



Image: © Peter Sparkes

FACT SHEET

SULPHUR- CRESTED COCKATOOS

Sulphur-crested Cockatoos are large white native parrots with a yellow crest. Males and females look very similar, although females have red eyes while males' eyes are black. Sutherland Shire is lucky to have a large population of this iconic, playful and highly intelligent species.

DO THEY SOMETIMES CAUSE PROBLEMS?

Sulphur-crested Cockatoos (also known as 'cockatoos' or just 'cockies') are successfully adapting to urban environments as their natural habitat reduces. Having cockatoos in our cities and suburbs is quite wonderful. However, sometimes people can see the following cockatoo behaviours as being challenging:

- They can be messy feeders. Cockatoos will happily scavenge for food in garbage bins which can cause significant mess. Some birds have even learnt to open bin lids to access garbage.
- Rubbish bins, food scraps, waste processing centres, open grassy ovals, people intentionally feeding birds, gardens planted with seed and fruit-bearing plants all provide ample food for these opportunistic birds. Some of these sources are not particularly healthy for the birds, and not everyone is happy to share their vege patch or fruit trees with cockies!
- They have a harsh, screeching call which can be very loud, especially when the flock is large.
- Cockatoos are fond of chewing and pulling materials apart, such as the soft timbers around window frames, decking wood, outdoor furniture, trees, shrubs etc.

We can coexist more peacefully with these beautiful birds by making a few changes to our own practices.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOOS

KEEPING OUR COCKATOOS OUT OF TROUBLE

One of the biggest drawcards for urban Sulphur-crested Cockatoos is the amount of easily available food. In fact, city and suburban cockatoos are becoming reliant upon food sources provided by humans. Here are a few tips to help stop cockies becoming a nuisance around the home:

1. Don't overfill your garbage bins and make sure the lid is closed. Cockies and ibis both thrive on access to food scraps. If your bin lid can't close properly, they are able to open the bin and make a mess of your rubbish.
2. If using a public park or open space, always put your rubbish in the bin or take it home and dispose of it appropriately.
3. Don't feed or encourage cockatoos. They are likely to turn up regularly in noisy and often destructive flocks. Sutherland Shire has a wide variety of natural food sources for cockies, so they won't be missing out if you don't feed them.

If cockies are damaging your house, garden or other property, the following strategies may be helpful:

- Give them a quick squirt with a water pistol or spray bottle. If there are no water restrictions, a garden hose is effective.
- Hang shiny, moving objects around the problem area (old CDs, strips of foil or used foil pie-dishes are perfect for this!).
- Use approved bird netting on a frame over the affected area.
- Try painting timber areas white as a deterrent.
- Use a scarecrow or hang a hawk/owl-shaped kite or decoy (however once the cockatoos realise it isn't real, it won't work any more!).
- String fishing wire across the area to deter them from landing.
- Make noise when the cockies arrive or use a motion-sensitive alarm, providing you aren't bothering your neighbours.

It may take several days for the birds to stop hanging around, so be persistent but take care not to harm them. They are protected under the *NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and it is illegal to harm them.

For more information about native animals in Sutherland Shire, visit:
sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Residents/Animals/Native-Wildlife

SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

4-20 Eton Street, Sutherland NSW 2232
T 02 9710 0333 ssc@ssc.nsw.gov.au
sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au



Sulphur-crested Cockatoos feeding from an overfilled bin. Image: J. Sladek, Sutherland Shire Council



Image: © Peter Sparkes

