

Wildlife Matters

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

FEISTY COCKATOOS

MUCH of west Brisbane is still forested. The Council and many of the residents owning acreage properties are protecting native ecosystems and working hard to restore them. Of particular importance to many bird species and some mammals are tree hollows, which are essential for breeding. These generally form in older trees – more than 80 years old – where a branch has fallen, and in dead trees. So old trees should be conserved if we are to encourage our local wildlife.



Cockatoo attacking a Lace Monitor - Photo Bryan Hacker

Many of the parrots nest in tree hollows and from personal observation appropriate hollows are in continuous use, in this instance, with pairs of Rainbow Lorikeets. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, which have become abundant in west Brisbane and apparently thrive in a semi-urban setting, also nest in tree hollows. With their distinctive call they are often to be heard during the daytime. But sometimes one can sense that they are furious, with their continuous shrieks. It is worth looking to see what angers them so, and on several occasions we have seen that their concern was clearly a Lace Monitor Lizard or Carpet Python. In several instances we have seen Lace Monitors running from cockatoos, carrying a cockatoo chick in the mouth.

Cockatoos are feisty birds and can turn on the attack. The photograph shows a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo attacking a Lace Monitor, which was curling up its tail to avoid being bitten. The shrieks of the cockatoo had to be heard to be believed! Although sorry for the cockatoos and their chicks which have been attacked, we should remember that Lace Monitors are carnivorous and also part of our local ecosystem.

Bryan Hacker

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