

Noisy birds



Why birds make noise

- Bored and lonely birds tend to make more noise than ones that are occupied.
- Birds like to communicate to other birds, including the rest of the flock, particularly when lost.
- Unhappy or sick birds can make loud noise or in a repetitive pattern for a long period of time.
- Jealousy or a change to routine or familiarity (e.g. change or loss of a family member)
- A change in environment or inadequate sleep may cause birds to stir.
- Some birds may celebrate the sunrise or sunset.
- When afraid, birds can make a noise to warn others about danger.

How to control bird noise

Bird noise can be controlled through several small behavioural changes.

- Ensure that the birds basic needs are met – food, water, toys.
- Offer an alternative outlet for the bird to play and get exercises – consider a play gym, supervised out-of-the cage play, or leaving the television or radio on.
- Non-toxic cardboard items such as tree branches with leaves, paper cups and old phone books can be entertaining for your bird.
- Try hiding toys and food in places which the bird has to forage to find it. Working for the reward provides mental

stimulation and replicates wild bird behaviour.

- Do not reward your bird by giving it attention whilst squawking.
- Positively reward the bird with a toy, treat and verbal praise when it is behaving quietly.
- Increasing stress on the bird by yelling, hitting the bird or cage, spraying with water etc. can make noise worse and lead to other issues.
- If your bird is making noise due to loneliness, you may want to consider finding a new home for your pet until your lifestyle is better suited towards having a pet. An alternative would be to get another bird for companionship but this needs to be considered in relation to your individual circumstances.

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Neighbours

Talk to your neighbour about the problem; they may not be aware that their bird is making noise or that it is bothering you. If you are uncomfortable addressing the issue in person, council suggests writing a letter to your neighbour. You can also attach this factsheet for useful techniques on how to control the level of noise. Give your neighbour time to address the issue.

If the noise persists, council will require you to complete a noisy bird survey. Council require documented evidence of nuisance instances to be collected before the issue can be escalated. This helps Local Law Officers to identify the cause of the nuisance, allowing them to better assist owners when resolving the issue.

The noisy bird survey must be formally lodged (it cannot be anonymous) as this documentation supports escalation action. The survey is recorded, by the complainant for a period of seven days and then must be returned within seven days of completion.

This factsheet, a template letter to address the issue with your neighbour, and the barking dog survey are all available on the council's website by searching *noisy birds*.



To further progress discussions with your neighbours in a structured format, the Dispute Resolution Centre offers free advice and mediation services. Visit the Department of Justice and Attorney General's website at www.justice.qld.gov.au or alternatively contact the Central Queensland branch on 1800 817 927.

What will council do?

After a noisy bird survey has been submitted to council, Regulatory Services will, if necessary, survey adjoining neighbours to determine if others have similar concerns. This will allow us to judge the extent of the impact on the immediate community. If the alleged nuisance is proven to be a breach of Mackay Regional Council Local Law No 2 (Animal Management) 2011, council may issue the owner with compliance notices and/or penalty infringement notices. The Local Laws

database is available on council's website under 'Residents'. The identity of the complainant will remain confidential in any correspondence from council. The owner can dispute the complaint, as they have the right to have the matter heard before a Magistrate's Court. If this happens, the complainant(s) will be required to provide evidence in person. A more detailed statement or affidavit may be requested, as council must be satisfied that sufficient evidence is available to support legal action.

For more information visit the website mackay.qld.gov.au, phone council on 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529), or email council@mackay.qld.gov.au.