



Threatened species detection report

Mt Alfred State Forest

Wattle Creek Track planned burn area

A report on the detections of Yellow-bellied Gliders (*Petaurus australis*), Southern Greater Gliders (*Petauroides Volans*), Long-nosed Bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*), Yellow-bellied Glider feed trees, and habitat trees detected within and adjacent to Mt Alfred - Wattle Creek Road planned burn GP-TBO-BAI-0017, in Mt Alfred State Forest, East Gippsland.



Abstract

Fauna and habitat surveys were conducted by surveyors from the Victorian Forest Alliance within and adjacent to Mt Alfred-Wattle Creek Road scheduled planned burn in vicinity of Wattle Creek Track in Mt Alfred State Forest, adjacent to the Mitchell River National Park. Yellow-bellied Gliders, Greater Gliders, Long-nosed Bandicoot, Yellow-bellied Glider feed trees, and a significant number of hollow-bearing trees were detected across two days of nocturnal spotlighting surveys, and daytime habitat surveys. See below for the results.

Surveyors: Chris Schuringa, Andrew Lincoln, Mardi Denham-Roberts, Felicia Brady

Author: Chris Schuringa

Date of Investigation: 20/11/2023 - 22/11/2023

Date of report: 13/12/2023

Location: The survey was undertaken in and adjacent to the scheduled Wattle Creek Road planned burn, in the Mount Alfred State Forest, adjacent to the Mitchell River National Park.

Method

A nocturnal spotlight survey was conducted over two nights, and habitat trees recorded during the day.

Where possible, animals were filmed using a video camera which then panned over to a GPS to provide the coordinates of the detection location. Vocalisations of Yellow-bellied Gliders were also detected during the survey. The approximate locations were marked using a GPS. Other fauna species of interest were also recorded, as well as Yellow-bellied Glider feed trees, and hollow-bearing trees/habitat trees.

Results

Spotlighting surveys on 20 November 2023 detected twelve Southern Greater Gliders, and Yellow-bellied gliders were aurally detected at six locations. Spotlighting surveys on 21 November 2023 detected one Long-nosed Bandicoot, two Southern Greater Gliders, and two Yellow-bellied gliders were aurally detected.

- [Click here to access a Google drive folder with waypoints and footage of species detections](#)
- For habitat tree photos please contact citizen.science@victorianforestalliance.org.au

Results summary

Waypoint ID	Species	Coordinates	Detection	Date & time
MTA03YBGA	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 537279 5830426	Aural	20/11/2023 23:07
MTA01GGV	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 537842 5831135	Visual	20/11/2023 21:23
MTA04GGV	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 537172 5830302	Visual	20/11/2023 23:47
MTA05GGV	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 536817 5829413	Visual	21/11/2023 01:02
MTA06GGV	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 536791 5829358	Visual	21/11/2023 01:07
MTA08GGV	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 536752 5829416	Visual	21/11/2023 01:11
MTA09GG&SGV	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 536727 5829310	Visual	21/11/2023 01:33
MALO1BANV	Long-nosed Bandicoot	55 H 536210 5829616	Visual	22/11/2023 00:09
MTA10YBGA	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 536745 5829282	Aural	21/11/2023 01:35
WCT2GG01V	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 536505 5829214	Visual, not filmed	21/11/2023 11:07
WCT2GG02	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 536335 5829364	Visual	22/11/2023 00:38
WCTGG01	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 537307 5829451	Visual	20/11/2023 10:28
WCTGG02	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 537273 5829459	Visual	20/11/2023 10:32
WCTGG03	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 537106 5829518	Visual	20/11/2023 11:31
WCTGG04	Southern Greater Glider	55 H 536977 5829311	Visual	21/11/2023 00:08
WCT2YBG01A	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 536178 5829407	Aural	21/11/2023 21:58
WCT2YBG01A1	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 536415 5829162	Aural	21/11/2023 22:56
WCTYBG01A	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 537381 5829552	Aural	20/11/2023 21:42
WCTYBG02A	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 537477 5829423	Aural	20/11/2023 21:56
WCTYBG03A	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 536897 5829103	Aural	21/11/2023 00:09
WCTYBG04A	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 536858 5829491	Aural	21/11/2023 00:36
WCTYBG05A	Yellow-bellied Glider	55 H 536685 5829318	Aural	21/11/2023 01:00
WCTYBGFT	Yellow-bellied Glider feed tree	55 H 537417 5829426	NA	20/11/2023 21:57
08571	Habitat tree	55 H 537062 5829481	NA	20/11/2023 23:24
0858	Habitat tree	55 H 536936 5829328	NA	21/11/2023 00:19
08591	Habitat tree	55 H 536849 5829284	NA	21/11/2023 00:45
08601	Habitat tree	55 H 536213 5829195	NA	21/11/2023 22:08
08611	Habitat tree	55 H 536288 5829166	NA	21/11/2023 22:32

08621	Habitat tree	55 H 536517 5829582	NA	22/11/2023 00:06
08631	Habitat tree	55 H 536340 5829399	NA	22/11/2023 00:27
HBT2	Habitat tree	55 H 536025 5829644	NA	21/11/2023 23:32

Conclusion

The forests within and adjacent to the scheduled burn GP-TBO-BAI-0017 Mt Alfred – Wattle Creek Road are an important refuge for threatened wildlife. Our surveys show significant numbers of Greater Glider, Yellow-bellied Glider, and Long-nosed Bandicoot. These species will likely be killed by FFMV’s scheduled planned burn.

Greater Gliders are listed as Endangered and Yellow-bellied Gliders are listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC ACT. The Department of the Environment’s Conservation Advice for both species identifies prescribed burns as a key threat, not only causing direct mortality, but also the destruction of glider habitat trees used for denning. Research by DELWP (Bluff 2016¹) identified that hollow bearing trees in planned burns were 28 times more likely to collapse than in unburnt areas.

The forest in the Mt Alfred-Wattle Creek Road planned burn area is a Special Protection Zone and has not experienced widespread prescribed fire or bushfire for more than thirty years. The protection of long unburnt forests is critical for the recovery of many threatened species (von Takach et al 2022²).

We urgently recommend that FFMV remove the Mt Alfred–Wattle Creek Road from the scheduled planned burn, or refer the burn under the EPBC Act as a controlled action, acknowledging the serious threat to listed species and their habitat.

The adjacent GP-TBO-BAI-0007 Mt Alfred-Kill Me Dead Creek planned burn contains similar habitat and threatened species including Greater Gliders and Yellow-bellied Gliders. This burn must also be referred under the EPBC Act as a controlled action.

We have provided the detections in this report to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas.



We respectfully acknowledge the Brabralung First Nations Peoples, of the Gunnai Kurnai nation, whose unceded land we conducted these surveys on.

We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past and present.

¹ Bluff, L. Reducing the effect of planned burns on hollow bearing trees, DELWP report no 95 (2016)

² Von Takach, B., Jolly, C.J., Dixon, K.M. et al. Long-unburnt habitat is critical for the conservation of threatened vertebrates across Australia. *Landscape Ecology* 37, 1469-1482 (2022)