

What facilitates urban colonisation by Crested Pigeons *Ochyphaps lophotes*?

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The Crested Pigeon's *Ochyphaps lophotes* range expansion in south-east Australia has encompassed urban areas, but its urban ecology is insufficiently known to allow identification of factors facilitating urban colonisation. In 2008, we documented its autumn/winter habitat use and foraging ecology and that of potentially competing Feral Pigeons *Columba livia* and Spotted Turtle-Doves *Streptopelia chinensis* in Melbourne. Crested Pigeons occupied three of the five urban habitats surveyed, but particularly occurred in open parkland where most of their foraging took place. Turtle-Doves were ubiquitous, but foraged mostly in streetscapes. Feral Pigeons occupied all habitats except bushland, but their density did not vary among habitats. Foraging substrate use, foraging behaviour and probably the seed diet of all three species were very similar. Crested and Feral Pigeons always foraged within five metres of con-specifics and Spotted Turtle-Doves did so on 84 per cent of occasions. Each species also foraged with at least one of the other pigeon species, but infrequently (δ 14% of records for any species). Intra- and inter-specific aggression was rare among pigeons foraging in close proximity. Factors possibly facilitating Crested Pigeons' residence in Melbourne in autumn and winter include: (a) an evolutionary history in open woodland and savanna, equipping them to exploit urban open parkland, (b) the high abundance of grass and herb seeds (c) the lack of aggressive competition for food with other pigeons and (d) limited ecological isolation from Spotted Turtle-Doves through partly different habitat use.