



Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*

What do they look like? Crested Pigeons are grey-brown pigeons about 30 cm long with slightly iridescent (shiny) green-bronze sections in the wings and pink legs. They have a small upright or backwards crest. They are often called a 'topknot pigeon', (though there is a large, rainforest pigeon in the wet tropics, with this name).

Where do they live? Crested Pigeons are common in open country across the region. They rarely occur in wetter or closed forests. They have expanded eastwards to coastal areas as a result of urbanisation. Open grassland and woodlands are favoured. They are particularly common around artificial water points such as bores and farm dams.

What do they need to live, eat and breed? Crested Pigeons are granivores (seed eaters) and they feed in open country. They build a flimsy nest of twigs, often on a tree with large leaves such as a palm. It is very common for Crested Pigeons to nest around homesteads. Crested Pigeons require access to water and may leave an area if it becomes too dry.

When might I see (or hear) them? Crested Pigeons are common around homesteads, rural centres, cattle yards, grain silos and in many city suburbs. Their wings whistle distinctly in flight and they cock their tail on landing.

What management actions affect this species? Crested Pigeons are 'disturbance increasers' - increasing in numbers with clearing, cropping or urbanisation. Proliferation of species such as Crested Pigeons indicates high levels of alteration of the natural landscape and is indicative of a decrease in overall bird diversity.

How do they benefit the land I manage? As with many granivores, Crested Pigeons may reduce single grass species dominance through seed consumption. Unlike Galahs, another disturbance increaser, Crested Pigeons are not destructive feeders.

Similar species: Spinifex Pigeon (*Geophaps plumifera*) is similar but smaller (quail-sized), with a taller crest. Common Bronzewing (*Phaps elegans*), Bar-shouldered Dove (*Geopelia humeralis*) and Squatter Pigeons (*Geophaps scripta*) all lack crests.

