

Nest Box Monitoring Notes

Why monitor?

We use nest boxes to monitor the distribution and status of arboreal mammals (e.g. Sugar Glider, Feathertail Glider, Brush-tailed Phascogales and woodland birds in the region.

We use nest boxes as a means for landholders and others to be directly involved and engaged in the project by establishing nest boxes on their properties

We use nest box monitoring as an educational tool and for the promotion of the overall project

We use nest boxes as part of our long-term strategy to monitor changes in the environment over time

We will gather baseline data to determine the usage of nest boxes by arboreal mammals and woodland birds in revegetation plantations in the Wedderburn district.

Equipment required

- 0 Monitoring camera
- 0 Ladder with fasteners
- 0 Monitoring sheet
- 0 Samsung tablet with Avenza maps.

Available from



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Field monitoring of nest boxes:

References:

Lewis, M. *Long term nest box study in the Bendigo area.*

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club

McMullan, B. 2012. *Nest Box Monitoring Field Guide.* Yellow Box Woodland Project Nest Box Program, Connecting Country.

Triggs, B. (1996) *Tracks, Scats and Other Traces* - A field guide to Australian Mammals

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**Wedderburn
Conservation
Management
Network**

Conserving and
enhancing the biodiversity

When to Monitor

Nest boxes will be checked once a year March as part of systematic monitoring and

MARCH 2019						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

data on use of each nest box will be recorded. At other times, some nest boxes may be checked for educational or communication purposes. Care should be taken to avoid disturbance when monitoring at other times, especially around the breeding season in spring.

Observing the nest boxes at dusk is preferred



•How to monitor

It is preferable to use the most non-invasive method of studying an animal so as not to interfere with its behaviour and breeding success.

Therefore if possible a pole mounted camera can be used to monitor nest boxes and if needed photograph inside the box. If the use of a camera is not possible then best practice is:

Always be safe and secure your ladder to the tree.

Always work in pairs with one person holding onto the ladder.

- * Place a sock, (or the like) in hole.
- * Raise nest box lid and slide clear plastic plate over exposed lid (this prevents animals escaping and potentially being predated on).
- * After observing contents of box, close lid and slide out plastic.
- * Gently remove sock.



Alternatively, you can monitor if the nest box is being used by doing the following:

Head to the nest box approximately 10 minutes before sunset.

Take a torch with you, but make sure to put red cellophane over the light which will act as a filter and reduce any disturbance to the animal.

Establish a sit and wait position within sight of the space between the nest box entrance and the host tree trunk (the entrance will be close to the tree trunk).

The distance between your position and the box should be reduced according to your ability to keep still and quiet. You could be waiting up to 30 minutes. Very quiet and still observers can sit within 2m of the tree. However, larger groups of people will need to keep further away, up to 5m for example.

You should be in place, quiet and still within 15 minutes of twilight (twilight times will generally lag sunset times by approximately 20 minutes). Local sunset times can be found readily on the internet such as on the [weather zone website](#).

Wait a minimum of 15 minutes past twilight to see if an animal emerges from the box.

When movement is observed around the nest box opening, see if you can identify the animal in the natural light available by observing its shape and size (silhouettes are often great indicators of species).

As a final measure, turn on your torch, but ensure you have red cellophane over the beam. Track the animal to identify distinguishing features. If an animal bolts for the canopy, try to resist the temptation to stand up and make a fuss (noise and movement will make these animals flighty).

If you have time, turn your torch off and wait for another five minutes to see whether you can spy another individual exiting.

