



December 14, 2020

## Citizen scientists find high density of Yellow-bellied Gliders halting destruction of forests!

Logging has stopped in old growth forests in the Colquhoun after citizen scientists from GECO, Gippsland Environment Group, and Friends of Bats and Habitat Gippsland found a high density of Yellow-bellied Gliders. Thanks to the actions of citizen scientists and people taking action and calling the Environment Minister logging has stopped for now!

VicForests and the Environment Department didn't conduct spotlight surveys for the gliders which would have protected the area. A large part of the coupe has already been logged where it is highly likely Yellow-bellied Gliders were present. VicForests is legally required to do the surveys, they failed to protect the gliders making logging in the area unlawful. [Read our report submitted to the Environment Department here.](#)

Logging started in the area over two weeks ago, in an [ABC article released on Saturday morning](#) a VicForests representative stated that "These coupes would have had all of the appropriate surveys by VicForests." But destruction of the forests started without any surveys.



Department specifically told VicForests not to log. Last week we revealed [the Department had made secret recommendations to VicForests not to log unburnt forests.](#)

According to the Forest Protection Survey Program report for 'Lior' obtained from their website at least four detections of Yellow-bellied Glider were picked up by audio recorders prior to logging. Despite the presence of Yellow-bellied Gliders a spotlight survey wasn't done by FPSP or VicForests.

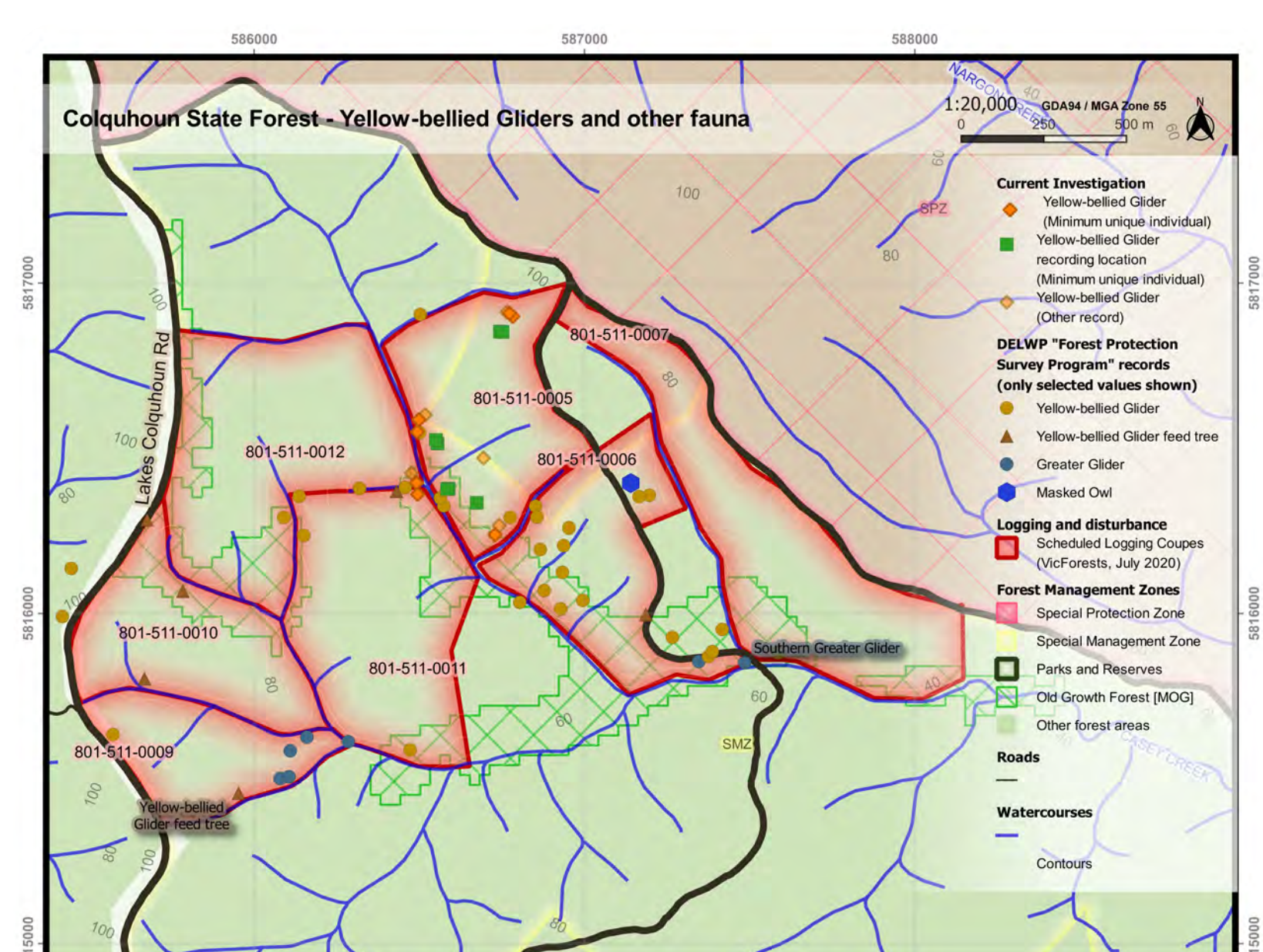
According to the Environment Department's biodiversity response and recovery report for the 2019/2020 bushfires 35% of Yellow-bellied Gliders modelled habitat is within the fire extent and 18% within high severity burn areas. The species is set to be listed as Endangered under Federal environment law.



East Gippsland locals protest logging in 'Lior', Colquhoun State Forest

Under forest regulations covering the East Gippsland the identification of more than five Yellow-bellied Gliders in one kilometre of spotlighting triggers the establishment of a 100ha protection zone. VicForests did not conduct survey before commencing logging, a significant part of the coupe has been destroyed which would have been protected had surveys been done.

Masked Owl was also reported in an adjacent coupe, and there is munched old growth throughout the area. Despite the terrible impacts of the bushfires in the East Gippsland, and the government's old growth forest logging ban, logging has gone ahead in this important area of unburnt forests. An adjacent coupe 'Tiger' was also surveyed by FPSP and 9 Yellow-bellied Gliders were recorded, the Department need to put in a zone there as well to protect the glider's.



Map of the area showing Yellow-bellied Glider detections, credit [Fauna and Flora Research Collective](#)

The ABC article released on Saturday said Agriculture Minister Jaclyn Symes (in charge of the state-owned logging company VicForests) told ABC Gippsland **only salvage logging of burnt forests was taking place** in East Gippsland.

"I can assure you that there is no harvesting in East Gippsland occurring at the moment, apart from salvage logging," she said.

But environmentalists said Ms Syme's statement was contradictory.

"To say that there will be no unburnt areas logged within the fire footprint makes little sense, considering the fire footprint is essentially a map of the burnt areas of East Gippsland... It would be fair to say the minister's claims give the impression that logging is less widespread than it is."

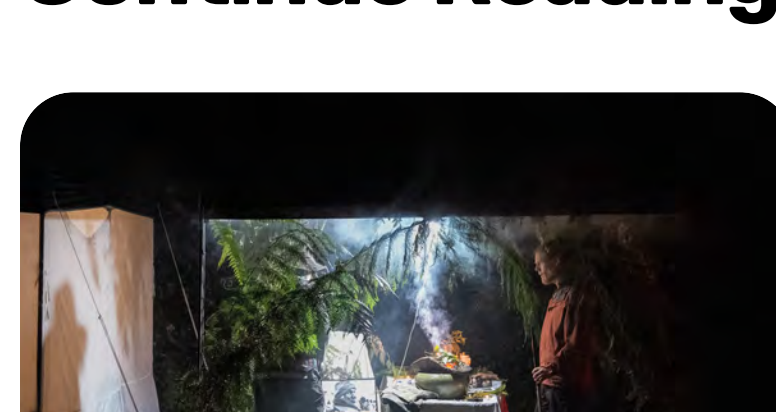
"This approach is unfortunately consistent with the way information around logging is often communicated with the public, where sleight of hand is common, information is used selectively and science is often ignored."

SHARE

Citizen science Threatened species Unburnt Forests Colquhoun

## Continue Reading

Read More



### Day of Forest Defenders: Podcast & Video remembering our fallen legends

January 18, 2024

A tribute podcast and video by GECO forest crew to remember our dead forest defenders, read by Fiona York, Kim Shimlaki and Anita Davis, as part of the podcast series "GECO: 30 years fighting for forests"

READ MORE



### 30 Years Fighting for Forests Celebration

January 11, 2024

In December 2023 we celebrated our 30th anniversary along with the end of native forest logging in Victoria! We reflected on the epic battles of the campaign, the people that passed along the way, and the people who stuck through it all thick and...

READ MORE



### 30 Years Fighting for Forests Podcast

December 19, 2023

To celebrate our 30th anniversary, this new 6-part podcast series looks back on the wins, losses and lessons of a thirty year campaign to protect the forests of East Gippsland in Victoria. Produced by Fiona York and 3CR and available wherever you get your...

READ MORE