



## Raven – Damage Prevention and Control

### Identification and Distribution

The Australian raven *Corvus coronoides* is a large (48-54cm length; 500-820g weight) black bird with a long bill and elongated throat feathers (hackles) that are obvious when it calls. The call is a drawn-out, falling 'aah-aah-aaaaahhhh'. As they mature, the eyes change from blue as a nestling, to brown and then to white at 3 years of age. Juvenile birds also have shorter hackles and pink skin around and within the mouth.

The Australian raven occurs throughout much of Australia, excluding Tasmania. It has become one of the most common birds in metropolitan areas. Refer to [www.naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://www.naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au) to find further information on the species distribution.

### Behaviour

Breeding Australian ravens will build a stick nest in a tall tree and lay eggs in late winter and early spring. Ravens are scavenger and eat a varied diet, including insects, carrion (dead livestock, roadkill), young birds, bird eggs and flower nectar. They will also scavenge for meat, fruit and bread from parks, shopping centres, schools and fast food outlets.

### Environmental Law

All fauna native to Australia, including fauna that naturally migrates to Australia, are afforded protection under both State and Commonwealth legislation.

The Australian raven is listed as a Declared Pest in some areas and can be controlled on private property if they are causing damage to, or likely to cause damage to, crops or stock without the authority of a licence. Refer to the [Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development website](#) for areas where this is applicable.

Outside of these areas, a licence issued by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions may be required. Further information is available on the Department's [website](#).

### Raven-Human Interactions

Ravens have increased in numbers in the Perth metropolitan area due to an increase in the amount of food and water and roosting and nesting sites available. Ravens will swarm food sources, fighting over food and flocking to harass predators. A large numbers of ravens can also result in fouling of buildings and vehicles with faeces.

In rural areas, Australian ravens are known to damage grape, almond, melon and citrus crops; although studies have shown that they prefer carrion. Ravens are often abundant at lambing time because afterbirths and carrion provide an abundant food source. Correct nutrition and provision of adequate shelter and supervision near lambing time can reduce the number of weak lambs and therefore the number that are vulnerable to predators.

Most complaints relate to noise, scavenging and breaking open bins, impacts on other birds (predation) and damage to gardens and fixtures on buildings and cars. Although Australian ravens can cause a range of damage problems, the damage is more commonly due to other animals (e.g. other birds, rodents, foxes). It is important to determine if ravens are responsible before taking further action.

If you find a sick or injured raven contact the [Wildcare Helpline](#) on (08) 9474 9055 for information on registered wildlife rehabilitators and centres who can assist with your enquiry.

### Disease Risk

Ravens carry *Salmonella* species and thus there is a risk of transmitting diseases and infections, such as Salmonella, to humans from contact with faeces.

## Damage Prevention and Control

Damage prevention and control strategies for the Australian raven can vary markedly between metropolitan and rural areas, but the general goal is to remove the resources that attract ravens. It is important to note that most control programs offer only a short-term solution due to the mobility of flocks and ongoing breeding.

The following steps may be effective:

- Do not feed wild native animals, clear away food scraps and uneaten pet food and dispose of fruit which has fallen from fruit trees;
- Ensure rubbish bins have lids;
- Cover compost heaps/ ensure compost bins have lids;
- Properly secure chicken pens and ensure they are in good repair;
- Deny access to sheds, vehicles and rubbish bins;
- Thin or prune tree branches to make the area unattractive;
- Spray ravens with water as they land;
- Hang reflective tape on roost trees; and
- Employ noise and/or light emitting devices (gas guns, alarms, bright lights).

A combination of techniques is likely to be more effective than a single technique and the type, intensity and location should be varied because ravens can quickly learn that there is no threat associated with scaring techniques. It is also important to ensure that strategies are employed across a metropolitan area.

Exclusion using netting is generally not practical but may be useful in some circumstances, such as for enclosing high-value crops in small areas.

## Population Control

*Population control using lethal methods should be viewed as a last resort after all other control options have been attempted.*

Shooting is most effective as a scaring technique rather than a population reduction measure. Shooting of ravens is difficult, time consuming and usually only results in the removal of a small number of birds. Trapping is also time consuming, requires maintenance and usually is only a temporary solution.

However, shooting or trapping may be useful for removing small groups of problem birds, or where other control methods are not appropriate. Firearms must be licenced and a licence issued by the Department may be required for shooting and trapping activities. Further information is available on the Department's website.

Removal of nests and eggs is unlikely to be successful because replacement clutches can be laid within 5 weeks.

## Citation

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