

33. A Flash of Colour - Observing Crimson Rosellas

Aim

This activity directs students' observations of a common bird in many parks. The activity could be adapted for observations of other animals in the park.

Materials

- Resource sheet 33: Crimson Rosellas.
- Base map of the site you are visiting.

Activities

1. Using the information supplied and your observation skills, sit quietly in the picnic ground or designated area and observe the Crimson Rosellas for an agreed length of time.

2. While observing, complete the data tables provided in the record sheet.

Characteristics:

Population:

Living in a group:

Habitat:

Management:

3. Back at school, compare observations with other members of the class.

Link to Section 4

See also Section 4 of this education resource kit, in particular: Dandenong Ranges National Park, where Crimson Rosella are common.

Resource sheet 33

Crimson Rosellas

The name Rosella is derived from the first sighting of these parrots in the Rose Hill district of Sydney.

Rosellas belong to the parrot family. The Crimson Rosella is distinguished from other rosellas by its colouring - rich deep crimson colouring on the head, neck, underside and rump while its shoulders are blue and its tail is tipped with pale blue.

Some Crimson Rosellas have learnt to coexist with humans and are even common in the bushland areas close to Melbourne. In the bush Crimson Rosellas usually live in timbered ranges, gullies and valleys.

Immature Crimson Rosellas are green and do not have adult plumage colours until their third year.

These birds nest in hollows of dead or living trees. Five to eight white eggs are laid and the breeding season is from October to January. Their diet is mainly seeds, insects and nectar.



Crimson Rosella © MT

33. Observing Crimson Rosellas

Characteristics

Complete the following after observing the Crimson Rosella for a few minutes.

Size: _____

Colour: Head Breast Back Tail
 _____ _____ _____ _____

Call: _____

Food: _____

Habitat: _____

Grooming Habit: _____

Eating Habit _____

Flight Habit : _____

Population

Observe the Crimson Rosella for 2-5 minutes within a picnic ground.

How can you identify adult birds?

How can you identify juvenile birds?

How many adult birds did you observe? _____

Estimate the total number of birds you observed. _____

Living in a Group

Crimson Rosellas exist together in small groups. From your observations estimate the size of the group.

Do adult or juvenile birds dominate the group? _____

List two advantages of these birds living in a group:

1. _____

2. _____

Would you describe these birds as solitary or social birds? Explain.

Habitat

Mark the following features on a base map provided. You should use a symbol to represent each feature.

- picnic tables
- cars
- visitors

Observe the groups of Crimson Rosella for five minutes and locate each bird as a cross on the base map.

Management

Use your base map to answer the following:

Describe the relationship(s) that exist between any of the features mapped.

Are any of the above relationships likely to cause management problems for the Park?
Explain your answer.

If you have noticed that the Crimson Rosellas seem to cluster in specific locations within the picnic area, what environmental damage has this caused?

Many visitors come to a park to see and feed Crimson Rosellas. Tourist buses with overseas and interstate visitors stop at some picnic grounds in parks to feed the rosellas. Park rangers actively discourage feeding of wildlife in the park.

Suggest some ways the park environment could be protected and all groups satisfied.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____