

Common Name/Scientific name: Little Black Cormorant / *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Around more open waters, this species congregates in larger flocks than other cormorants and flies in V-shaped formations. However at the Maroochy gardens, they are usually seen on the lagoon as single birds or a pair, no doubt due to the small size of the enclosed waters, and limited food supply. Also known as a Little Black Shag



Description: The Little Black Cormorant is a small, slim, totally black cormorant with a greenish sheen to the back and a slender grey hooked bill. In the breeding season, adults have fine white flecks on the head and neck and the green tinge becomes more bronze.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: The Little Black Cormorant feeds on fish, crustaceans and aquatic insects. They catch prey underwater, by diving and swimming using large, fully webbed feet for propulsion. Special nictitating membranes cover and protect the eyes underwater. As their feathers are not waterproof, cormorants are regularly seen perched with their wings outstretched to dry after diving

Breeding and Nesting: This species have not been seen breeding and nesting at the gardens. But around larger, more open waters, the Little Black Cormorant nests colonially, often on the fringes of heron or ibis colonies, building large stick nests in the fork of a tree or on the ground. Both sexes share nest-building, incubation and feeding of the young.

Similar species seen in the gardens: While little black cormorants are only occasionally seen at Maroochy Gardens, the similar Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos* is a more regular visitor. Little Pied Cormorants can be easily distinguished by their white face, white front of neck and white undersides.