



FEEDING WILD BIRDS

RESPONSIBLE WILDLIFE INTERACTION GUIDELINES

It is not against the law to feed wild birds and while it may be tempting, it is important to understand the potential consequences of such actions. Wild birds can feed themselves and encouraging them to congregate in masses can have a detrimental effect on all parties involved. Feeding wildlife can lead to health problems or even death for the animals involved. Moreover, it can contribute to wildlife becoming dangerous or nuisances in our neighbourhoods. A better way to encourage wild birds on your property is by planting bird attracting nectar-rich native plants and making nesting boxes available.

Keep wildlife wild - for their sake and ours, do not feed native animals.

BIRD FEEDING GUIDE

Please embrace the following steps from our friends at Australian Geographic and Council's Environmental Health Section:

1. Ensure feeding and watering stations are not accessible for cats - keep them up off the ground.
2. Clean feeding and watering stations daily with warm soapy water and air dry to remove any bacteria and mosquito harbourage.
3. Remove food after one hour and vary the time and days you provide food.
4. It's a snack not a meal - birds should obtain most of their diet naturally.
5. Provide good-quality food - avoid feeding birds bread, commercial nectar mixes or seed mixes as they do not contain sufficient nutrition for birds
6. Cease feeding if large flocks (20+ birds) begin feeding at the same time as this increases the risk of disease transmission and stress for the birds.
7. Cease feeding when you notice birds waiting for feeding time as this is when they cause significant noise and mess.
8. Feed pets indoors and remove leftovers, as pet food is not suitable for birds.
9. Create a habitat - grow local native plants for food and provide nesting boxes.
10. Make feeding a treat, for example 3 times a week.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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THE RISKS INVOLVED WHEN FEEDING WILDLIFE

- > Feeding wildlife the wrong type of food can be harmful, as they may develop nutritional disorders or even cause death for the animals involved.
- > Wildlife may become dependent on human-provided food, making them vulnerable to attacks from predators and disrupting their natural behaviours.
- > Wildlife that are fed by you may become dangerous and/or a nuisance to others in your neighbourhood. This is because as wildlife population numbers grow so does the associated noise, damage to property, large amounts of faeces and other nuisance or health risks.
- > If wildlife depends on humans for food, they can become more vulnerable to attack from predators, including domestic animals, and can lose the ability to find and capture their own food.
- > Could be seen to represent animal cruelty
- > Can increase aggression, stress, spreading disease through a concentration as birds feeding
- > Poses a health and safety risk (may cause dermatitis and asthma due to the mites carried)
- > Small risk of Avian Flu outbreak
- > Poses a threat to natural biodiversity, competition with native animals
- > Can cause sickness and deformities in young birds as high quantities of salt and fat present in bread and processed foods

REGULATIONS AND AUTHORITIES

The State Government Department of Environment and Science regulates wildlife feeding under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Feeding a native animal that is dangerous (such as a Kangaroo) or creates an immediate threat to human health and safety (such as feeding birds beside a road in such a way that they interfere with traffic), is not allowed.

Whilst Council is unable to direct a person to stop feeding wildlife, persons who choose to do so must do so in a manner that does not cause a public health risk.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE ELSE IS FEEDING BIRDS AND IT IS CAUSING A NUISANCE

If someone else is feeding wildlife and it is causing a nuisance often the best approach is to talk to the person and discuss your concerns in a calm and respectful manner. If feeding the birds is causing a vermin issue, this can be reported to Council. Where the feeding of birds is causing concerns regarding vermin, mosquito breeding (birdbaths etc.), or the accumulation of faeces on the feeders property or surrounds, Council's Environmental Health Officers will investigate. Whilst Council is unable to direct a person to stop feeding wildlife, persons who choose to do so must do so in a manner that does not cause a public health risk.

Council does not have any powers to stop people from feeding birds. But if the feeding and watering of birds is causing an increase in rats, mice or mosquitoes, Council may be able to assist. *The Public Health Act 2005* has provisions regarding the public health risks caused by designated pests, being rats, mice and mosquitoes. It is an offence to provide or likely to provide, harbourage, a breeding ground, or a source of food for designated pests.

If your wildlife nuisance issue isn't unlawful and hasn't been resolved after attempting the steps mentioned above, as a last resort, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (JAG) provides dispute resolution services, including mediation, which could provide an alternative way of resolving the bird feeding issue with your neighbour. JAG can be contacted on (07) 3239 6277 or 1800 017 288 or online at www.qld.gov.au/law/legal-mediation-and-justice-of-the-peace/settling-disputes-out-of-court/mediation-services/mediation.

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