Birds and poultry

Many Gold Coast residents own birds for a variety of reasons, including companionship and special interest.

To ensure that your birds or poultry are kept without nuisance to your neighbours, you are required to comply with the following rules:

- keep your birds or poultry contained to an avairy or enclosure
- keep seed or any bird food in a sealed, vermin-proof container
- thoroughly clean aviaries and enclosures on a weekly basis
- avoid excessive vocalisation.

Find useful information and resources for keeping of birds and poultry.

In addition, minimum enclosure standards must be met for the keeping of poultry, as prescribed within Council’s Local Law No. 12 (Animal Management) 2013:

- located not less than one metre from the property boundary
- located at the rear of, and behind, any residence
- not located within 10 metres of any residence, food storage or preparation area.

Restrictions apply to the number of birds that can be kept on a property.

However, you may apply for a permit to keep more than the allowable number of birds.

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of bird</th>
<th>Land size (metres²)</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgerigars, canaries and other birds of a similar size</td>
<td>Less than 300</td>
<td>four (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgerigars, canaries and other birds of a similar size</td>
<td>301 - 2000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgerigars, canaries and other birds of a similar size</td>
<td>More than 2001</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockatiels and similar-sized birds</td>
<td>Less than 300</td>
<td>two (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockatiels and similar-sized birds</td>
<td>301 - 2000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockatiels and similar-sized birds</td>
<td>More than 2001</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockatoos, galahs and other birds of similar size</td>
<td>Less than 300</td>
<td>one (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockatoos, galahs and other birds of similar size</td>
<td>301 - 2000</td>
<td>two (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockatoos, galahs and other birds of similar size</td>
<td>More than 2001</td>
<td>four (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeons</td>
<td>Less than 300</td>
<td>two (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeons</td>
<td>301 - 2000</td>
<td>20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeons</td>
<td>More than 2001</td>
<td>30*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: a member of the Pigeon Racing Association may have more than 20 pigeons on land more than 800 metres² in size.

### Poultry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of poultry</th>
<th>Land size (metres²)</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roosters, peacocks, ostriches and emus</td>
<td>Less than 4000</td>
<td>not allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosters, peacocks, ostriches and emus</td>
<td>More than 4001</td>
<td>one (1) per 4000m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geese, ducks, turkeys and other poultry (except roosters)</td>
<td>Less than 800</td>
<td>not allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geese, ducks, turkeys and other poultry (except roosters)</td>
<td>801 - 2000</td>
<td>six (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geese, ducks, turkeys and other poultry (except roosters)</td>
<td>More than 2001</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic hens</td>
<td>Less than 600</td>
<td>not allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic hens</td>
<td>More than 600</td>
<td>one (1) per 100m²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Useful information and resources for keeping of birds and poultry

Click on the subheadings below for tips on how to manage noisy birds.

Excessive vocalisation

Vocalising is a natural behaviour of birds. A pet bird will vocalise when it is time to wake in the morning, when it is time to go to bed, when it is feed time and, of course, when you come home and the bird wants to let you know where it is. Vocalising is fine until it becomes inappropriate.

Generally speaking, it is unnatural for a bird to scream for more than three minutes, four or five times a day. Learn what is normal for your bird and then you will know what is excessive.

Remember: if your bird is being noisy, it’s not doing it to irritate you. Often the bird is just lonely, bored or it may be trying to tell you that something is wrong.

Nutrition

A balanced diet is essential to the physical and mental health of your bird. Some foods, such as sunflower seeds, are like junk food for some species. Feeding your bird at a regular time each day could result in a conditioned response of vocalising at feed times. Of course, water must be available for your bird at all times.

Socialisation

Birds are social creatures with social needs - it is important to spend time with your bird everyday. Ensure all members of the family interact with the bird.

Boredom

Birds are intelligent creatures that require both mental and physical stimulation. You can enrich your bird’s environment by providing it with a range of foraging toys, a play gym and a variety of branches to chew on. The enrichment you provide is only limited by your imagination. Further information on environmental enrichment can be found on the internet, in bird keeper magazines, books and from your vet. Enrichment for your bird needs to be varied regularly. Ensure the cage size is sufficient. This is important to allow birds to self-exercise. Out of cage activities are also very stimulating and training can roll over into the everyday management of your bird.

Health

An unhealthy bird will be an unhappy bird. If your bird seems out of sorts, ask your vet to check its health. Ensure that your bird’s health needs are being met at all times. During molting and the breeding season, birds can become more vocal.

Modification techniques

How many of us reward our birds for being quiet? Most pet owners wait until the bird vocalises, and then tell it to be quiet. In other words, the bird knows that it will get attention for being noisy. How about paying attention to the bird or giving it treats for being quiet?

Do not give the bird what it wants, until you get what you want, that is, when the bird is calm and quiet. The bird might only be quiet for two seconds, but that is two more seconds that you had before, so reward it with what it wants. Remember that if you are training your bird to stop screaming, it will get worse before it gets better. You also need to inform your neighbours of what is about to happen, so that they can be prepared for the extra vocalising effort from the bird. It will be a day or two of ‘extinction bursts’ and the occasional test scream, but persevering will be worth it.

When you talk quietly to some birds, they will stop screaming in order to listen to what you have to say. Here is your chance to reward the bird’s quiet behaviour while you are calm and in control.

- To keep the noise at a manageable level, give your bird as much positive attention as possible, just as you would do with a dog, cat or child.
- Never hit birds or use a spray bottle. They don’t connect their behaviour with your retaliation, and they are fragile and have hollow bones, so you could easily maim or kill them without intending to.
- Yelling at the bird also doesn’t help - it may prompt them to show off their vocal talents as loudly as possible.
- Distract your bird by giving it something to do (a new toy, newspaper or box to destroy).

If high noise levels continue to be a problem, take your bird to a veterinarian who specialises in birds. Your pet may be ill or injured. If the vet gives your bird a clean bill of health, but it continues to make too much noise, contact a bird behaviour specialist.

Rowdy roosters

The rooster is often portrayed as crowing at the break of dawn (‘cock-a-doodle-doo’) and will almost always start crowing before four months of age.

He can often be seen sitting on fence posts or other objects, where he crow to proclaim his territory. However, this idea is more romantic than real, as a rooster can and will crow at any time of the day. Some roosters are especially vociferous, crowing almost constantly, while others only crow a few times a day. These differences are dependent both upon the rooster’s breed and individual personality.

Roosters crow as a territorial signal to other roosters. However, crowing may also result from sudden disturbances within their surroundings.

If there’s one thing roosters are famous for, it’s their loud ‘cock-a-doodle-doo’ wake-up call every morning. This alarm clock can get too loud and come too early for rooster owners and their neighbours. Luckily, there are a few steps you can take to discourage your rooster from crowing.

Caponising, or neutering, may solve the problem, however, instead of resorting to such a drastic method, you may simply be able to ensure the rooster is kept in a coop overnight.

Cover your rooster’s cage with heavy material at night to prevent the entry of light. Place a heavy blanket or cardboard sheets over your rooster’s cage to darken it. This will block the entry of light and discourage your rooster from crowing in the early hours of the morning. Remove the heavy material from your rooster’s cage at a time that you are comfortable with it crowing.

Provide the rooster with less headspace in its cage at night or reduce the height of the cage by lowering the roof or by raising your rooster’s perch. Ensure that the cage is not positioned on the periphery of your yard or garden.

If you find that your rooster is crowing at an inappropriate time, the best solution is to move your rooster to a location with less noise.

If these methods do not work, you may need to consider alternative solutions. Your local veterinarian can provide advice on how to deal with rowdy roosters.

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rooster can comfortably stand in the cage, but not stretch its body. Roosters cannot crow in a low-roofed cage, as they need to stretch their entire body, especially the neck, while crowing.

Keep roosters occupied so they have less time to get bored and crow. Provide treats that take time and effort to find and eat. Offer roosters corn on the cob, or hide food scraps such as lettuce under the straw or in baskets above the perch. Decrease the number of roosters in your coop. Keeping more than one rooster encourages competition among them, which results in an increase in crowing.

We have a number of useful fact sheets about keeping birds and poultry. Follow the links below for more information.

- Domestic animal noise nuisance
- Keeping of poultry
- Quick guide to keeping pets on the Gold Coast

Related information

- Pet owners: local laws, breaches and fines
- Report a problem: Animals

Key information

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<td>Keeping of poultry fact sheet</td>
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<td>Quick guide to keeping pets on the Gold Coast</td>
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<td>Subordinate Local Law No.12 (Animal Management) 2013 (0.46mb)</td>
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</table>

Forms & applications

Keeping of animals (excess animals) permit

Use this form to apply for a permit to keep more than the allowable number of animals.

Downloads: Keeping of animals (excess animals) permit (0.22mb)