

Feather Fascination!

with local Birdwatcher, Jim Butler

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STRESSED BY FREEDOM

They were an odd couple: a Rainbow Lorikeet and a Scaly-breasted Lorikeet! The Rainbow was the leader and it was very protective of the Scaly-breasted. We met them, very confrontingly, when the Rainbow flew in the kitchen window, landed on our breakfast table and confidently commenced sharing our cereal and cups of tea. The Rainbow was very stressed and attacked if anyone got between it and the food. Shooing it away was impossible, it was not intimidated. When confronted it advanced on us and bit hard on our fingers and toes.

When they weren't inside the house they sat close together on the back deck preening intently, making gentle sounds to each other and relaxing. Sometimes they flew away and we heard them causing havoc at other homes nearby. During the day, if the doors were open and the kitchen empty, they found us wherever we were in the house, and they would not be ejected, they wanted company and food!

To protect ourselves we closed up the house and the Rainbow took to displaying aggressively on the kitchen window sill. We had some wet paint on the deck, and as a lasting memento, we have green footprints of the Rainbow up and down the white window sill. The Scaly-breasted always waited in the trees until the Rainbow indicated, with a very un-lorikeet-like call, that food was available.

We decided we could not live in a closed-up house, so we contacted a bird-carer who was delighted to take the troubled couple. To safely capture them we enticed them into a cage, and to our astonishment, they settled completely and became softly calm and friendly. Living in the bush had clearly been very stressful for them. We heard today from the carers that they are now doing brilliantly in their new large aviary.

Happy Birding

~ Jim

Image: Rainbow Lorikeet by Mike Ford ©