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'Hated' Australian bird dealing with invasive species – 28th November, 2022

Level 4

A bird that many Australians dislike has had an image change. The white ibis, which is indigenous to Australia, is helping to get rid of the invasive cane toad. Many Australians view the ibis as a pest because it scavenges for food from the trash. It even steals food from people's hands. People nickname it the "bin chicken". The word "bin" is Australian English for trash can. People now like the ibis because it has learnt how to eat the poisonous cane toad.

Cane toads came to Australia in the 1930s. Sugar farmers wanted them to eat a beetle that was eating their crops. However, the toads ate many insects and small animals to the point of extinction. They spread all across the country. They had no predators until the ibis learnt to kill them. The ibises pick the toads up and shake them. The stress from this makes the toads release all their poison. The ibises then wash the toads in water and eat them.

Level 5

A bird that is reviled by many in Australia has undergone an image change. That's because it is helping to get rid of a huge nuisance - the invasive cane toad. The bird is the white ibis, which is indigenous to Australia. Many Australians view the ibis as a pest because it scavenges for food from garbage bags and trash cans. It even steals food from people's hands. People nickname it the "bin chicken". The word "bin" is Australian and British English for trash can. People are now seeing the ibises in a positive light. The birds have learnt how to eat the poisonous and destructive cane toad.

Cane toads were introduced to Australia in the 1930s. Farmers thought they would eradicate a beetle that was eating their crops. However, the toads ate some insects and small animals to the point of extinction. They quickly spread across the country. Their poison is strong enough to kill most animals that eat toads. They had no natural predators until the white ibis learnt to rid them of their venom. An Australian journalist said the ibises pick the toads up and "flick them about". The stress of this makes the toads release all their poison. The ibises then wash them in water and eat them.

Level 6

A bird that has been widely reviled in Australia for decades has undergone an image change. The reason is that it is helping to get rid of an even bigger nuisance - the invasive cane toad. The bird is the white ibis, which is indigenous to Australia. It is viewed as a pest by many Australians because of its propensity to scavenge food from garbage bags and trash cans. It even steals food right out of people's hands. People nickname them the "bin chicken". The word "bin" is Australian and British English for trash can. The birds are now being viewed in a positive light. They have adapted and learnt how to eat the poisonous and destructive cane toad. As a result, Australia's natural habitat is benefitting.

Cane toads were introduced to Australia in the 1930s. Sugar farmers thought they would help in eradicating a beetle that was devastating their crops. However, the toads soon began to wreak havoc as they rapidly spread across the countryside. They ate many insects and small animals to the point of extinction. Their toxin is strong enough to kill most native animals that eat frogs and toads. They had no natural predators in Australia, until the white ibis learnt to rid them of their venom and gulp them up. An Australian journalist said the ibises pick the toads up and "flick them about". The stress of this makes the toads release all their poison. The ibises then wash them in water and gobble them down.