

THE PRACTICE OF WILDLIFE FEEDING IN SUBURBAN BRISBANE

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Wildlife feeding is a frequently debated topic that generates polarised views but literature relating to the practice is rare. This study provides the extent of wildlife feeding in Brisbane, highlighting common practices associated with feeding in a suburban setting. A questionnaire, delivered to 400 Brisbane residents, asked questions about the species being fed, the food being provided and frequency of feeding. A second section of the survey aimed to gain some insight into the respondent's perception of the practice of wildlife feeding.

Of the 34 per cent of respondents who replied to the survey, 37 per cent indicated they fed wildlife, with the majority doing so between daily or weekly intervals and throughout the whole year. A significant proportion (58%) of feeders were found to use inappropriate foods such as bread. The species most commonly fed were large carnivorous/omnivorous birds such as Australian Magpies and butcherbirds. There were strongly divided opinions on the practice of wildlife feeding. Most non-feeding survey respondents stated that they did not approve of the practice and stated that wildlife did not benefit from feeding, while, not unexpectedly, the majority of feeding respondents gave the opposite opinion. Both feeding and a small percentage of non-feeding respondents agreed that if feeding was to take place appropriate guidelines should be followed. As it appears inevitable that feeding wildlife will persist, readily available information on the correct procedures should be made available to the parties involved.