

## HUNGRY NATIVE ANIMALS

Birds and mammals throughout Mackay and the Whitsundays have lost their homes and their food source following Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Flowers and seeds from trees, which many species rely on, have been blown away.

Cass Hayward, Reef Catchments' Coasts and Biodiversity Officer said, "Lots of people needed a helping hand to get through the last few weeks. Our wildlife does too."

"Many of us have seen the picture of the soaked, injured cockatoo that passed away during Cyclone Debbie. It was devastating. Everyone can assist in helping our precious wildlife recover by providing a little food throughout their properties", Cass Hayward said.

Ordinarily, feeding wildlife is not recommended. Many species become reliant on this food source and forget to scavenge for themselves, or our human food is not good for them. However, in such critical circumstances, providing food for birds and other wildlife may facilitate their recovery.

There are a few general rules to follow that will help keep these species safe, independent and fed:

- It is essential that food be placed in a safe place, away from cats and dogs. If possible, set up food where the animals would normally feed. For birds, this is in trees in vegetated areas.
- For nectar eating birds: As well as honey and sugars, these birds need protein. Ready to mix honey-lorikeet food is available at pet stores, or some homemade mixes are suitable also. For example, mixing peanut butter, honey and water into a pulp and placing in trays.
- For grain/seed eating birds: Finch seed and parrot mix is good for many doves, finches and parrot species. This is available at pet stores and supermarkets.
- For mammals: Scattering carrots, apples, bananas and oats where species frequent is recommended.

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