

What to do to save the cockatoo

Julimar Conservation and Forest Alliance

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ONE OF the privileges of living in Toodyay is being in one of the few places in WA where you can see Carnaby's cockatoos for much of the year.

The Carnaby's cockatoo is one of only two white-tailed black cockatoos in the world and can only be found in the south-west of WA.

Growing up to 58cm it is differentiated from other black cockatoos by its white tail feathers, creamy cheeks, shorter bill and a distinctive, raucous call.

In the past people have reported seeing huge flocks of hundreds of birds flying between Perth and the Wheatbelt.

Many spend autumn and winter at the beach and coastal plain before flying inland to breed in spring and early summer.

The Carnaby's cockatoo comes to Julimar

to breed and takes advantage of the large, older wandoo and marri trees which can be found particularly in the north-eastern part of the forest.

Suitable trees have a large hollow which can take more than a century to develop, so young regrowth will not help the Carnaby's breed.

For successful breeding the Carnaby's also needs reliable food sources within a 12km range, which makes the wonderful diversity of the flora within Julimar Forest vitally important.

In the forest they will feed on marri and jarrah tree nuts and enjoy the Proteacea groups such as banksia.

With the reduction in their traditional foods some of the Carnaby's cockatoos have adapted to eating pine cones.

If you are lucky enough to have them visit your garden they'll love your cape lilac and will take advantage of any available almond and macadamia nuts.

For the last 50 years the number of Carnaby's and the other black cockatoos has been in massive decline.

The World Wildlife Fund estimates the population of Carnaby's has been reduced by at least 50 percent mainly due to habitat and feeding ground losses, with additional pressure from other species taking the few remaining nesting hollows.

The Carnaby's cockatoo now deemed to be endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Birdlife International, while the Australian Conservation Foundation predicts it is "likely to become extinct in the wild".

It is vital we maintain and protect our northern jarrah forests including Julimar if future generations – our grandchildren – are to enjoy these wonderful birds.

As a community we can help give the Carnaby's and other black cockatoos a future by preserving existing woodlands.

For example, we can maintain the older habitat trees we already have, and think carefully before taking down an old tree.

We can plant new trees on which the Carnaby's can feed – maybe an almond which grow well in Toodyay.



Cockatube attached to a suitable tree.

Don't clear all the banksia from around our gardens or verges and provide a reliable water source, especially during the hot spring and summer months.

If you want to do more, you could consider having a Cockatube installed.

These are an artificial nesting box and provide a "hollow" in which the Carnaby's can breed.

There are a number of different types available, usually over a metre in height and 30cm in diameter.

To be successful the Cockatube needs to be in a place which also has food and water within a short flying distance for the birds.

In 2021 a documentary *Black Cockatoo Crisis* was released.

It is already an award-winning social impact documentary, receiving the Brian Beaton Award in 2021.

The Julimar Conservation and Forest Alliance will host a screening of this documentary in Toodyay in the near future and we invite you to attend, with entry by donation.

If you'd like to know more about the Carnabys and what you can do to help, visit www.savetheblackcockatoos.com.

If you'd like to know more about supporting the JCAFA group to support the black cockatoos, please go to website www.julimarcafa.org.au or contact us on julimarforest@gmail.com.