

NEST BOX INNOVATIONS

...simplifying construction and monitoring

YOUNG LANDCARER, JACK SPITTLE (WONYIP LANDCARE GROUP, GIPPSLAND), TAKES NEST BOX DESIGN AND MONITORING TO THE NEXT LEVEL... WITH SIMPLICITY AT ITS CORE.

Australia is witnessing unprecedented levels of habitat loss - including the devastating loss of old-growth forests, tree hollows, and our arboreal species who rely on them. Witnessing the decline of the Strzelecki Range's Eastern Pygmy Possum, Red-Tailed Phascogale, Greater Glider, Powerful Owl, Barking Owl, Masked Owl, and the Azure Kingfisher, and learning of the recent listing of the Gang Gang and Black Cockatoo, Jack Spittle decided to do something about it.

SIMPLE NEST BOXES

Jack has designed a no-nails flat-pack nest-box which can be carried into the field, constructed and installed by novices, on the spot, in minutes. It is a game changer. A timber housing coated in wax provides a strong and lasting home; peppermint extract is added to deter swarms of bees moving in! Jack's simple notch assembly has now been patented and continues to be adapted for a range of arboreal species from small boxes for bats, pygmy possums and sugar gliders to larger boxes for species such as Greater Gliders, Gang Gangs, Glossy Black Cockatoos, and a range of owls - the list keeps growing.

A 2021 VLG Grant is supporting the installation of over 90 of Jack's nest boxes across the Wonyip district, and more boxes have already been installed across city and regional locations in Victoria and NSW in a variety of projects.



Patent No. 2020103607

IN-BOX MONITORING

The State of the Environment Report (2021), VAGO's 'Protecting Victoria's Biodiversity' (2021) and Samuel's 'Independent Review of the EPBC Act' (2020) all speak to the critical importance of monitoring our native populations and evaluating the efforts we are taking to protect them.

Understanding that meaningful data is key to impact, Jack has designed a monitoring device which detects movement inside nest boxes. His wireless device is connected to the internet and so climbing a tree to check the box becomes a thing of the past.

Occupancy is recorded in real time and can be viewed anywhere in the world through his online dashboard. Real data - in real time - anywhere.

A pilot in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, believed to be the first of its kind, is to show the potential of this innovation for the casual citizen scientist to governments facing the challenges of climate change.

Jack is also looking at other applications for this technology. The sky's the limit!



Image: Alice McGlashan (2021)

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