

CARAGABAL BIRD ART PROJECT



THIS BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK is located along the Mid-Western Highway in the small, rural village of Caragabal in Central West NSW. Completed in 2020, with an extension in 2022, it aims to celebrate the unique local bird life at Caragabal and raise awareness of local threatened species. There is a distinct change in the landscape, soil and vegetation from the east to the west of Caragabal, which creates a terrific diversity in the bird species seen here.

The Caragabal Bird Art Project was first envisioned by Cr. Phillip Diprose who was inspired by Camila De Gregorio and Christopher Macaluso, designers and birders who visit his nearby property to conduct bird surveys. When invited to speak to the children at Caragabal Public School, Cr. Diprose decided to pitch his idea to local students. They loved it!

A partnership then formed between Caragabal Public School, the Caragabal Progress Group and Weddin Landcare to bring the project idea to life, with generous input from local community members and businesses.

The project was also proudly supported by Central West Local Land Services through funding from the NSW Government and the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. The landowner, Trevor McDonald, kindly allowed the artwork to be displayed on his shed.

Primary students from Caragabal Public School researched the local bird species and then voted on which birds should be included on the artwork, based on 'pitch' presentations given by the students to their classmates. The students were very engaged in this project, with some even begging to work on "their birds" during lunchtime!

In 2022, an extension saw the addition of three threatened bird species, including two critically endangered birds, to help raise awareness of these species and prompt action.

The artwork was designed by Eggpicnic, a Canberra based fine art design studio operated by Camila De Gregorio and Christopher Macaluso, which is devoted to wildlife conservation.

The team at Eggpicnic were incredibly supportive of this project, being one of the first of their major artworks outside of Sydney.

This wonderful, collaborative effort has resulted in an inspiring and meaningful flock in a location like no other! Visit Caragabal to get a photo with these incredible birds, then spread the word to help conserve them.



THE BIRDS OF CARAGABAL

The birds featured on the artwork are a great representation of the birds found at Caragabal. The birds on the eastern and northern walls of the shed are listed on these pages (in order of appearance from left to right). The three species added to the western wall in 2022 are listed on the back page of this brochure. Threatened species are denoted by an asterisk.

The information in this brochure was sourced from BirdLife Australia and the NSW Government Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. To learn more about this project and the birds of Caragabal or to see samples of the Caragabal Public School students' work visit weddinlandcare.org/caragabal-bird-art.



Photo: Jenn Graham



Photo: Jenn Graham



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Photo: Jenn Graham



Photo: Melanie Cooper

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

The Cockatiel is a small member of the cockatoo family, mainly occurring in inland regions of Australia. It prefers open country, where it can forage on the ground for grass seeds, nuts, berries and grain. Cockatiels generally travel in large flocks and nest in hollows, in tall trees near water.

WELCOME SWALLOW *Hirundo neoxena*

Australia's most widespread swallow, the Welcome Swallow, can be seen swooping and gliding with its forked tail in search of flying insects in almost any habitat. Swallows build mud nests, lined with feathers and fur, under shelter such as on the walls of buildings, often raising two broods in a season.

AUSTRALIAN WOOD DUCK *Chenonetta jubata*

The Australian Wood Duck has adapted to a range of modified habitats, such as farm dams. They form monogamous pairs and nest in tree hollows (sometimes even chimneys), often reusing the same site. These ducks prefer to forage for vegetation on land, only taking to open water when disturbed.

SUPERB FAIRY-WREN *Malurus cyaneus*

Male Superb Fairy-wrens are often accompanied by a band of brown wrens - a mix of females and juvenile males. They are seen in most habitat types where suitable dense cover and low shrubs occur, feeding in groups on insects and other small arthropods. They build a dome-shaped, messy nest.

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE *Cracticus tibicen*

Australian Magpies are common and conspicuous birds living in groups of up to 24 birds in territories that are actively defended by all group members. Known for its pleasant carolling song and for its tendency to swoop, Magpies are found wherever there is a combination of trees and adjacent open areas.

TAWNY FROGMOUTH *Podargus strigoides*

Tawny Frogmouths are nocturnal birds that feed at night on insects, worms, slugs and small mammals, reptiles, frogs and birds. During the day, they perch on low tree branches, perfectly camouflaged as part of the tree. They occur in a range of habitats and nest in forked tree branches.

EASTERN ROSELLA *Platycercus eximius*

These medium-sized, colourful parrots are found throughout south-eastern Australia in open woodlands, grasslands, farmlands and remnant bushland. Eastern Rosellas mate for life. The female prepares the nest, usually in a hollow in a eucalypt tree and incubates the eggs while the male regularly feeds her.

LAUGHING KOOKABURRA *Dacelo novaeguineae*

In eastern Australia, the raucous cackle of the Kookaburra is an essential feature of the dawn chorus. They inhabit most areas where there are suitable trees and feed on insects, worms, crustaceans and small reptiles, mammals and frogs. Pairing for life, the nest is a bare chamber, usually in a tree hollow.

NOISY MINER *Manorina melanocephala*

Noisy Miners are particularly pugnacious honeyeaters. They noisily defend their 'patch' of trees from other birds. This bold and curious bird lives in woodlands, open forests and has adapted to suburban environments. They feed mainly on nectar, fruits and insects and breed in small to large colonies.

BUSH STONE-CURLEW* *Burhinus grallarius*

The Bush Stone-curlew is a mainly nocturnal, ground-dwelling bird with a wide-ranging diet and a remarkable courtship dance. At night, you may hear their eerie, high-pitched wailing. Due to their ground-dwelling habit they are prone to predation and nest disturbance and are now endangered in NSW.

RED-RUMPED PARROT *Psephotus haematonotus*

Found across south-eastern Australia, the Red-rumped Parrot inhabits open, grassy woodlands, cleared farmland and urban gardens. Flocks forage quietly on the ground for seeds and green tips, often with other parrots. With breeding habits similar to the Eastern Rosella, these parrots mate for life.

MASKED LAPWING *Vanellus miles*

Masked Lapwings are large, ground-dwelling birds that are also known as Spur-winged Plovers as they are armed with a yellow spur, used when diving at intruders during breeding season. They are found in a wide variety of open spaces, including urban settings, and feed on insects and earthworms.

GALAH *Eolophus roseicapilla*

The Galah is one of the most abundant and familiar of the Australian parrots, forming huge, noisy flocks which roost together at night and feed on ground seeds during the day. Galahs flourish in farmlands, eating the seeds of cultivated crops. Galahs nest in tree hollows and form permanent pair bonds.

DIAMOND FIRETAIL* *Stagonopleura guttata*

The Diamond Firetail is a small bird found in open grassy habitats with scattered trees. Diamond Firetails often build their nests in prickly or dense shrubs or even at the base of a hawk's nest. They hop along the ground eating ripe seeds and insects. Loss of habitat has placed this species at threat.

GREY-CROWNED BABBLER* *Pomatostomus temporalis*

The Grey-crowned Babbler is a noisy and sociable bird, found in co-operative, territorial groups, which are often seen on the ground or in low trees foraging for invertebrates and seeds. The group builds two nests, one for roosting and one for brooding females. Loss of woodland habitat is a threat to this bird.

SUPERB PARROT* *Polytelis swainsonii*

Each day, brightly coloured Superb Parrots fly, swiftly and gracefully, between their breeding habitat (deep hollows in large woodland or forest trees) and feeding habitats. They forage for seeds, fruits, nectar and flowers. Habitat loss is the main threat to this species; however, many are also struck by vehicles.

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE *Aquila audax*

With a wingspan up to 2.3m, the Wedge-tailed Eagle is Australia's largest bird of prey. Eagles can soar to altitudes up to 2,000m and can lift about 50% of their body weight, eating both live prey and carrion. They are monogamous and build a large stick nest in the tallest live or dead tree in their territory.

SACRED KINGFISHER *Todiramphus sanctus*

Sacred Kingfishers seldom eat fish, mainly hunting small terrestrial vertebrates and invertebrates. The birds perch on a low branches then swoop down to grasp their prey and return to the perch to eat it. Sacred Kingfishers are only seen here in warmer months and are mainly solitary, pairing to breed.



Photo: Melanie Cooper



Photo: Mal Carnegie



Photo: Jenn Graham



Photo: Jenn Graham



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Photo: Jenn Graham



Photo: Jenn Graham



Photo: Melanie Cooper



Photo: Jenn Graham



Photo: Ken Griffiths



Photo: Ken Griffiths



Photo: Jayden Gunn

SWIFT PARROT* *Lathamus discolor*

Swift Parrots breed only in Tasmania, with timing dependent on the flowering of the Tasmanian Blue Gum. During winter they fly across Bass Strait to forage on the flowering eucalypts in open box-ironbark forests of Victoria and south-east NSW. These critically endangered, medium-sized parrots mainly feed on nectar and are noisy, active and showy, with a very fast, direct flight.

REGENT HONEYEATER* *Anthochaera phrygia*

Once widely distributed, this handsome, critically endangered honeyeater is now confined to Victoria and NSW due to widespread clearance of their woodland habitat. The Regent Honeyeater is found in eucalypt woodlands, particularly in blossoming trees and mistletoe. Their cup-shaped nest is thickly constructed from bark, lined with soft material, and is placed in a tree fork.

GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOO* *Calyptorhynchus lathami*

These fussy birds feed almost exclusively on seeds of *Allocasuarina* trees. They strip the pods from the tree then tear them open with their strong bills, littering the ground below with discarded cones. Glossy Black-Cockatoos are found across eastern Australia and are the smallest of the five black-cockatoos. They mate for life, with pairs maintaining their bond all year round.

To learn more about these birds or become involved in projects to help protect them, contact Weddin Landcare:

E: weddinlandcare@outlook.com

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W: www.weddinlandcare.org

HELP THEM, DON'T HURT THEM!

This was a catch phrase developed by Year 4 student, Patrick, as part of his pitch to his classmates. We loved it so we have adopted it too! You can help to protect these beautiful birds so that they may be seen in our landscape for generations to come. Some simple measures include:

- Look out and slow down for birds when driving.
- Avoid or clean up grain spills and dispose of food and rubbish thoughtfully.
- Protect patches of remnant vegetation and single paddock trees (including dead ones), especially if they have hollows.
- Strategically graze stock to maintain areas of native groundcover and protect nesting sites.
- Strategically revegetate using local native plants including overstorey and understorey species.
- Retain habitat features such as native grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees, dead trees, fallen logs, leaf litter and mistletoes and protect water sources such as rivers, creeks and dams.
- Remove features that may cause harm to the birds such as barbed wire.
- Control pest animals such as cats, foxes, dogs and goats and appropriately confine domestic pets.



THIS PROJECT WAS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY

