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Writer's Pack

Thank you for considering writing for *Australian Wildlife Secrets* – Australia's premier wildlife magazine.

Our audience is largely family based, amateur wildlife enthusiasts and animal carers. Accordingly, we search the country looking for exciting, informative articles that encourage good wildlife management and the creation and care of yard-friendly environmental practices. While we cannot guarantee to publish any article, AWS staff will work with writers to prepare their submissions to work towards a likely placement.

As our magazine requires a balance of material, successful articles will be allocated based on the selection criteria for each issue.

What you need to know

Contract:

A writer's agreement setting out all relevant obligations will be sent on acceptance of material.

Fees:

Wildlife Secrets has a sliding fee scale for published articles based on the author's professional standing and the size and visual content of the material.

Please contact the editor to discuss rates.

Accepted formats: Word (.DOC) or Rich Text (RTF)

Credits:

Where applicable, this information should be supplied when submitting images and text. When using other author's images or words, ensure you have permission in writing from the owner and forward a copy of this documentation to AWS.

Copyright:

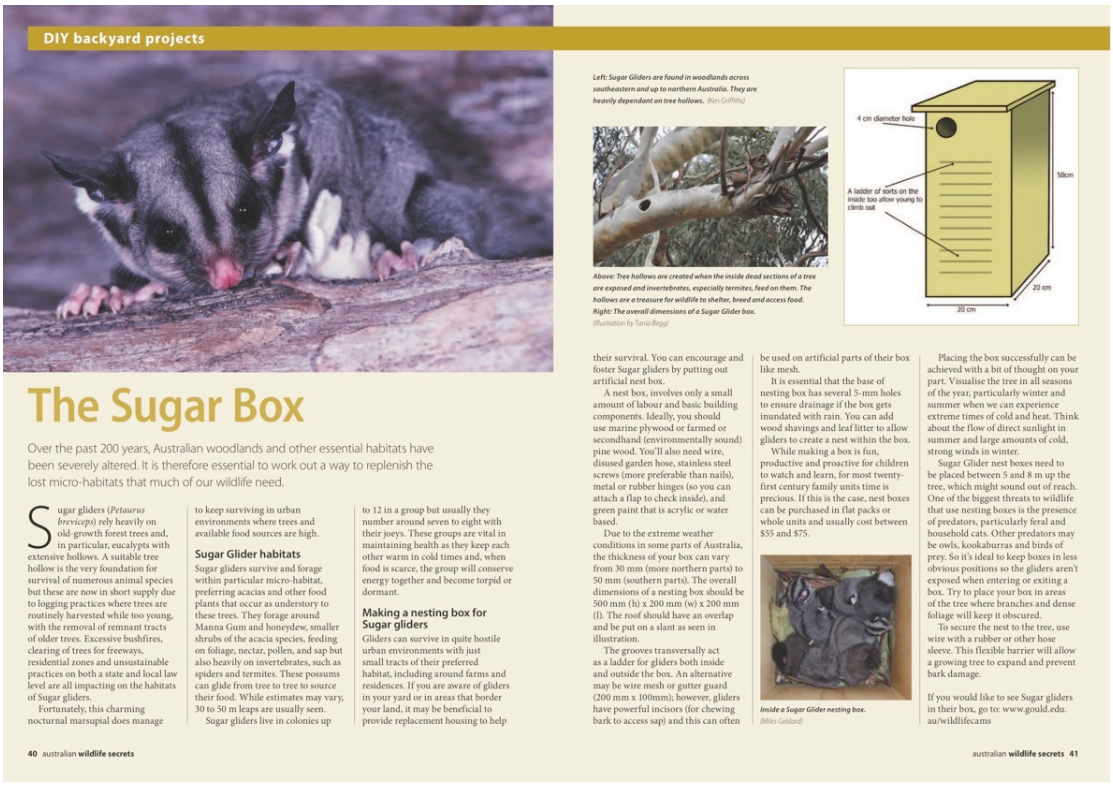
Authors own the copyright to their material and agree to exclusively license the work to Wildlife Secrets for a period of 12 months from publication, which means the article cannot appear in another magazine or on websites unless agreed in writing by Wildlife Secrets.

Quality assurance:

Wildlife Secrets takes much pleasure in presenting articles in a professional manner and as such we provide professional editing and proofing, design and layout, and print quality. A style guide is available and will accompany this pack or can be found on our website.

Layout and proofs:

When requested, we will send the author a PDF of their final article for proofing and any last-minute necessary changes.



DIY backyard projects

The Sugar Box

Over the past 200 years, Australian woodlands and other essential habitats have been severely altered. It is therefore essential to work out a way to replenish the lost micro-habitats that much of our wildlife need.

Sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*) rely heavily on old-growth forest trees and, in particular, eucalypts with extensive hollows. A suitable tree hollow is the very foundation for survival of numerous animal species but these are now in short supply due to logging practices where trees are routinely harvested while too young, with the removal of remnant tracts of older trees. Excessive bushfires, clearing of trees for freeways, residential zones and unsustainable practices on both a state and local law level are all impacting on the habitats of Sugar gliders.

Fortunately, this charming nocturnal marsupial does manage to keep surviving in urban environments where trees and available food sources are high.

Sugar Glider habitats

Sugar gliders survive and forage within particular micro-habitat, preferring acacias and other food plants that occur as understory to these trees. They forage around Manna Gum and honeydew, smaller shrubs of the acacia species, feeding on foliage, nectar, pollen, and sap but also heavily on invertebrates, such as spiders and termites. These possums can glide from tree to tree to source their food. While estimates may vary, 30 to 50 m leaps are usually seen.

Sugar gliders live in colonies up to 12 in a group but usually they number around seven to eight with their joeys. These groups are vital in maintaining health as they keep each other warm in cold times and, when food is scarce, the group will conserve energy together and become torpid or dormant.

Making a nesting box for Sugar gliders

Gliders can survive in quite hostile urban environments with just small tracts of their preferred habitat, including around farms and residences. If you are aware of gliders in your yard or in areas that border your land, it may be beneficial to provide replacement housing to help their survival. You can encourage and foster Sugar gliders by putting out artificial nest box.

A nest box, involves only a small amount of labour and basic building components. Ideally, you should use marine plywood or farmed or secondhand (environmentally sound) pine wood. You'll also need wire, disused garden hose, stainless steel screws (more preferable than nails), metal or rubber hinges (so you can attach a flap to check inside), and green paint that is acrylic or water based.

Due to the extreme weather conditions in some parts of Australia, the thickness of your box can vary from 30 mm (more northern parts) to 50 mm (southern parts). The overall dimensions of a nesting box should be 500 mm (h) x 200 mm (w) x 200 mm (l). The roof should have an overlap and be put on a slant as seen in illustration.

The grooves transversally act as a ladder for gliders both inside and outside the box. An alternative may be wire mesh or gutter guard (200 mm x 100mm); however, gliders have powerful incisors (for chewing bark to access sap) and this can often be used on artificial parts of their box like mesh.

It is essential that the base of nesting box has several 5-mm holes to ensure drainage if the box gets inundated with rain. You can add wood shavings and leaf litter to allow gliders to create a nest within the box.

While making a box is fun, productive and proactive for children to watch and learn, for most twenty-first century family units time is precious. If this is the case, nest boxes can be purchased in flat packs or whole units and usually cost between $55 and $75.

Placing the box successfully can be achieved with a bit of thought on your part. Visualise the tree in all seasons of the year, particularly winter and summer when we can experience extreme times of cold and heat. Think about the flow of direct sunlight in summer and large amounts of cold, strong winds in winter.

Sugar Glider nest boxes need to be placed between 5 and 8 m up the tree, which might sound out of reach. One of the biggest threats to wildlife that use nesting boxes is the presence of predators, particularly feral and household cats. Other predators may be owls, kookaburras and birds of prey. So it's ideal to keep boxes in less obvious positions so the gliders aren't exposed when entering or exiting a box. Try to place your box in areas of the tree where branches and dense foliage will keep it obscured.

To secure the nest to the tree, use wire with a rubber or other hose sleeve. This flexible barrier will allow a growing tree to expand and prevent bark damage.

If you would like to see Sugar gliders in their box, go to: www.gould.edu.au/wildlifecams

Left: Sugar Gliders are found in woodlands across southeastern and up to northern Australia. They are heavily dependant on tree hollows. (Ron Griffiths)

Above: Tree hollows are created when the inside dead sections of a tree are exposed and invertebrates, especially termites, feed on them. The hollows are a treasure for wildlife to shelter, breed and access food.
Right: The overall dimensions of a Sugar Glider box.
(Illustration by Tania Begg)

Inside a Sugar Glider nesting box.
(Miles Geldard)

A sample feature-with-images post-design

Images

AWS accepts RAW, Tiff or Jpeg (jpg) and will also take slides (to be scanned).

Mail DVD/slides (registered) to:

Simon Watharow
PO Box 4760 Knox City, 3152 Victoria.
Email: (under 10 Mb) simon@wildlifesecrets.com.au

Photos provide much interest for readers. Therefore they need to be sharp, in focus and high resolution where possible. Low-resolution images may be used but severely restrict usage. AWS requires usually 1-5 megabyte images to carefully manipulate the usage. When using DSLR have the setting on RAW or maximum DPI resolution. Website images are rarely used.

Professional images by request are used and rates will vary depending on size, usage and placement in magazine. Please email to offer your services and a list of requests goes out during each magazine for images, and chosen images selected and paid for after printing.

Rates: from $25 an image.

Wildlife Secrets Style Guide

Articles may be edited for consistency, length and placement.

It also helps if your submitted articles to conform with the AWS style guide. Key elements of the guide include:

Animal names:

- Scientific names are capitalised and italic, but a special epithet is not capitalised, as in *Aquila audax* (Wedge-tailed Eagle)
- When plural, species name is lower case, as in Wedge-tailed eagles
- Common names are capitalised (as in Bennett's Wallaby) and roman
- Generic names (as in wallaby or waterbird) is lower case

Numbers and measurements:

- One to ten is spelt out unless a measurement or date (as in one egg); 11 and on are numeric
- All measurements are metric and contractions (as in cm, km, etc.)
- Spans are set with an en dash, no spaces (as in 9–10 cm)
- Dates are day, month, year, no commas (as in 16 March 2011)
- Up to 9999 no commas used, 10,000 and on with comma

Places and organisations:

Captialised (as in Murraylands Region, Wombat Awareness Organisation)

Spellings:

waterbirds (1 wd)
waterlogged (1 wd)
ton (not tonne)