

## The Bird-Bath Study

Dear Colleague

Thankyou sincerely for your interest in our bird-bath project. To reiterate, we are interested in hearing about the use of bird-baths in any setting – suburban backyard, farm, inner-city apartment. As described in the *Wildlife Australia* article (2008 45(2)), in the context of the prolonged drought that much of eastern Australia has been experiencing it is likely that the bird-baths provided by people in their houseyards are of great importance for the survival to many species. Remarkably, almost nothing is known about this potentially significant activity. This project aims to start the long process of understanding faunal use of bird-baths, as well as the motivations of the people involved. There are three ways to be involved.

### First level: Starting simply

With so little known, even the most straight-forward observations can be important. For example, a simple list of the species that are known to have visited your bird bath/s will be useful. Even better would be information on when and how often – there are often specific times of the day or the year when birds come. A simple note describing these things would be very helpful to us.

### Second level: A bird-bath diary

For people with more time and interest, we would like to invite you to keep a slightly more detailed diary of bird-bath visits. We recognise that most people cannot sit and watch their bird-bath throughout the day but it may be possible to keep a note-book handy and jot down the species, how many individuals came, the time of day and any other relevant notes. For example, your diary entries might look like this:

12/7/08	7.35am Noisy Miner	3	Chased away the Crested Pigeons
12/7/08	8.05am Crested Pigeon	2	
12/7/08	4.45pm Silvereye	4	Bathing vigorously

### Third level: Timed observations

This would be best for people who are able to watch their bird-bath/s either regularly or for extended periods of time – say an hour or so. These observations aim to record more detail about the visit, such as how long the birds stayed and whether there were any interactions with other species – especially displacements.

I have included a blank data sheet that could be used for these observations with an example of how they could be filled out.

### Why do you have a bird bath?

Finally, we are inviting everyone to write a simple explanation of why you have bothered to buy and maintain a bird-bath at your place. There is no 'correct answer' this; we genuinely would like to know why you like to provide water for wildlife.

Thankyou very much

Please send all information, queries and questions to:

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