

Lorikeet Arena

Map Ref 1

The feeding of the wild lorikeets, attracts visitors from all around the world to Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. We sometimes have trouble convincing our guests that they are not kept in a giant aviary at the Sanctuary!

They spend their nights roosting in the trees at Burleigh and Coolangatta before flying out to the Hinterland during the day where there is a good supply of native flowers for them to feed upon. The lorikeets normally make a breakfast stop at the Sanctuary on their way out and then again in the afternoon before they return to the safety of the trees for the night. The feeding takes place every single morning and afternoon on every day of the year no matter what the weather conditions. In fact, it is in times of heavy rain that the most amount of lorikeets visit. Rain washes away their natural food source from native flowers.

Lorikeets are nectivores; they use their brush-tipped tongue to mop up nectar from flowers such as Grevillia, Bottlebrush, Banksia, Melaleuca and Acacia. They will eat some seeds, fruit and vegetables but nectar is their main source of energy. 'People food' such as bread, honey and water mixed together makes the birds sick which is why we encourage people NOT to feed wild animals. A lot of times people think they are helping but they may only be causing damage to the wildlife they are trying to help.

We feed the lorikeets a special blend of honey, water and 'Wombaroo' powder. This is a special formula that is healthy for the wild lorikeets and has been developed by our veterinary staff.

Lorikeets are a flock bird. This means that they all fly together, eat together and sleep together. Lorikeets do not like to be on their own as it reduces their chance of survival. When there are many lorikeets flying together or roosting making a lot of noise together, it becomes very confusing for predators such as birds of prey and cats. Usually during the lorikeet feed you will experience these 'fright flights'. When feeding, some lorikeets remain in the trees to act as lookouts for the flock.

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary feeds two species of lorikeet:

- RAINBOW LORIKEET - brightly coloured red, blue, green, orange and yellow bird.
- SCALY-BREADED LORIKEET - smaller green bird with yellow flecks on its chest.

Please note that as the lorikeets are completely wild, we cannot guarantee their numbers. The quantity of lorikeets depends on many factors including season, weather, availability of food in the wild and the presence of natural predators in the local area. Whilst the sanctuary offers food to the lorikeets each morning and afternoon, it is up to them whether they choose to come in to the sanctuary to feed.



Q1

Lorikeets can't carry things with their feet but they do have sharp claws. Why do you think this is?

FOR GRIP WHILE PERCHING AND GROOMING

Q2

Why do we ask people NOT to feed lorikeets in their backyards? What are some of things you could do to help lorikeets?

WE DO NOT ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO FEED ANY WILD ANIMAL IN THEIR BACKYARD AS THEY COME TO DEPEND ON PEOPLE WHO MAY FORGET TO FEED THEM SOME DAYS OR MOVE HOUSE: PEOPLE OFTEN FEED WILD ANIMALS THE WRONG TYPE OF FOOD. THE BEST WAY TO HELP WILD ANIMALS IS TO PLANT NATIVE FLOWERING PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN, SUPPLY NESTBOXES AND TO KEEP CATS AND DOGS INSIDE AT NIGHT.

Q3

What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of 'flock behaviour'?

STUDENTS MAY COME UP WITH THEIR OWN SUGGESTIONS AS WELL AS THE FOLLOWING: ADVANTAGES – SAFETY IN NUMBERS, SHARE RESPONSIBILITY OF FINDING FOOD AND ACTING AS A SCOUT, SOCIAL INTERACTION/COMPANY. DISADVANTAGES – MAY ATTRACT RATHER THAN DETER PREDATORS, COMPETITION FOR FOOD DURING FOOD SHORTAGES.

A1

A2

A3

No matter how old you are there is nothing like the feeling you get when you encounter wild animals up close. So go on! Grab a plate and feed the wild lorikeets!