

# Black Cockatoo Activity Sheets

## Introductory Notes

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Five (5) colouring sheets and one (1) guide to “Identification to chewed Marri nuts eaten by cockatoos and parrots”.

The activity sheets are companions to the *Exploring Perth's Banksia Bushland* activity sheet released by Hon. Dr Sally Talbot at the Perth's Banksia Woodlands symposium in March 2011. Web site: <http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/resources/for-schools>

The three species of black cockatoos seen in the Perth area are all endemic to south-west WA and their very existence is threatened due to destruction of forest and woodland habitat - having an impact on food resources and hollow-bearing trees for nests. Other threats to the birds are competition for breeding hollows by other species, feral European honey bees, poaching of eggs for aviary trade, changes in fire regimes and potentially climate change.

The activity sheets have been designed for a wide audience – from merely as a colouring sheet for lower primary school children to a sheet that requires more research by upper primary children into colours and textures etc. of the birds and surrounding vegetation.

For upper primary, secondary school and others, the rear of the sheet has facts in a condensed form about each of the species.

**Baudin's Cockatoo** (with a long bill) is a forest species and the activity sheet shows the pair feeding on Marri.

The **Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo** pair has been drawn perching on a Jarrah. Over the past few years, we have seen pairs of these birds, and sometimes small flocks, coming to the Swan Coastal Plain to feed and sometimes roost.

The glossy black male has a distinctive red panel on its tail – we are truly fortunate to see these iconic birds flying around and feeding in suburbia. Will these birds still be in existence in 50 years time for our grandchildren to see?

**Carnaby's Cockatoo** (with a short, wide bill) mainly breeds in the wheatbelt area and in the non-breeding season moves to coastal areas. The activity sheet has a Carnaby's Cockatoo perched on an old gate post near a farm house with some other cockatoos silhouetted on the skyline.

Many landcare groups, individual farmers and some corporations have installed artificial nest hollows to replace or repair hollows lost for various reasons. The other **Carnaby's Cockatoo** activity sheet (based on a real photograph) shows a nestling that has been successfully raised within a PVC Cockatube™ that has been installed to repair a former nest hollow in a Wandoo – the base of the hollow had rotted away and was unusable. We hope that country folk will be inspired to install some artificial nest hollows and encourage Carnaby's Cockatoos to breed on their farm properties.

The fifth colouring sheet "***Endangered Black Cockatoos in Western Australia***" is meant for A3 paper size. The artwork shows a Jarrah/Marri/Banksia woodland scene with all three species of endemic cockatoos depicting typical activities – feeding on seeds, on nectar and grubbing for insect larvae, drinking from a puddle and inspecting a nest hollow.

The guide "***Identification of chewed Marri nuts by cockatoos and parrots***" is the result of many queries from bushland groups, naturalists, bush walkers and others about what bird species has been chewing on the nuts. Each species has a different style – from the inelegant "chomp-chomp" style of the Forest Red-tailed Black and Carnaby's cockatoos to the delicate style of the Red-capped Parrot and Baudin's Cockatoo which use their long upper beak to extract the Marri seeds. The Marri nuts show the lower mandible indentations from the bird feeding on the seeds. To further assist identification, an end-on view of the lower mandible of each species is shown next to the nuts.

The artist Rob Fleming has prepared nature-based drawings for the Education Department, posters for corporations and colour plates for bird field guides and books. He uses a stylus and computer tablet to prepare his drawings – all birds have been drawn with scientific accuracy and his Marri nut drawings are exquisite with the shapes and tones adding such realism.

All the artwork is [will be] freely available to download as PDFs from the Urban Bushland Council website <http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/resources> and copying for educational purposes is encouraged.