injury and be able to provide emergency care to them.

In Wildcare, you will need to complete the following training workshops in order to care for gliders:-

- Orientation – compulsory for all members
- Rescue and First Aid for Wildlife (Basic) – compulsory for all members
- Caring for Orphaned Mammals
- Gliders

Is caring for gliders difficult?

Caring for gliders is generally undertaken by experienced possum carers. They can be difficult to care for due to their highly specialised diet. They are great escape-artists and need specially adapted enclosures to prevent escape and to prevent predation by snakes. Some species of gliders (such as the Yellow-bellied Glider and Greater Glider) are considered vulnerable in South-east Queensland.

Remember:-

- Gliders are **nocturnal** – you need to be available to care for them at night.
- They have a **specialised diet** – you must be able to provide fresh blossoms and insects for them every day.
- One of their greatest **predators** is the domestic pet – they cannot be housed near domestic dogs, cats or reptiles.
- Young joeys need to be fed **every 3 to 4 hours** (including through the night).
- Older joeys/adults must be housed in an **outdoor aviary** large enough to allow development of their gliding skills.

You would generally not be permitted to care for gliders until you have gained some experience in caring for possums.

Remember, we raise to RELEASE!

We must care for wildlife in a way that ensures their survival once returned to the wild.

What equipment do I need to care for gliders?

Gliders need to be housed and cared for during rehabilitation to prevent further injury, prevent escape, minimise stress and to allow them to display their natural behaviour.

A few things we must consider when housing gliders include:-

- All species are arboreal and therefore require enclosures that are wide and high enough to accommodate branches of a variety of sizes and to provide necessary space that they require to glide.
- Enclosures must be snake and rodent proof.
- To prevent escape, enclosures must be made from 1cm square gauge wire and for the smallest species, lined with shade cloth.
- Injured and sick animals must be housed indoors.
- Enclosures will require large water containers for holding fresh vegetation.
- A variety of feeding bowls will be required including stainless steel coop cups for holding food and water.

Below is a brief overview of some of the equipment that gliders require. The Wildcare glider training workshop and manual covers their requirements in more detail.

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| Rescue Equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure, small plastic pet carriers for rescuing adults and juveniles • Clean, second-hand towels to line container • Pouches for both orphaned and adult gliders |
| Orphaned Gliders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding equipment (syringes, specially made latex teats, cannulas, sterilising equipment, small feeding bowls) • Lots of cotton pouches (30+ each animal) • Small baby blankets and towels. • Small pet carry cage • Verandah-style small aviary/cage lined with shade cloth • Branches for climbing and water containers for holding fresh vegetation • Specialised heating equipment (if caring for unfurred and just-furred joeys) |
| Adult Gliders <i>Critical Care Stage</i> <i>Intermediate Care Stage</i> <i>Pre-Release and Final Rehabilitation Stage</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid wire mesh enclosure with sturdy branches (0.5m L x 0.5m W x 1.0m H) • Small coop cups and ceramic bowls for water and food • Large quantity of clean towels or blankets for lining enclosure • Small water containers for holding fresh vegetation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid wire mesh enclosure with sturdy branches (1.0m L x 1.0m W x 1.0m H) • Small coop cups and ceramic bowls for water and food • Large quantity of clean towels or blankets for lining enclosure • Small to medium sized water containers for holding fresh vegetation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large outdoor enclosure (minimum size 3.0m L x 3.0m W x 2.0m H ranging to 6.0m L x 3.0m W x 3.0m H) • Enclosure must have adequate amount of shade with some areas where access to sun is possible • Large branches and ropes to allow for climbing experience • All species will require an artificial nest box suitable to the species • Coop cups for water and food • Large water containers for holding fresh vegetation |

Critical Care Stage - designed to reduce an animal's level of physical activity for a short period of time and to provide easy access for monitoring, treatment and feeding.

Intermediate Care Stage – allows sufficient space for some physical activity while enabling the animal to be readily caught for monitoring and treatment.

Pre-Release/Final Rehabilitation Stage – allows an animal to regain better physical condition, display natural behaviour, acclimatise to normal weather conditions and reduce human contact.

The measurements for enclosures listed above are sourced from the *Code of Practice – Care of Sick, Injured and Orphaned Protected Animals in Queensland* (EHP). In some circumstances, Wildcare's housing requirements exceed the CoP suggestions.