



## Feeding Wildlife

In the Canberra region, there is a sufficient and varied natural food supply for wildlife and additional hand feeding may create problems like malnutrition, disease, and an imbalanced population of some species.

We all love to see wildlife in our gardens, in the parks and by the waterways. We think that by hand feeding them we are helping them. Healthy wildlife needs to forage daily to obtain a healthy balance between diet and exercise. Wildlife fill up quickly if food is readily provided, they invariably move on to other people for the same diet, return day after day and miss out on nutrients and exercise they need to regulate and digest an unnatural diet and this results in malnutrition over a period of time.

### Why we recommend you **DO NOT FEED** Wildlife:

By providing non-natural food you may cause a number of ecological problems such as:

- Insufficient nutrients which means wildlife suffer digestive problems and many other health issues;
- Rats and mice will often infest areas where there is an abundance of leftover or spilt food;
- Weak and deformed bones in young animals because of an unbalanced diet;
- Unnatural numbers of animals in areas they would not normally occupy;
- Adults who neglect to forage may not teach their young the natural skills to forage;
- Poisoning or transmission of diseases via contaminated food and faeces at food stations;
- Encouraging feral animals which in turn compete with the native wildlife;
- Making wildlife an easy target for predators i.e. foxes, dogs and cats;
- An increase in insect population which in turn increases diseases, pests and plant destruction; and
- Dependency - what happens when you suddenly stop feeding them?

### How You Can Help Feed our Natural Wildlife:

- Introduce bird-friendly plants that provide nectar, pollen, seeds and berries, and which attract insects;
- Reduce the frequency and quantities of feed to reduce dependency;
- Observe the '**Do not Feed the Wildlife**' signs provided at many venues;
- Provide only natural food such as insects where possible or good quality wild bird seed mix;
- Feed insect eating birds termites, beetles, ants, mosquitos, flies, cockroaches, moths, scale, bugs, aphids, larvae, spiders, catapillars, crickets and worms instead of meat.

### Did you know?

- Bird diseases are spread at feed stations when seeds are contaminated by bird droppings;
- Possums, birds and flying-foxes will eat poisoned sprayed fruit, flowers and leaves in your garden;
- A poisoned mouse can kill a bird if the newly poisoned mouse still has poison in its stomach;
- Insect-eating bats and birds can be affected by insecticides, snail bait can be deadly and cruel; and
- Swans and ducks eat leaves, seeds, grass, aquatic plants and insects – **NEVER** bread.

