



The Flinders Ranges Council

# Little Corella



## Community Information



## Background on the Little Corella

Little Corellas are an Australian native bird naturally found in parts of South Australia. The range of the Little Corella in South Australia has expanded substantially southwards since the 1920's. Flocks have been part of the landscape in The Flinders Ranges Council district for many years with numbers steadily increasing. It is believed the range of the Little Corella has increased due to the change in land use that has occurred. The provision of water and undisturbed environment has been favourable to Little Corellas.



*Pair of Little Corellas (Cacatua sanguinea)*



## What problems are caused by Little Corellas?

Little Corellas can cause problems in town areas when their numbers are high. These problems can vary depending on location and the attitudes of observers. Each year The Flinders Ranges Council receives many calls, emails and letters from residents, businesses and groups regarding Little Corellas. These letters include requests for action on the Little Corella issue and reports of the problems the birds are causing.



Concerns include -

- Noise associated with flocks of birds. This includes inability of some residents to be able to relax at home due to the noise, and complaints from customers about bird noise to businesses in affected towns.
- Damage to trees, including native trees and ornamental exotic trees.
- Damage to ovals and recreation areas.
- Litter such as pine cones and small branches on roads, footpaths etc.
- Increased cost to Council, businesses, and residents of cleaning up after birds.
- Damage to buildings and infrastructure, including damage to TV antennas, window seals, vehicles, roof tiles, fencing etc.
- Impact on human health, including depression, anxiety, health issues relating to pollution of water tanks, stress from noise and mess caused by birds.





## Typical behaviour and activity of the Little Corella

Knowing how Little Corellas behave will help in planning and undertaking a management program.

The typical daily activity pattern for Little Corellas is to start calling at first light. As the light grows, birds begin to move about the roost trees and calling intensifies. Birds may fly to other trees, often with exposed or dead branches at the top, to catch the first sunlight and bask for a period.



The birds then fly off to commence foraging in a sown crop, a pasture, stubble, or a roadside. The first bout of feeding lasts for a variable period, determined in part by temperature, abundance of food and whether there are young to feed. This can last from half an hour up to four or five hours. Little Corellas then usually return to a resting or loafing site to digest food, preen, play and rest.

During summer, this resting period may last for a number of hours, until the day is cool enough for the birds to resume feeding late in the afternoon.

Little Corellas return to the evening roost site near sunset and are often noisy while settling to roost. On moonlit nights, Little Corellas often call and move about the roost site, flying to other trees on occasion.

When pairs are breeding, they are dispersed over the countryside, where they feed near their nest hollows. During spring Little Corellas are mostly seen in pairs or small flocks. After the young fledge (November usually) they join growing flocks that gather to feed in crop stubbles, slashed paddocks and other, concentrated food sources. This is when large flocks form, comprising young of the year, their parents and non-breeding birds.

These summer aggregations of birds roost communally at traditional sites and tend also to feed in large groups at favourable food sources.

Flocks “accumulate” at such sites by a process known as ‘local enhancement’, whereby birds flying past will change course to join other birds they can see on the ground, feeding. It is not until the autumn break when significant rainfall softens the ground over a wide area, often in April or May that these flocks once again disperse into smaller groups for the winter and feed by digging in the now softer ground for bulbs and corms.

By August, pairs have once again moved close to their nest hollows to feed and prepare for breeding.





## Description of actions Council is undertaking in 2013-2014

The Flinders Ranges Council is undertaking a number of actions to manage Little Corellas. The purpose of these actions is to decrease the negative impact large flocks of Little Corellas are having on some sections of the community.

### **MONITORING OF FLOCK BEHAVIOUR AND MOVEMENT**

An important part of any Little Corella control program is understanding their behaviour. To have an effective management approach it is necessary to know where the flocks are roosting, where they are feeding, and how they move about during the day. It is also important to know if the flock population is increasing or decreasing. All of this information will help determine the current and future management approaches, and their effectiveness. The Flinders Ranges Council has Little Corella Survey Sheets available for residents to record information such as numbers and movement. Information gathered will be used to refine and improve the Little Corella management strategy for 2013 – 2014.

### **STROBE LIGHTS**

Strobe lights, flashing white lights and high powered torch lights have been found to be an effective deterrent for the birds. The flashing lights made the birds uncomfortable and they left their roosting site. When the light is shone onto branches the movement and light makes it look like the branches are moving. This unsettles the birds as they can not be sure if something is moving about. The birds will then move away from the site. A high powered torch waved slowly in foliage will do a similar job.

This activity undertaken at sunrise and after sunset can be very successful in moving on the birds.

### **GAS GUN**

As in previous years, Council will continue to utilise gas guns to scare the birds away from certain locations. The gas gun is similar to the type used in vineyards and orchards. It periodically fires making a loud noise and startles any birds that are nearby. The gas gun is not lethal as it fires no projectiles. The gas gun will be placed in areas within towns where flocks of birds are reported as causing an extreme disturbance.



*The gas gun*



## Description of actions undertaken by Council in past years

The Flinders Ranges Council has trialled a number of management methods for Little Corellas in past years, and includes -

- Formation and meetings of The Flinders Ranges Little Corella Control Reference Committee.
- Shooting of birds. This approach is not suitable for town areas.
- Collection of information of impacts of Corellas on businesses and residents through surveys and public meetings.
- Use of Council volunteers to move flocks and relocate gas guns.
- Use of 'Bird Frite'® shots to scare birds.
- Ongoing lobbying of State Government
- Engagement of all South Australian local councils through the Local Government Association of South Australia 2013 Annual General Meeting Showcase
- Engagement of Mid North and Yorke Natural Resource Management Board. This has been ineffective to date.
- Trap and gas action, which was ineffective in reducing flock numbers at the time.
- Applying for grant funding.
- 2013 Control Program – effective for short term control.







## Do you need further information?

### INFORMATION BROCHURE

Council has developed information brochures to help residents understand the impacts of Little Corellas on the community, future actions that Council will be undertaking and what private landholders can do to effectively manage Little Corellas on their land. These brochures are available from the Council office and at Hawker Motors, and are also available on the Council web site. (*see website address below*).

### MANAGEMENT PLAN

In conjunction with the above actions Council is preparing a Management Plan which will outline how Little Corellas impact the community and the future management of these impacts. This plan will evolve as actions are trialled and new information becomes available. The Flinders Ranges Council Little Corella Management Plan will be available on the Council website.

For further information regarding any of the abovementioned actions, please refer to Council's website at [www.frc.sa.gov.au](http://www.frc.sa.gov.au)

Further information on Little Corella behaviour; please contact the Northern and York Natural Resources of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources on (08) 8638 2351, facsimile (08) 8636 2371 or [www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)





## Council needs your feedback and ideas

The Flinders Ranges Council is determined to decrease the negative impact Little Corellas are having on residents. To do this Council will review its management actions each year and refine the program to achieve better results.

Feedback from residents and landholders is essential to the review process.

Council welcomes all comments from The Flinders Ranges Council district residents.

Information is needed on the following:

### **What impact are Little Corellas having on you?**

Describe the impact.

Can you put a monetary value to any damage or benefit?

If it is impacting on lifestyle or health please provide details of how this is happening, who is affected and what the implications of the impact are?

### **Describe any actions you take at your property to manage Little Corellas.**

Provide details of any actions you take – action description, impact on bird numbers, and times of day you take these actions. (Survey form is provided)

### **Describe any positive benefits you see with having Little Corellas in the region.**

### **Would you support the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issuing a permit to trap and gas Little Corellas?**

Let us know if you support this method and why.

### **Do you support the non-lethal actions Council is currently taking to manage Little Corellas?**

Please provide any information you have on the apparent effectiveness of current actions.

Do you use any of these methods on your property?

If Little Corella numbers continue to increase what type of action do you feel Council should take?

**Please send your feedback and ideas to Council for our consideration**