



Feeding Birds and Other Wildlife

It is an offence in Western Australia to feed native fauna, including birds, without a licence. Fines of up to \$20,000 are part of updated regulations under Section 155 of the West Australian Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

The practice of feeding animals most likely originated in countries that experience harsh winters where food becomes scarce. In Perth we are lucky enough to live in a climate with mild winters and natural food available year-round.

Instead of feeding, we encourage residents to plant a wildlife-friendly garden and leave out clean fresh water for our local wildlife.

Impacts of Feeding Wildlife:

- Dependence on humans for food and young animals not learning to forage. This is particularly problematic if the person who feeds goes away on holiday or moves house.
- Species and biodiversity loss. Higher numbers of bigger or more aggressive birds (ravens, magpies, wattlebirds) often results in a decrease in smaller species and result in less variety of birds visiting and less safe spaces for these species.
- Increase in pests such as rats, mice, cockroaches, and ants which will also be attracted to food.
- Significant health issues such as beak rot, brittle bones, dental decay and starvation.
- Overpopulation and increase in diseases and habitat pressure.
- Feeding waterbirds can result in algal blooms due to increase in food waste and animal waste and create conditions that support botulism outbreaks.
- Spread of seeds of weed species throughout the environment which can choke out native plants.
- Increase in nuisance behaviours such as begging for food and food aggression.



Examples of health issues caused by feeding wildlife:

- Feeding quendas fruit can cause severe dental decay, leading to infections and starvation, as they cannot eat.
- Birds that are fed mince can develop beak rot when mince sticks to their beak. The resulting bacteria build-up causes the beak to weaken and break off. It can also cause brittle bones in young birds as mince does not provide the correct balance of nutrients (particularly calcium).

Ways to support wildlife:

Create habitat on your property suited to different species. ReWild is a great resource (some examples included below). You can also register for the annual City of Melville Native Plant Giveaway and a free verge tree.

- Quendas like shrubs to hide and rest under and wood mulch to dig in for fungi and grubs.
- Magpies nest and sleep in tall trees and enjoy large bird baths to bathe and play in. Increasing mulch, leaf litter and rocks can attract insects and skinks which the magpies eat.
- Small birds need dense shrubs to hide and nest in to keep safe from predators. They also like shallow bird baths close to their safe spaces.
- Microbats are insectivorous and often roost in hollows. Consider adding bat boxes to your garden as well as native plants and a frog pond to attract insects.
- Create a frog pond in your garden and check out the Tadpole Exchange Program.

Borrow a wildlife camera from your local library to see which animals visit your garden.

Contribute to scientific research about wildlife through a citizen science project. For example, recording observations of South-western Snake-necked Turtles on the TurtleSat app or identifying local birds and submitting a survey for Birdlife Australia.

Join an Environmental Volunteer Group to help look after local bushland reserves.

