

NEWS

Coreellas caught on camera going for a spin on a rooftop whirlybird air vent

ABC Radio Perth By Emma Wynne

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Footage of a group of coreellas taking turns to spin on a rooftop whirlybird air vent in Perth has provoked surprise and delight on social media.

The quartet was captured by an ABC Radio Perth listener in Caversham on Perth's eastern fringe.

Perth naturalist and bird expert Eric McCrum said the coreellas, along with other types of cockatoos, were instinctively playful.

"Because they are communal you always see coreellas in groups, and community invites games," he said.

"They are just literally playing with one another and enjoying whirling around."

Although he has never seen play like this before, Mr McCrum said it was entirely in character.

"Often they go to lawns and bite off the succulent part of the grass and lie on their backs — it's just sheer fun," he said.

"This is just simply play, like kids gambolling around."

Coreellas are a subspecies of cockatoo, as are galahs which can also regularly be seen playing on powerlines.

"It's all part of play, they just like to dangle and twist around," Mr McCrum explained.

A short history of coreellas in the city

Coreellas and galahs have unique feet, with two toes at the front and two at the back, which gives them a particular ability to grip and hang on to fruit or berries.

Today, they are a far more common sight in the Perth metropolitan area than previously.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, coreellas found themselves able to feast on cereal crops as the wheatbelt area around Perth expanded.

However land clearing also robbed them of their habitat and they had to compete with other species for nest hollows in trees.

Their numbers had plummeted by the 1940s as a result of shooting and poisoning by farmers.

They are now protected from culling.

"When I was a kid in the 1930s and '40s, we practically never saw them," Mr McCrum said.

"Today, you go to places like Guildford, you will often see 20 or 30 on the grass in the afternoons."

They have also learned to follow trucks hauling wheat to Fremantle, Mr McCrum said, to pick up grain that escapes onto the



Wild whirlybirds! Coreellas in Caversham turned a rooftop into a playground when they found this whirlybird. Thanks to Jane and Phil in Caversham for the video. [#abcradioperth](#)

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