



**MIDCOAST**  
council

# PROTECTING SQUIRREL GLIDERS IN YOUR BACKYARD



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Squirrel gliders are often found in the Forster area. They are at a moderate to high density in most forested reserves and are also known in a range of other areas. We are fortunate to have such robust populations within bushland reserves in urban Forster and it is a sign that our forests are often of high quality and condition. There are three sub-populations:

- Central Forster reserves (Golden Ponds/ The Southern Parkway – Zamia/ Kentia – Reservoir Hill – The Sanctuary)
- Sweet Pea Road/ Seven Mile Beach
- Pipers Creek and Big Island

These sub-populations are somewhat isolated at present and it is a major priority to re-connect these habitats to secure the species. Trees in road reserves and private properties in the urban area are critical for movement.

You can help protect these important populations in and around your own home.

A good habitat garden can encourage a wide range of animals into your backyard

## In the Garden

There are simple things you can do to create an attractive, low-maintenance, wildlife-friendly oasis for animals like squirrel gliders. A good habitat garden can encourage a wide range of birds, reptiles, frogs, insects, microbats and mammals into your backyard.

The variety of wildlife that you get in your garden will depend on the habitats that you provide. In natural bushland there are five main structural layers where wildlife feed, shelter or breed. Four of the layers comprise vegetation cover and the fifth is the leaf litter, logs and rocks found on the ground. In developing your natural habitat garden, try to mimic these different layers.

### To help attract wildlife to your garden:



Plant local native plants



Provide water for birds or a small frog pond



Provide nesting boxes for gliders, birds, possums and microbats



Provide rocks and logs for lizards and frogs



Keep areas with natural leaf litter for lizards and other small animals



# Weed Management in Your garden

A weed is any plant growing in an area where it does not naturally occur and is not wanted. A weed could be something that popped up by itself in your garden, was already there when you moved in, or you may have unwittingly planted it! Weeds compete with native plants for water, light and nutrients and spread into natural areas from backyards via animals, birds, wind, water, green waste dumping, and attachments on vehicles. They know no boundaries!

Many bushland weeds are species that have escaped from suburban gardens. They invade bushland and displace native species thus depriving native fauna of a source of food and habitat.



Feral and domestic cats are a serious threat to squirrel gliders



To help protect the native bushland around Forster you can do the following:



Remove introduced species from your backyard



Avoid purchasing species known to be environmental weeds



Do not plant introduced species that have berries or fruits readily distributed by birds



Replace invasive plants in your garden with native alternatives



Join a Landcare or Coastcare Group

# Responsible Pet Ownership

It is estimated that over 60% of Australian households have one or more pets. Without their owners even knowing, domestic pets can catch and kill native animals or prevent them from entering a residential backyard. Feral and domestic cats are the biggest threat to native animals in the urban environment. Cats are opportunistic predators and will climb trees to prey on squirrel gliders and other native wildlife. It's very important that domestic cats are kept indoors, or confined to cat enclosures.

It is possible to have both domestic pets and wildlife by doing the following:



Desex domestic cats



Build cat runs or modular pet parks for cats



Keep dogs and cats in their yard



Don't leave out extra food for pets because you might attract foxes or Indian myna birds.



Squirrel glider photos provided by Ashley Carlson

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