



Feathered friends: Heba Shide says the pigeons provide good company. Photo: Steven Siewert

Faces of Sydney Kings Cross

Migrant's love of birds takes flight

Sophia Phan

She's only been living in Kings Cross for a few months, but Heba Shide says she goes to Fitzroy Gardens five days a week to feed the pigeons.

"There's some days that I don't go so they can miss me," she laughs. "Now they're used to me so when I show up they all come to me without me even pulling out food or anything."

Originally from Addis Ababa,

the capital of Ethiopia, Heba says the pigeons provide good company, spending at least an hour with them each visit.

"I don't have much (sic) friends," she says. "If I'm not there, I miss them."

Though referred to by some people as the "rats of the sky", she thinks they are "sweet birds".

"I get bad looks from people sometimes because they dislike pigeons, but I don't care because I love the birds," she says.

Heba usually gives them bread or birdfeed, but says she sometimes likes to treat them with banana bread.

She says pigeons are misunderstood. "They're just like any other bird that's out there trying to get itself food or feed its young."

And it's not just pigeons that Heba likes the company of. She says she also likes to feed magpies and ibises.

"I love them all equally."

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