

## Inter-breeding in Rosellas?

My friend Kara teaches at Bermagui in a class-room which is built on a slope, so that the windows are at eye-level with the tree foliage. To the delight of her class of “kindie” and Year one children, a hollow in the tree was used as a nest by a Rosella family. What was most intriguing was the fact that the parent bird was a Crimson Rosella, and the chicks were Eastern.

Kara explains: “First we noticed a Crimson Rosella which the children called Mum around the nest entrance. Then the baby started appearing and it looked like an Eastern Rosella. It would pop its head out each morning and when the Mum turned up in the trees, we could hear it squawking for a feed. Then we noticed an Eastern Rosella ‘father’ begin to turn up and both birds would sit in the tree and go down to the nest. The Crimson Rosella seemed to have much more of a role in looking after the baby though.

“We watched the morning the ‘mother’ Crimson coaxed the baby Eastern out of the nest for its first fly – this took a few hours with the baby taking a few steps then darting back down the hole. Eventually the adult got the baby up on top of the nest-hole and off the baby flew.”

“The baby and the two adults continued to return to the tree for some time... the baby now became known as the ‘teenager’.”



“A week or so later, the children saw 3 babies (Eastern Rosellas) popping their heads out of the nest. This time it was the Eastern Rosella adult who seemed to spend most time with them, although the Crimson Rosella was still around and so was the teenager.”

Then came the school holidays and so no further observations were possible. But what a wonderful experience for the children, enabling them to learn first-hand of the nesting habits of rosellas. Perhaps a few bird-watchers were created in Kara’s class-room.