


Let Nature Feed Itself, Feeding Wildlife – FACT SHEET ---- 3








Wildlife Volunteers Association Inc. (WILVOs) If you need assistance with native wildlife call our 24 hour hotline number **5441 6200** This fact sheet contains information sourced from WIRES, thank you.

www.wilvos.org.au

Natures food chain has been developed over millions of years. By feeding wildlife you could be causing untold damage to our already fragile environment. The dietary requirements of our native fauna area extremely complex, even experienced wildlife carers can have difficulty establishing the correct diets when caring for sick, injured or orphaned wildlife. By feeding our wildlife, you are upsetting natures fine balance. By continually feeding wildlife, it can become aggressive, dependant and ultimately sick. It also causes nomadic animals to become sedentary reducing the amount of exercise and disabling their ability to forage for natural foods – this is not instinctive behaviour, it is learned. Following is a guide on why we shouldn't feed wildlife, the most important reason being, we cannot provide them with their correct nutritional requirements.

Animal	Unnatural Foods DO NOT FEED	What feeding wildlife unnatural foods can do	Natural Foods	Enjoy your wildlife without feeding it
Kookaburras Magpies Currawongs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meat ➤ Mince ➤ Bread 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bled meats contain high levels of phosphorous and are low in calcium. These foods can produce imbalances in their nutritional requirements causing severe deficiencies, for example, calcium deficiencies can cause beak and bone deformities. ➤ By providing a regular food source, you may encourage over population of these species. As they are predatory, this will deter smaller native birds visiting your garden. ➤ Can become dependant on a regular food source and lose the ability to find food themselves, especially juveniles raised on a false diet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Insects ➤ Invertebrates ➤ Small Reptiles ➤ Small Mammals, like rodents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leave leaf litter in your garden as it will attract insects, vertebrates and lizards. ➤ Leave 'safe' dead trees and hollowed limbs of live trees - the hollows provide nesting sites. ➤ Plant native trees - consult your local nursery for plants indigenous to your area. ➤ Call WILVOs if you find a sick, injured or orphaned animal.

<p>Rosella Cockatoos Galahs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bread ➤ Fruit ➤ Food Scraps ➤ Seed mixes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bread has a poor nutritional balance for most birds - it does not provide the complex cereal base they require. ➤ Introduced fruit is not a natural part of their diet and if it is 'going off' it can ferment in the crop causing bacterial or yeast infections. ➤ Seed mixes are rarely nutritionally balanced and many are difficult to eat, even these larger birds can't crack some of the seeds, encouraging them to rely on the oilier seeds (sunflower) which can lead to long-term fatty growths and obesity. ➤ Encourages population that would normally be nomadic to become sedentary, thus not balancing their diet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Native grasses & seeds ➤ Large variety of insects and their larvae ➤ Hardened fruits like gum nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leave 'safe' dead trees and hollowed limbs of live trees - the hollows provide nesting sites. ➤ Provide a balance of vegetation in your garden by avoiding hybrid native plants - consult your local nursery for plants indigenous to your area. ➤ Provide water in varying depths with protection from neighbourhood cats, by planting plants of varying heights around the water source. ➤ Call WILVOs if you find a sick, injured or orphaned animal.
<p>Lorikeets Honeyeaters</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sugar & Water ➤ Honey & Water ➤ Bread ➤ Non-native fruits ➤ Seed mixes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The digestive system of these birds is designed for a predominantly liquid intake. Bread, seed mixes and fruit quickly fill the bird and slow the digestion process leading to vitamin and mineral deficiencies predisposing the birds to disease through bacterial and yeast infections of the crop. ➤ Diseases such as psitticine (beak & feather) disease are easily spread through communal feeding trays. ➤ With a regular food supply, nomadic birds will breed out of season thus becoming sedentary, creating localised over population, leading to further disease. ➤ Causes a decline in smaller birds through overcrowding of nesting sites and competition for insects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nectar & Pollen from eucalypt & other native flowers ➤ Native Berries & Blossoms ➤ Insects & their larvae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a balance of vegetation in your garden by avoiding hybrid native plants - consult your local nursery for plants indigenous to your area. ➤ Provide water in varying depths with protection from neighbourhood cats, by planting plants of varying heights around the water source. ➤ Leave 'safe' dead trees and hollowed limbs of live trees - the hollows provide nesting sites. ➤ Call WILVOs if you find a sick, injured or orphaned animal.

<p>Ducks</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bread ➤ Chips ➤ Vegetable scraps ➤ Leftovers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These foods do not provide the correct nutritional balance causing deficiencies and predisposing them to disease etc. For example, a reduction in calcium levels can cause weaker egg shells. ➤ Bread can ferment in the gut causing bacterial infections. ➤ Food settles on the bottom of ponds and rots causing levels of bacteria to rise causes things such as botulism which can kill the ducks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plants growing along the waters edge, as well as in the water ➤ Shrimps and Mussels ➤ Small Aquatic Animals ➤ Insects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contact your environment centre or council to clean up and regenerate the local pond, lake or lagoon. ➤ Write down your observations on the condition of your local ducks, their environment and any changes, this may be useful to your environment centre. ➤ Call WILVOs if you find a sick, injured or orphaned animal.
<p>Possums</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bread ➤ Fruit ➤ Food Scraps ➤ Milk (cow, goat, soy, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fruits are not digested easily by Ringtail Possums, it ferments in the gut and produces vast quantities of gas - death is usually the end result. ➤ If fed milk, it aggravates their digestive system causing diarrhoea and dehydration which can result in death. ➤ Feeding non-native foods encourages them to 'experiment', including eating the poisonous snail pellets in your garden. ➤ Introducing a new food source ultimately reduces the possums territories creating overpopulation of areas, predisposing them to disease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Variety of leaves, eucalypt trees being the favourite for both the leaves and flowers ➤ Native fruits and buds ➤ Bark ➤ Grass ➤ Occasionally Small Insects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a balance of vegetation in your garden by avoiding hybrid native plants - consult your local nursery for plants indigenous to your area. ➤ Leave 'safe' dead trees and hollowed limbs of live trees - the hollows provide nesting sites, or install a possum box see building a possum box fact sheet for a plan. ➤ If possible, keep your compost heap enclosed to prevent possums from 'scavenging' and using this as their only source of food. It also discourages rodents. ➤ Call WILVOs if you find a sick, injured or orphaned animal.
<p>Kangaroos</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bread ➤ Leftovers ➤ Milk (cow, goat, soy, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kangaroos are designed to eat large amounts of low protein roughage such as native grasses and browse (leaves, twigs and shoots). Human food is a poor substitute with little nutritional value and will disrupt their natural intake. ➤ If fed milk, the gut becomes aggravated causing diarrhea & dehydration that can result in death. ➤ Bread is a soft food and if eaten regularly it can result in gum problems. ➤ Once this occurs, it only takes a hardened grain or twig to puncture the gum allowing the disease 'lumpy jaw' to infect the gum area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kangaroos – predominantly grasses ➤ Wallaroos/ Wallaby's grasses, browse & shrubs ➤ Smaller macropods - fungus, browse & insects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Call WILVOs if you find a sick, injured or orphaned animal.

