



WildWatch Australia

RESULTS OVERVIEW

www.abc.net.au/wildwatch

Every single one of the 27,364 survey responses has now been collated, analysed and interpreted. So go to the website for the in-depth results, theories behind them and an insight in the different regions.

The results truly represent the whole of Australia – with entries literally ranging from Parramatta to Pannawonica and in all different age groups. This gives us a picture of the wildlife in Australian's gardens on a larger scale than ever before. The group of universities and conservation organisations are very keen to use the results!

likes and dislikes

- the least liked animal group of all was **flies/mosquitoes** (clear winner in these stakes with 89% of people disliking them!)
- the favourite animals of all were **small insect-eating birds** (perhaps because they eat the least favourite animals!), but **lorikeets, rosellas & other parrots, honeyeaters and frogs** were close behind

the hand that feeds

- WildWatch confirms that Australians everywhere are actively engaged in attracting wildlife to their backyards. Nearly 30% of people who responded **fed wildlife**, and 6 out of 10 have **bird baths**.
- Lorikeets, rosellas and other parrots, as well as magpies are the most commonly fed

cats and dogs

- Australian's have one of the highest levels of **pet ownership** in the world – this survey found just over 50% of people own a cat or a dog or both.
- Most people (63%) who responded considered domestic pets to be the **biggest threat** to wildlife in their garden.
- WildWatch demonstrated clearly that managing your pets does work: respondents who restricted the movements of their dogs and cats saw significantly more birds and mammals.
- The well-known technique of putting a bell on cats (40% of cat owners do this) was reported to work very well for frogs and reptiles and birds but **not** for mammals.

city and country

- WildWatch revealed an expected but until now unproven trend of seeing greater biodiversity in gardens as we move from the inner city, through the suburbs of large cities, to the fringes of small town and finally to remote or rural locations. People living away from towns were likely to see more of everything.
- Only a few animals do as well in cities as in the country – lorikeets and flying foxes being prime examples (see the website for more on the '**heat island effect**' of our cities)

native plants matter!

- All wildlife groups were much more commonly seen in gardens located close to bushland.
- Gardens with native plants, and especially local native plants, supported a significantly greater diversity of wildlife than gardens with more exotic plants.

the underdogs?

- Wildwatch confirms that larger birds (eg. magpies, kookaburras) are doing pretty well in our urban areas, and that sadly, the most popular small insect-eating birds (with the 99% approval rating) are not doing nearly so well
- by looking at the factors affecting where small insect eating birds are doing best, we can see that by retaining bushland, and replacing lawn with shrubs would most likely benefit

them. Putting out food is probably not going to help them – because this tends to attract the larger birds.

the regions

- if you want less **snakes**, but can cope with more **centipedes & millipedes, earthworms & flatworms**, and **snails**, then you need to go to the Wet Temperate Coasts
- if you want to increase your chances of having more types of **mammals** in your garden, you need to live in the Northern Wet-Dry Tropics
- You're more likely to have **wombats** in your garden in the Temperate Highlands
- the Subtropical slopes/plains region appears to make the most effort **attracting wildlife** – with more nestboxes, feeding and birdbaths than anywhere else.
- people living in the Arid Interior are more likely to **control their cats** – putting bells on them and keeping them inside at night
- gardens in the Semi-arid Tropical/subtropical Plains are more likely than anywhere else to have **snakes** and **birds of prey**.

the common and the rare

- **flies/mosquitoes** (with 26,570 people reporting them) and **butterflies/moths** (26,432) were the most ubiquitous of all.
- **Tassie devils** (227 reports) and brush-tailed **phascogales** (349) were the rarest.

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We'll be conducting another survey in September!

From the first survey we found people wanted more, so the next survey will feature three main parts – pests, changes and a detailed species section. We will bring to the fore the issues that have emerged from different areas around Australia and delve deeper into them. In the TV programs and Local Radio slots we'll look at how some of these issues are being tackled - by experts and non-experts alike, and encourage participation in the survey.

more:

check out the website www.abc.net.au/wildwatch for more stories, more about regions, more facts and figures.