



Wildlife Matters

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

Powerful by name, powerful by nature

THE Powerful Owl is Australia's largest owl, standing at 65cm tall with a wingspan of almost 1.5m. These magnificent apex predators of the night are found along the east coast of Australia from central Queensland down to Victoria. They prefer dry sclerophyll forest and open woodlands where they favour creek lines and gullies for both roost and nest sites. However, with an ever-changing urban landscape, these owls are turning up in some interesting places.

They are highly efficient predators with inch long talons that enable them to tackle large prey items such as Ringtail and Brushtail Possums, Flying Foxes, Gliders, and even other birds! They require old growth trees with large hollows for breeding and can fledge one or two chicks a year, generally between July and September. When emerging from the hollow, Powerful Owl chicks do not resemble their parents and are covered in fluffy white down feather before gradually obtaining adult plumage by roughly six months of age.



**Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*)
with Ringtail Possum** Photo:
Jasmine Zeleny

Listed as Vulnerable in Queensland, Powerful Owls face threats such as loss of habitat and hollow bearing trees, vehicle strike, and electrocution by powerlines. Urban Powerful Owls are also beginning to take more terrestrial prey items such as Black Rats, with secondary poisoning from anticoagulant rodenticides becoming an emerging threat for the species. While food may be plentiful, there is a price to pay when you are an owl living in the city.

We are fortunate enough to have a number of Powerful Owl pairs right here in the west, in suburbs such as Fig Tree Pocket, Kenmore Hills, Brookfield, Pullenvale, Toowong, and Anstead. There are still many more to be found.

If you see a Powerful Owl, please report your sightings to BirdLife's Powerful Owl Project. You can also join the project as a citizen scientist to help us locate and monitor Powerful Owls in Brisbane. Visit <https://birdlife.org.au/projects/urban-birds/powerful-owl-project-pow> for more information.

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