



29th May 2015

Department of Parks and Wildlife
Locked Bag 104
BENTLEY WA 6983

Via e-mail to Brad Barton

Dear Brad,

RE: WAFarmers comment on Muir's Corella Draft Management Plan

As background, WAFarmers is the state's largest and most influential rural advocacy organisation. WAFarmers represents around 3,300 Western Australian farmers from primary industries in the southwest land division of Western Australia. WAFarmers has been representing producers in the Western Australian agriculture industry for 103 years. Collectively our members are major contributors to the \$5.5 billion gross value of production that agriculture in its various forms contributes annually to the Western Australian economy. As the largest WA rural lobby group, our grains members represent approximately 35% of the overall production in WA.

In addition we have a number of affiliated membership groups who form part of our membership base. The largest portion of our members, 95%+ would be located more than 100 kilometres from Perth. To service our members, WAFarmers has a staff of 10 based in Perth and are supported by a Zone Structure throughout the southwest land division. The staff cover all aspects of policy, media, events management, administration and membership services.

After an approach from, discussion with and information provided by our members in relation to the above Plan, we seek to make the following comments in relation to the Plan:

- WA Farmers agree there is a growing problem with the number of these birds currently spread throughout the south west land division, more specifically in an area surrounding Manjimup, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown and west to Kojonup. This problem is a result of protection afforded to the Corellas over an extended period of time.
- The significant increase in numbers as a result of this protection is now resulting in three areas of specific concern to our members and the wider communities in the areas affected by Corella's.
- Agricultural cereal crops – it is well known and documented that Corella's will take cereal crop seeds from freshly cultivated and planted agricultural farm land. The actual productivity losses are very difficult to determine. Members have suggested that the actual number of Corella's could be double the reported numbers. Assumptions of crop losses of one hectare of cropped land to seed loss to Corella's, has an associated cost of \$150 of establishment. At 3 tonnes per hectare, and crops valued at \$300 per tonne, the lost productivity is valued at \$1,050. However, the widespread nature of the issue across more than 100 farms, the annual losses add up to more than \$100,000, and the volume of losses are reportedly greater than one hectare per farm. The volume of money

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lost is a considerable concern to our members and the wider industry, especially considering the average net profit is approximately 5%.

- Our members are also very concerned about the noise these Corella's produce constantly throughout the day and especially when banding together in groups. Whilst this noise is annoying to humans, we are also concerned that the noise, combined with the aggressive behaviour of birds of this size, large numbers of Corella's are impacting a range of other native species and birds including habitat, nesting/breeding locations and competition for food.

Management Proposal

WAFarmers members are generally in agreement with the Draft Management Plan, however we believe that a more aggressive approach should be taken to the initial cull. If, as your plan suggests, there were 20,000 birds in 2014, our members believe your numbers are very conservative, then we would like to see an immediate (within 12 months), cull of 10,000 Corella's, followed by a 12 month period of no cull. Whilst this would likely still leave far too many Corella's in existence, it would thin out the numbers significantly enough to enable a more accurate assessment of numbers and locations to be undertaken. At the end of the second 12 month period, i.e. the period with no cull, the Department should be in a position to ascertain exactly how many Corella's from each location need to be culled to ensure a population size that is not endangered and can survive in harmony with the community and other native animals and birds.

Furthermore, WAFarmers would like to see an education program installed for farmers and hobby farmers where education can be provided to these people on how to store grain and other general advice as to how farmers can minimise the chance that a flock of Corella's will make their home on your farm as you are providing a regular source of food and water in a close area.

We would be pleased to work with the Department on the Draft management Plan to ensure a successful outcome for all stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Brown
CEO
WAFarmers Federation