

Bird Management in Urban Areas

Council Policy Number	160
Date adopted	17 March 2020
Scheduled for review	March 2024



1. Purpose

To provide guidelines to clarify the responsibility for the control of native and introduced birds in urban areas.

2. Definitions

Long-billed Corella	<i>Cacatua tenuirostris</i>
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>
Galah	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>
Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Indian Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
English Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW)	Permit required by law to disturb native wildlife. Issued by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

3. Policy Statement

This policy applies to:

1. Native birds
 - a. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
 - b. Long-billed Corella
 - c. Galah
2. Introduced birds
 - a. Pigeons
 - b. Indian Myna
 - c. House Sparrow
 - d. English Starling

Bird management in urban areas is important as birds can cause damage to:

- a. Roost trees
- b. Planted tree seedlings
- c. Fixtures – aerials, light fittings, powerlines etc.
- d. Soft timber on houses and outdoor furniture
- e. Bowling greens, ovals, golf courses, etc.

In some cases, the problems caused by these birds are merely a nuisance, in others, serious damage can be caused.

3.1 Damage to Trees

Tree damage can have many causes, other than cockatoos. These include defoliating and sap-sucking insects; raised nitrogen content of soils, (especially where stock camp under trees); altered soil hydrology through soil compaction, or rising water tables; browsing by possums; fungal attack; and damage to roots by hooved stock or machinery. Tree pruning by cockatoos, while usually obvious does not always result in long term harm.

On Campaspe Shire Council ('Council') owned or managed properties the extent of tree damage will be assessed by qualified arborist. Any response will be based on this.

3.2 Property Damage

Birds damage property through chewing of fixtures and wires and roosting.

1. On Council owned or managed property Council will assess and act to reduce damage.
2. Council does not have a responsibility for any damage on private property or within manufacturing premises. The responsibility rests with the respective property owner or business proprietor. This applies to both native and introduced bird species.

3.3 Nuisances

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* includes an obligation for Municipal Councils to "remedy as far as reasonably possible all nuisances in its municipal district".

Nuisances are conditions that are "liable to be dangerous to health or offensive" and can arise from any number of means including any animal, including a bird capable of carrying a disease transmissible to humans.

When determining a nuisance regard must not be had to the number of persons that are or may be affected. The degree of offensiveness may be considered.

It is considered an offence under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* for any person to cause a nuisance or knowingly allow a nuisance to exist on any land owned or occupied by that person.

In the event of a nuisance being determined by council officers, officers may direct the owners of the land to take measures to abate the nuisance. In the case of bird management, officers may direct the property owners to take measures as detailed below to control bird flocks and damage caused by birds.

3.4 Noise

Concerns regarding noise are assessed in accordance with the Nuisance provisions of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* as detailed above.

3.5 Native Bird Control

Cockatoos (collective reference to Corellas, Cockatoos and Galahs) cause damage by eating and by chewing non-food items. Chewing maintains their beaks at the correct length and condition. Almost all problems caused by cockatoos relate to their eating or chewing behaviour. The severity of many cockatoo problems is due to the social nature of cockatoos – they do most things in flocks. Cockatoos always flock together to roost and at night and in the early morning the noisy behaviour of cockatoos can be a problem for nearby residents. Day roosts, used sometimes for several hours between feeding bouts, are often used repeatedly. Day roosts may also be casual or short-term rest stops.

Cockatoos are classified as "unprotected wildlife" under the *Wildlife Act 1975* and may be controlled when:

- Damaging buildings, pasture, crops or other property
- Posing a risk to human health and safety, or
- Damaging the environment.

Control techniques for urban areas are:

- a. Use of bird deterrents to reduce roosting sites. Deterrents include; netting; spikes; wires; optical and elimination of food sources,
- b. Scaring the birds with explosive cartridges
- c. The use of taped bird distress calls played with an amplifier
- d. Trapping, or

- e. Lethal control (when all other methods have failed).

Techniques that impact on the bird directly (b-e above) will require an Authority to Control Wildlife ('ATCW') permit available from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Techniques that reduce access to roosting site (a. above, netting, spikes etc.) do not require an ATCW permit. It is illegal to poison native fauna.

In urban areas, shooting the birds is not permitted under the *Firearms Act 1996*.

3.6 Introduced Bird Control

Control techniques for introduced birds are:

- a. Use of bird deterrents to reduce roosting sites. Deterrents include; netting; spikes; wires; optical and elimination of food sources,
- b. Scaring the birds with explosive cartridges
- c. The use of taped bird distress calls played with an amplifier
- d. Destruction of nests and eggs
- e. Trapping, or
- f. Lethal control (when all other methods have failed).

Legally avicides can be used to control introduced birds. However, it is not recommended in urban areas due to the clean-up requirements and risk of other animals ingesting.

Problem birds or flocks should be managed at the discretion of landowners as long as the management complies with other relevant legislation, such as animal welfare.

4. Exclusions

Nil

5. Human Rights

This policy has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

6. Related Legislation

Public Health & Wellbeing Act 2008

Wildlife Act 1975

Firearms Act 1996

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

7. Related Policies, Procedures and Strategies

Non-indigenous Bird Management Policy (2013), Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

8. Attachments

Nil

9. Review Period

Four years

Responsible officer

Public Environments Manager

10. Administrative Updates

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter the policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

11. Approval History

Adopted 26 June 2018
Revised 17 March 2020
Revised 1 March 2021

Minute Book Reference No 1541 (Item 7.3)
Minute Book Reference No 461 (item 9.1)
Administrative update to apply consistent reference to
Campaspe Shire Council ('Council')

Chief Executive Officer: 

Date: 3/3/2021

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