

# ABC NEWS

## Corellas wreaking havoc in WA's South West and Mid West regions

ABC South West WA By Michael Black

Updated Fri 12 May 2017, 4:20pm



PHOTO: Corellas are creating all sorts of headaches in Western Australia. (Supplied: City of Greater Geraldton)

**Destructive flocks of corellas in the South West region of WA are outsmarting traditional attempts by local councils to cull their numbers.**

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The introduced pests from the eastern states have ripped up rubber sealing from around windows in the city's CBD and destroyed other infrastructure, including expensive copper wiring.

Bunbury's neighbouring councils and cities as far north as Geraldton in WA's mid-west are also grappling with growing corella populations.

City of Bunbury environmental officer Colin Spencer said the council was considering a wide range of options to keep the birds under control.

"We're looking at using pyrotechnics, birds of prey, lasers, anything to scare the birds away from where they're causing problems," he said.

There has been resistance to killing the birds in the past but Mr Spencer said it was far better to control the birds when numbers were down.

Mr Spencer also said populations of eastern long-billed and little corella species have increased dramatically in recent years — from fewer than 10 to more than 1,000 in Bunbury.

"The problem is likely to escalate to the point where it may be too difficult to control numbers in the future," Mr Spencer said.

"I don't think they're in plague proportions but in some areas it could feel that way."

### Corella complaints to councils

The Bunbury council has fielded dozens of complaints from residents about the squawking and screeching of corella flocks — as well as hundreds of dollars' damage to their homes.

Rolf Stene paid for two Norfolk Island pines to be planted in Bunbury's Bicentennial Square back in 1986.



PHOTO: Rolf Stene is heartbroken corellas are destroying a Norfolk Island pine, which was planted in his wife's memory. (ABC South West: Michael Black)

One was dedicated to his wife Dorothy who died eight years ago and Mr Stene said he was worried the trees could die after corellas stripped bark off the trunks.

"They're not like the red or white-tailed black cockatoos; these are vandals," Mr Stene said.

"I don't want the tree to die with her."

## A widespread problem

A Department of Parks and Wildlife spokeswoman said the birds caused significant damage to public infrastructure.

"They also compete with native species for hollows and food resources," she said.

"Research on the movements of introduced corellas has shown that these birds regularly move between the Perth region and the Bunbury-Busselton region."



PHOTO: The City of Bunbury is considering options to curb corella populations in WA's south west. (ABC South West: Michael Black)

The Department has established a partnership with the WA Local Government Association and local governments affected by out-of-control corella populations to deal with the problem.

The Department spokeswoman said the coordinated corella control program conducted last year in Perth successfully reduced corella numbers.

"An effective control program needs to be coordinated across a broad area and implemented over a number of years," the spokeswoman said.

The lack of progress with individual culling programs prompted the Bunbury and Busselton councils to join the project.

The south-west councils are spruiking the program as the best long-term solution.

In the meantime, residents fed up with the noise and damage have been asked to be patient.

**Topics:** pest-management, pests, environment, bunbury-6230, wa

*First posted Fri 12 May 2017, 4:14pm*