



# Bringing birds back

## I see red

Native plants in Australia have evolved to have red flowers specifically to attract birds. The eyesight of many pollinating birds that visit flowers for nectar, such as the Eastern Spinebill and Yellow Wattlebird is tuned to see violet, blue, green and red.

## Make friends with a Magpie

Magpies can recognize human faces and only swoop people that they see as a threat. Magpies only swoop during breeding season in September and October.

## Hit songs

Magpie songs last up to 70 minutes, and they are one of the most vocally complex songbirds in the world. Their complex communication is comparable to simple human language.

## Prickly business

Shrubs with prickly leaves or spines make great habitat for small native birds such as Blue Wrens, Eastern Spinebills and Silver Eyes and these birds are becoming scarce in our gardens.

## Bird bath

Birds that feed on seed like parrots and finches need to drink water twice a day. You can help these birds by adding a bird bath to your backyard, especially important during summer.

## Bell-shaped flowers

Bell-shaped flowers make plenty of nectar which attracts bees and honeyeaters. Honeyeaters are crafty birds and they often take shortcuts. They will use their beak to pierce a hole in the side of the bell flower making it easier to get the nectar.

## Fast food

The New Holland Honey Eater can take nectar from 15 – 100 flowers per minute. Honeyeaters are specialists and have curved beaks and brush tipped tongues to make the job of getting nectar, easier.

## Holiday makers

The Tasmanian Silvereye is a tiny bird weighing about 10 grams. Each autumn these birds head north, some as far as Queensland, for a holiday in the sun. This a journey of about 1,600Km! Scientists believe that they achieve this feat by island hopping across Bass Strait. Some of these birds are happy to stay in Victoria and can be seen feeding on insects, fruit and nectar. Silver Eyes are great for controlling insects in the garden and much cheaper than using pesticides.

## Feral pest

The Indian Myna was first introduced into the cane fields of north-eastern Queensland in 1883, to combat insect pests. This pest species has now spread across the country even reaching Tasmania. These aggressive birds compete with native birds for food and nest sites. Indian Mynas are accomplished scavengers and will even eat pet food.

## Keep pet cats indoors

Pet cats kill 79.7 million native birds every year. Each cat on average kills 110 native animals including reptiles, birds and mammals each year. Protect our wonderful wildlife by keeping your cat indoors and consider building a cat run for it.



## Citizen science

You can be a 'citizen scientist' and record birds you see at <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/>. You can do this from your own back yard with your family members, or at school with your teacher or other students.

