



Right: Yellow-bellied gliders may be seen feeding communally on the sap of favoured eucalypt species.

Image: Josh Bowell



SPOTLIGHTING FOR GLIDERS

Using a torch or spotlight to pinpoint the shining eyes of gliders in the treetops at night can help determine their presence when best-practice methods are followed – especially for greater gliders.

Equipment and supplies

- A spotlight with a dimmer switch and/or red filter (30–50 watts)
- Binoculars (7x, 8x, 10x recommended)
- Field notebook or fauna recording form
- First Aid kit

Spotlighting should only be conducted on your own property or with the permission of the landholder, ranger, or land manager. The best

results are achieved on dark nights at least an hour after sunset, and depending on the site, for at least an hour's duration. Once a glider is spotted, observe it only for a short time.

While walking in a single direction along a track, methodically scan vegetation with the torch held at eye level. Torches with red-filtered light or spotlights with a dimmer switch work best.

Greater glider eyeshine is bright-white under white light and orange under red light. In yellow-bellied gliders, eyeshine is white, but they are mostly detected acoustically following the sound of their distinctive shrieks, whirrs, and clicks.

Yellow-bellied gliders are more gregarious and active than greater gliders, which may move little. Seeing either of these species actually gliding is a rare treat.

Look for greater gliders high in the branches of the oldest trees, whereas yellow-bellied gliders are often on the trunks or limbs of 'food trees' and are heard before they are seen. Checking properties during the daytime hours for large gums with V-shaped notches and leaking sap flows will identify good sites to unobtrusively place infrared, motion-sensitive cameras or acoustic monitors to help detect these gliders.

Once gliders are spotted, white-light exposure should be reduced to avoid disturbing their nocturnal activities. Importantly, there should never be direct contact. Always remember to treat threatened gliders with respect and care.

Stagwatching

Stagwatching means identifying suspected dens in hollow or dead 'stag' trees and then watching them at dusk, when gliders leave their hollows to forage. You must stay far enough away to not obstruct the hollow's entrance or interfere with the glider. Hollows should also not be directly spotlighted. Recording the stag tree's species and location generates useful information for field notes and researchers.



Image: Josh Bowell

Look for large glider species in old eucalypts, including gum-topped box, river red gums, and ironbark species, particularly when trees are flowering.

White light can be blinding, which prevents natural behaviour. Ensure any white-light sources are used only to illuminate tracks for safety and are then dimmed or switched off. Red-filtered light is less obtrusive for gliders.

SPOTLIGHTING & STAGWATCHING TIPS

- A small, quiet group will have a better chance of success.
- Use designated tracks to avoid trampling vegetation or spreading weeds.
- Do not spotlight in the same trees or area for more than 3 nights in a row.
- Never interfere with the animals or try to feed them or encourage them to glide.
- Record observations in a field notebook or on a fauna sighting form.
- Report sightings of larger gliders to Queensland Glider Network at glider@wildlife.org.au



Image: Josh Bowell

Yellow-bellied gliders are curious, active, and vocal, with a whiter eyeshine.



Image: Paul Revie

Greater gliders have white-yellow to bright-orange eyeshine and are very quiet in the treetops.