

We have three colonies in as many separate rooms all of which are "glider proofed." Our "D" colony gets free roam of their room from 10:00 PM until 7:00 AM and then it's back to the cage. The first hour or hour and a half is spent with me and Gail playing with them. The rest of the time they are alone because you can't be with two territorial colonies at the same time or they will kill each other. We then lock them into their big "cage" (their room), wash off the D colony's scent, and change into our "B" colony clothes for the rest of the evening. We then retire to the bedroom and let the "Bs" out amongst us for the night until 7:00 AM.

Regarding the "extreme lifestyle approach" of letting your gliders out all night, we developed and use "Ed & Gail's Free Range Glider Rules" in addition to the gliderproofing tips. You can see this set of warnings and guidelines below for those of you crazy enough to attempt this. Yes, we are amongst the "fringe lunatics" that do this. We are gratified and delighted to watch them running, jumping, gliding, wrestling and chasing all night. And there is a lot of interaction too. Being awoken by a wet glider tongue in your ear every hour on the hour is not for everyone though... You have to take on additional responsibilities to make sure they are safe and you have to do a lot of extra work and cleaning each day.... Ready???? Here goes:

### Ed & Gail's Gliderproofing Tips & Free Range Glider Rules

This is in two parts:

- 1) Gliderproofing (points 1A through 1M)
- 2) Free-Range Rules (points 2A through 2G)

#### 1. Gliderproofing.

1A. Plumbing. All plumbing or access to plumbing behind walls must be blocked off. Plumbing often comes out of walls with plenty of space between the pipe and the wall. The last thing you want is a glider getting stuck in a wall.

1B. Valuables. valuables should be taken out of the room. If you have fine jewelry, heirloom photos or knick Knacks - they will be unceremoniously destroyed. Say goodbye to heirlooms, nice hanging pictures, plants, candles - anything nice. Say goodbye to anything you think is sentimental or valuable in any way - just take it all out of the room.

1C. Poisons. Poisons such as bug spray cans, solvents, detergents, etc. need to be taken away. If you can lock them in a cabinet that cannot possibly be opened, fine. But you have to be sure not to leave that door or drawer open.

1D. Candles. Just say no. Candles often contain material that is harmful to gliders and it is a BIG NO NO to have them lit with gliders in the room.

1E. Toilet seats. Down and covered. If they get in, they will drown.

1F. Holes, cracks, etc. Holes in walls and cabinetry must be covered or blocked off. You have to devise a way to block gaps under the door like with towels or anti-draft gadgets. Door cracks must be covered by stuffing towels under them or anti-draft gadgets.

1G. Appliances. Refrigerators, washers, dryers or any thing with a fan, heater or open flame

in it or under it is very dangerous (don't let them in a room with those things). Recently, a poster on sugarglider.com reported that a glider climbed in to the VHS slot on a TV/VHS combo and died inside, probably from electrocution.

1H. Fans. If you have a ceiling fan, shut it off and rig it so you can't turn it on by mistake. Fans with exposed blades are also dangerous for obvious reasons. Consider one of those ionic breeze jobs that has covered blades.

1I. House Plants. These are generally a bad idea. They will wreck the plants, scatter the dirt and possibly get killed eating them. Here is a good URL on good and bad plants: [http://www.moondance-sugargliders.com/sugar\\_glider\\_plant-tree\\_information.htm](http://www.moondance-sugargliders.com/sugar_glider_plant-tree_information.htm) But just don't have them in the room. It's easier and safer.

1J. Cords and Outlets. Gliders are like kids. So it's not a bad idea to plug-up open (unused) electrical outlets with child safety "blanks." It is a good idea to wrap cords and give them alternate things to chew on and destroy. The fewer the electrical devices with cords, the better.

1K. The Cage. Part of glider-proofing is to make sure your pets always have safe refuge in their cage and total access to it. You must leave the cage open so they can get food and water, else you have to put food and water out in the room. You should also leave the cage open in case they want to nest there.

1L. Other Species. "No" to other pets in the room. You should not expose them to animals they can eat or attack (gerbils, hamsters, chins, guinea pigs) [yes they are omnivores and they will attack and eat at least a part of a Chinchilla]. It is not fair to leave them in the same room with these other animals because it is a tease to the omnivores and the other animals can get stressed out. You should not expose them to animals that can eat them (Snakes, birds, cats). Just no other animals in a "Glider Free Range Zone" we say.

1M. Safe Alternative Nesting Places. You should leave different nesting boxes and pouches all around the room and you will find them in one or two of them. Ours usually end up all together in the same nesting place or sometimes they are scattered. I often find them in the bottom right-hand drawer of our dresser, where they chewed-out a hole in the false bottom so they could make an alternate nesting spot there. Give them safe choices in alternative places to sleep. Do not lock the cage - give them access to it so they can go and eat, drink and sleep there if they want to. If you want to "seed" nesting spots, be sure to put their funky bedding there so the scent draws them to it rather than dangerous nesting spots.

## 2. Free-Range Glider Rules

This part is about extra precautions if you intend to sleep in or stay in the same "gliderproof" room with your gliders. This is an "extreme" practice and is not for everyone. It is also considered dangerous by some because gliders have been known to crawl under you as you sleep and get crushed and killed. That is why it is important to have better-preferred and tested nesting spots available.

2A. Safety protocol. You have to be extra careful and get into a rigid protocol for safety including when doors are open, making room safe, watching where you are walking in the

middle of the night, etc. You have to learn how to back out of a room and slowly close the door so you don't crush them. You have to learn how to distract them by putting them on a wheel or bribing them with a treat so you can escape to go use the bathroom without them chasing you out the door...

2B. You have to have a glider-friendly bed. Our mattress is tempurpedic and gives a lot. If a glider crawls next to you and you roll over on it, it can get hurt or killed if you are on a hard surface. When gliders bed-down; however, they do it mostly with their own kind and prefer their own smelly bedding, not yours. You also have to check for gliders getting in and out of bed so you don't plop on top of them getting into bed or step on them as you get out of bed. You must shuffle your feet instead of stepping.... You need to fluff-out the pillows and sheets to check for them...

2C. Aggressive Grooming. If your pets are like the individuals in my colonies, you will be massively and possibly aggressively groomed and if they get worked up into a "grooming frenzy," as they often do, you have to wear socks, headgear and sometimes NBA shooting sleeves or they will "strip your bark" in the middle of the night.

2D. Morning Headcount and Contingency plan. You have to take time playing "where's the glider" in the morning and do a proper headcount and get them back into the cage. If you can't find him or her right away, you have to have a plan for just blocking off the room for the day so he or she can't get into the rest of the house or outside. (Of course you leave food and water out). If you can't make allowances for this, don't do this thing.

2E. Poop Zone. The whole room becomes a "free range poop zone" so if you are grossed-out by their little droppings and cleaning them up each morning, this is not for you. Ditto pee. You need to wipe that up as soon as possible or it will stain rugs and eat through and warp wood. We drape towels or other material on top of wood surfaces to help ameliorate this problem.

2F. Animal House. Literally. They are wild animals you know.... Toys, ropes, chewed-up balsa wood, strewn food, toppled nick nacks. Your room will be a wreck every morning and it'll look like John Belushi and his Animal House friends spent the night.

2G. Furniture Destroyed. If you are really attached to it, forget doing this. Because they will chew on it. Balsa and other chewy things help to distract but they have a habit of chewing exactly on what you don't want them to... You were warned...

So there are the top tips on gliderproofing and free range warnings. If you can deal with the dangers, safety considerations, and cleaning all the time, go for it.