

FOOD PREFERENCE OF LONG-BILLED CORELLAS *Cacatua tenuirostris* IN AVIARY EXPERIMENTS

K. A. WAPLES,¹ J. L. BARNETT¹ and C. A. MARKS²

¹Animal Welfare Department, Victorian Institute of Animal Science, Agriculture Victoria, Sneydes Road, Werribee, Victoria 3030

²Vertebrate Pest Research Department, Victorian Institute of Animal Science, Agriculture Victoria, Ballarto Road, Frankston, Victoria 3199

Received: 1 June, 2000

The long-billed corella causes extensive damage to crops in western Victoria. In an attempt to deter birds from vulnerable crops an appropriate bait is being sought for use in field trials of a chemical deterrent. Food preference was examined in captivity to determine bait acceptability in free-choice and no-choice trials. Corellas ($n = 10$) were offered 4 feeds simultaneously in free-choice trials; whole and hulled oats and whole and hulled sunflower seeds. A significant difference was found in daily consumption between feeds ($F = 88.24$, $df = 319$, $P < 0.001$). Although hulled oats were consumed in significantly higher amounts than all other feeds, there was some individual variation in food preference. Overall, mean daily diet comprised 62 per cent hulled oats, 17 per cent whole oats, 12 per cent hulled sunflower and 9 per cent whole sunflower. A no-choice experiment offering either hulled oats or hulled sunflower seeds found daily consumption of hulled oats was significantly higher than that of hulled sunflower seeds ($t = 6.01$, $df = 98$, $P < 0.001$), however daily energy intake in Mj was not significantly different. Hulled oats offer a suitable and practical bait for use in field trials as it is readily consumed by captive corellas, it is economical and widely available and may be an appropriate vehicle for chemical deterrents. Further studies are recommended to address non-target species issues and to test bait acceptance in the field.