

Greater Gliders: Under the Cover of Darkness

Natalie Jane Parker

Greater gliders (*Petauroides volans*) are one of my favourite Australian animals. It is disheartening that they are listed as endangered due to land clearing and logging of old-growth forests. I love their cute faces, soft colours, and fluffy ears.



I have been a member of the Australian Wildlife Society for a few years now. After reading in the summer edition of the Australian Wildlife magazine that the greater glider had been chosen as the Society's feature animal for 2024, I decided to paint this beautiful animal to help raise awareness and donate

Top left: Josh Bowell's photograph of the greater glider (*Petauroides volans*) was used as a reference for the painting. Image: Josh Bowell.

a portion of the sale price to the Guardians of the Greater Glider conservation program. Titled 'Under the Cover of Darkness', I started this painting in April 2024, and it took close to a month to complete. I used acrylic paints on canvas, and the artwork is currently for sale, hanging in Morpeth Art Gallery in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales.

I have been a wildlife artist for over twenty-five years

and am a member of several international art groups. One of these is Artist for Conservation. I knew before I started this painting, I hoped to submit it to their annual exhibition to promote further exposure to the plight of greater gliders. I was so pleased that my painting was selected for the virtual exhibit and companion book in June 2024. Artists for Conservation is based in Canada and is the world's leading group

of artists supporting the environment. This non-profit organisation comprises a membership of five hundred nature artists from over thirty countries. This year's exhibit saw a record number of submissions, with 547 entries! This annual exhibition is in its seventeenth year, celebrating artistic excellence in depicting nature, raising awareness of conservation issues, and supporting organisations dedicated to them. Last

year, I was genuinely surprised to win a Medal of Excellence for my painting of two laughing kookaburras (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) and an Honourable Mention for my second entry of a young swamp wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*).

I have a website where my artworks are available as prints, cards, and calendars, all made in Australia. Since May 2021, I have donated five percent of my monthly profits

to wildlife organisations. My greater glider painting will be added to my website soon and can be found at www.natalieparkerprints.com.au.

I hope to raise awareness of these beautiful animals, not only in Australia but internationally. The more people are informed about the dire situation that greater gliders face, the more they can be supported and protected.



I must thank Josh Bowell for allowing me to use his amazing photography as a reference for this painting. It takes patience and dedication to find these animals in the wild and photograph them, which is a feat in itself. Living

Top right: Medal of Excellence for the painting of two laughing kookaburras (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) and Honourable Mention for the entry of a young swamp wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*). Image: Natalie Jane Parker.

high up in the forest canopy, greater gliders are relatively silent animals spotted mainly by eye reflection.

More details about 'Under the Cover of Darkness' can be found on Morpeth Gallery's website at: www.morpethgallery.com

Bottom: Progression of the greater glider (*Petauroides volans*) painting up to the final and completed piece. Images: Natalie Jane Parker.

