

26th ACA National Clogging Convention, September 2022

Animal Emblem for ACT: Gang Gang Cockatoo

A brief description...

The Gang-gang Cockatoo, or Gang Gang for short, is a small, stocky cockatoo with a wispy crest, large, broad wings and a short tail. The adult male has a distinctive scarlet red head and crest, with the rest of the body slate-grey. The adult female has a dark grey head and crest, with the feathers of the underparts edged pink and yellow. In both sexes, the feathers of the upperparts and wings are faintly edged pale-grey, giving a barred appearance, with females having additional yellow edging to their feathers that increases this barred effect. Young birds are similar to the adult female, with young males differing by having a red crown and forehead and a shorter, less twisted red crest. Gang-gangs are gregarious but relatively quiet cockatoos, and may usually be located in food trees by the sounds of feeding and falling debris.

Gang-gang Cockatoos are endemic to south-eastern Australia. They are widespread in eastern New South Wales from the central slopes and tablelands to the south coast, down through Victoria's north-eastern regions to Seymour, with some records in east Melbourne, Mornington Peninsula and south-western Gippsland. They are a common sight in Canberra backyards and nature reserves.

Gang-gang Cockatoos feed mainly on seeds of native and introduced trees and shrubs, with a preference for eucalypts, wattles and introduced hawthorns. They will also eat berries, fruits, nuts and insects and their larvae. They are mainly arboreal (found in trees), coming to the ground only to drink and to forage among fallen fruits or pine cones.

Gang-gang Cockatoos form close, monogamous pairs. The female chooses a nest hollow in a suitable tree and both sexes prepare the nest for egg-laying, lining it with wood-chips and dust by chewing at the sides of the hollow. Both sexes incubate the eggs and care for the young. Parents feed their young for a further four to six weeks after fledging and family groups will be seen feeding together during the breeding season.



Due to the loss of habitat after the bushfire disasters of 2019/20, the Gang Gang Cockatoo is listed as a vulnerable species, with an assessment to be done before being listed as endangered.