
Urban Antics

We don't eat much.

Bird lovers are a strange breed. Anything from a peacock on the lawn to a canary in a cage might tickle their fancy. The canny ones, however, know how to entice a selection of native birds to grace their garden virtually for free. No cage to clean; no bird seed to buy. You, too, can enjoy birds in your backyard. All you need is an avenue of lilyarries, a hedge of *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon' and a lawn full of worms. Particularly discriminating aviaphiles will go to the trouble of planting local trees and shrubs to ensure top-class appointments for the local birds. After all, they wouldn't want the neighbourhood going to the dogs (or, worse still, *the cats*).

Speaking of cats, they have to be kept out of the water you supply for potential visitors. Even the smallest bird brain registers the location of a constant supply of water, but, predictably, will not use one frequented by ferocious felines. (Make sure the moggies can't creep up on an unsuspecting bird.) Mind you, other bird species aren't always desirable, either. One unfortunate magpie came down for a drink at his local wateringhole, only to be interrupted by the arrival of a twenty-eight parrot who, oblivious to all propriety, proceeded to take a bath. The magpie won the fight. You may not have to clean cages, but your more fastidious feathered friends will appreciate it if you clean the 'bath', and provide fresh water daily.

Of course, a true bird fancier will find it hard to stop there. A small offering of food wouldn't go astray, but you must be careful to match your morsels to the taste of your guests. Honeyeaters and wattlebirds feed on nectar, and favour a small bowl of honey and water. Place it outside a window, out of reach of the cats, and you will have a 'bird's eye view' of proceedings.

Sophisticates among you will appreciate the odd wattlebird with a flair for cordon bleu dipping its b.y.o. insect into the house sauce. Those with a taste for more homely scenes might be privileged to view fluffy honeyeater offspring brought to dine at your family restaurant.

Twenty-eight parrots appreciate an apple skewered on a broken tree branch. (If you're truly dedicated remove one bite to make it easier for them.) Of course, several apples would satisfy the whole family.



by
Louise Burch

Some might contend that a true friend of feathers can never be friend to fur, but the two can be successfully combined. A case in point: two currawongs set up home in the backyard of a hills house, and duly hatched their baby. Their attention was then turned to gathering food, and plenty of it. They soon spotted that 'Tiddles' was fed twice a day on the back verandah with meals that came in convenient beak-sized chunks. So, with a bit of tricky manoeuvring and considerable bluffing, they managed to persuade the cat to share her dinner. Baby currawong grew sleek and fat, with a taste for food containing 'no preservatives, no added salt, crude protein 7.00%, fat 2.00% and all essential vitamins and minerals needed for the well being of healthy adult cats'.

Of course, sharing your cat's dinner is one thing. Magpies, kookaburras, crows: they can all have a go. But it takes an exceptionally bird-besotted person to contemplate with equilibrium the prospect of sharing their own dinner. If you're like one unlucky diner at Fred Jacoby Park in Mundaring, you won't get a chance to contemplate at all. A kookaburra swooped down on his sausage before it reached his mouth. Knowing very little about processed meats, the kookaburra tried to put the sausage out of its misery by bashing it against a tree a few times before eating it. The mirth this afforded was some recompense for the stolen meal.

Entertainment is one reward for attracting birds to your garden. Magpies, apart from being accomplished choristers, often play chasey around tree trunks. They also indulge in a rudimentary form of soccer played with a leaf or twig carried and thrown by the beak - in any direction, with no particular thought for 'goaling'. The best reward, however, is knowing that the establishment of your habitat doesn't have to mean the displacement of the native species. If you want to know more, have a look at *Garden Birds: Attracting Birds to Australian and New Zealand Gardens*, by Clifford B. Frith.

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EDITORIAL

Anybody who reads tourist brochures in this State will appreciate that the tourist industry is, to a large extent, dependent on natural features and wildlife for its 'product'. Many people who are concerned with the natural environment are antagonistic to tourism, and it is certainly true that in the past there have been some insensitive tourist developments in the State. But, just as the farming community over the past ten years has become one of the greatest allies of conservation, so, increasingly, is the tourist industry. For example, in a recently published tourist industry report on tourism in the Kimberley, the need to preserve this environment was given top priority.

This report is indicative of the growing awareness in that industry of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and the protection and maintenance of our unique flora, fauna and landscapes. Rather than being despoilers, the tourist industry has the potential to become one of the strongest advocates for conservation in the broadest sense.

There is a great potential for synergism between those interested in the science of conservation and the tourist industry. One of the ways by which the tourist potential of any natural area can be enhanced without any cost to the environment is by providing information to the visitors on the natural science that makes that area special.

Landscape is one avenue by which we are attempting to provide an added dimension to the 'look it's lovely' tourist experience. Interestingly, while *Landscape* receives almost universal acclaim from the general public, there is ongoing, often vigorous, internal debate about how technical we should make the magazine. We would appreciate your views.



Shark Bay, p.8



Carving the Future, p.33



Garden Escapes, p.44

Cover Photo

'Now, just how do I find my way out of this Renoir landscape?'
Photographer **Richard Woldendorp** captured this lizard taking a sighting.