

# WOODLAND BIRDS

## of the Burkdekin Dry Tropics



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## Introduction

This is the second in the series of books produced by NQ Dry Tropics and Townsville Region Bird Observers Club with assistance from the Traditional Owner Management Group, covering the birds most likely to be seen in the woodlands of our region.

The Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region, located in north east Queensland, covers an area of approximately 140,000km<sup>2</sup> and includes the cities of Townsville, Charters Towers and Bowen plus all sub-regions north to Greenvale, west to Pentland and south to Alpha.

The objectives of the book are to assist local residents to identify the birds that inhabit our woodlands, to develop an awareness of the threatened, rare and endangered bird species and help reduce the threats to these birds. The scope of this book includes birds of the dry sclerophyll forests mainly comprised of eucalypt and acacia woodlands found on the lower rainfall areas of the plains and hill slopes of the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region.

We have selected 46 birds that are most likely to be seen in various woodland habitats in the region and for each bird we have provided photographs and text to aid identification.

The feature bird for this book is the Black-throated Finch (*Poephila cincta*). The Black-throated Finch (southern) is listed as endangered under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and as vulnerable under Queensland's *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

The range of the Black-throated Finch has contracted by 80 per cent in the last 20 years. However, it is still reported as locally common at a number of sites around Townsville and Charters Towers. The Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region is considered as one of the last strongholds of this bird.

We have also included a page on the Gouldian Finch (*Erythrura gouldiae*); a bird that was also found in the region and has not been sighted here for many years. We use this as an example of a local resident forced out of the region by habitat loss and a lack of consideration in development activities.

Gouldian Finches were once considered to be among the most common finches of the northern savannas. However, in the last 100 years they have undergone significant population declines and a contraction of their known range. Until 2004 they were seen occasionally at a few sites in the Einasleigh Uplands of Queensland.

There are anecdotal reports of declines in finch populations in the Herberton area in the 1940s, Chillagoe areas in the 1950s and from Mareeba in the 1960s. The pattern of historical decline in Gouldian Finch population is similar to that observed for similar granivorous birds such as the Black-throated Finch (reference: *Draft Recovery Plan for the Gouldian Finch 2005-2010 Background Information*).

Since European settlement, large tracts of Australia's woodlands have been cleared and as over one-third of Australia's land birds are woodland dependent at least one in five of these species is now threatened (reference: [www.birdsaustralia.com.au](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au)).

Ongoing threats to our fragile woodland habitat include development projects, woodland fragmentation due to vegetation clearance, the spread of noxious weeds, altered fire regimes and damage from domestic and feral animals. Careful planning and management is necessary to ensure the conservation of the remaining woodlands. Remnant and urban woodlands are valuable assets that can enhance property values, improve quality of life and protect natural resources.

Rural and urban landowners and managers can obtain support and advice with respect to the retention and restoration of woodland habitat from local organisations such as Greening Australia Queensland and Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare Incorporated (CDTLI). Both organisations have produced bush regeneration manuals such as *From Seeds To Success* by CDTLI and *Bushland Management Resource Manual* from Greening Australia that contain practical rehabilitation techniques applicable for use in this region.

We encourage all readers to identify the birds found in their local woodlands by reference to the photographs and descriptions in this book and to note the importance of this habitat to the feeding and breeding activities of the birds. Our aim is to provide a greater understanding of the wonderful and unique birds found in the woodlands of our region so that we can all work together to provide the protection they need to survive.







Vulnerable

## Black-throated Finch

*Poephila cincta*

The Black-throated Finch is a small (to 12cm), sleek and stocky bird with a grey head, thick black bill, cinnamon-brown body and a conspicuous black bib on its throat. There are two subspecies; the northern (*Poephila cincta atropygialis*) and southern (*Poephila cincta cincta*). The two subspecies can be distinguished by the colour of their rump. The northern subspecies is black from the lower back to the tip of its tail. In the southern subspecies the black is broken by a white patch on the rump.

Both subspecies occur in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region and are believed to intergrade around the Atherton Tablelands (Burdekin-Lynd Divide, north Queensland).

The northern subspecies extends north to Cape York Peninsula and west to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The southern subspecies formerly occurred from north-east New South Wales to the Atherton Tablelands (north Queensland) and west to central Queensland. However, since the late 1970s the southern subspecies has rarely been recorded south of Clermont or Aramac (Queensland – 23°S).



This equates to a 50 per cent to 80 per cent contraction in its former range and the southern subspecies is now listed as endangered at the national level and in New South Wales, and vulnerable in Queensland.

Black-throated Finches are most frequently seen in lightly grassed open woodlands close to water where they spend most of their day feeding on the fallen seed of grasses and herbaceous plants, and occasionally insects. The Black-throated Finch is a social bird and adult male–female pairs form strong bonds – the members of a pair are rarely seen apart. The Black-throated Finch forms loose flocks for at least part of the year, usually 10–30 individuals; although in a few areas congregations of 60 or more are still seen.

Black-throated Finches mostly form communal nesting sites, with multiple nests occurring in a small area.

Nests are used for breeding and roosting, and the birds return each night to roost. Both adults in a pair engage in the construction of bottle-shaped nests of woven grass. The nests may be built in the outer branches of trees and tall shrubs, in tree-hollows, in mistletoes, and the base of raptor nests.

The timing and duration of the breeding season appears to depend on food resources and therefore varies according to rainfall patterns and site-specific circumstances. Under optimal conditions the species can breed continuously throughout the year but in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region most breeding occurs in the first half of the year. Usually five or six eggs are laid at one time and juveniles remain with their parents for a few months after fledging.

Daily movements appear to be influenced by season, with shorter, localised movements during the breeding season and longer excursions during the non-breeding season. Some populations are known to migrate up to three kilometres between breeding and non-breeding areas.

The decline in the southern subspecies is thought to be due to a combination of overgrazing (domesticated and non-domesticated herbivores) and drought. Illegal trapping is an ongoing threat in some areas and has probably led to the loss of some local populations. As the Black-throated Finch does not occur in built-up areas, urban sprawl is an increasing threat. The Black-throated Finch Recovery Team ([www.blackthroatedfinch.com](http://www.blackthroatedfinch.com)) is working with all levels of Government and interest groups such as NQ Dry Tropics to improve the conservation of the species.



## Black-throated Finch identification aid.

To avoid any confusion between the Black-throated Finch and other small seed-eating finches found in the urban and semi-rural properties of the region, we can provide the following identification aid:



*The Black-throated Finch is a stocky bird with a blue-grey head, a black bill and a conspicuous black bib on its throat.*



*The Chestnut-breasted Mannikin is a solid bird with a light brown head, a black face and a silver-grey bill.*



*The Nutmeg Mannikin is a sleek bird with a brown head, a darker brown face and throat with a dark grey bill.*



## Common Bronzewing

*Phaps chalcoptera*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 30-36cm. Large bodied pigeon with a small head. Back, dark brown feathers with pale edges. Tail is tipped white. Multicoloured iridescent wing feathers, dark eye underlined with white. Underparts — neck, bluish shading to pinkish/brown. Legs - pink/red, bill grey. In flight, the underwing is rufous. Male has a cream/buff forehead. Female's forehead is grey. Call is mournful, resonating with repeated 'oom'. Shy and wary, when disturbed taking off with a whirring sound.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Forages on the ground mostly for seeds, often alone or in pairs. Sometimes in small parties.

### BREEDING:

July-January. Builds a flat platform of slender twigs on a thick branch, in a tree fork, or a mistletoe clump. Sometimes use old magpie or crow nest and lays two eggs.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Dams, as they come in to drink early morning and late afternoon. Woodlands and scrub, acacia thickets, farmland and often flushed from roadsides.



## Crested Pigeon

*Ocyphaps lophotes*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 30-35cm. Sexes similar, the only grey pigeon with a tall pointed, dark crest. Wings light brown with black barring on shoulders and bronzed green/purple wing patch, edged white below. Tail long, darker with white tip. On landing the tail is flicked up. Thick red ring of bare skin surrounds the red/orange eye. Bill black, legs and feet deep pink/red. Immature duller, with smaller crest.

### FEEDING HABITS:

In small groups, feeding on the ground, eating a variety of seeds and some plant material with the occasional insect. Always near water.

### BREEDING:

Mostly in spring or summer, but can breed at anytime. Nest is a frail platform of twigs, incubation shared by both sexes. Several broods are raised in succession.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Areas of human settlement, where cleared areas leave scattered trees for roosting and nesting. Roadsides, telephone wires, watercourses, wooded grasslands and farm dams.





## Squatter Pigeon

*Geophaps scripta*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 26-32cm. Head, neck and upperparts light grey/brown. Face and throat have distinctive black and white stripes. Skin around eyes blue-grey (southern subspecies, *scripta* is classified as vulnerable) or red (northern subspecies, *peninsulae*). Occasionally known to squat down when approached.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on the ground by walking and pecking usually among sparse and low grass. Usually in pairs or small groups. Eats the seed of grasses and small herbaceous plants and occasionally insects. Drinks every day.

### BREEDING:

Poorly known. Possibly breed all year round in response to sustained rainfall and food availability. Nest in shallow depression on ground, among, or sheltered by, grass tussocks, shrubs or fallen logs.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Lightly grassed areas of open eucalypt woodland and near to water. Presence is erratic in many areas.

### THREATS:

Vegetation clearing, overgrazing (domesticated and non-domesticated herbivores) and feral predators (especially foxes and cats). A threatened species under State and Federal legislation.



## Diamond Dove

*Geopelia cuneata*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 19-22cm. Very small red-eyed dove, with blue-grey plumage, pale grey breast, white spotted wings, white outer tail feathers and pink feet. Has a swift dipping flight and a pleasant soft four note call. In brief showers or when 'sunbathing', may be seen resting on the ground with one wing raised. They are nomadic birds, moving in large flocks, depending on rain.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on fallen, very small seeds of grasses and herbs, also insects. In early morning or late afternoon numbers of birds may gather in procession to drink at waterholes. They then disperse, flying with whistling wings and wagging tail.

### BREEDING:

May breed throughout the year, peaking in September-November. The courting male shows typical bowing and tail-raising. A flimsy platform nest is built in a low tree fork. Both sexes share incubation.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Common in all inland dry open savannah, grassy woodland, mulga, arid grasslands, but never far from water.



## Peaceful Dove

*Geopelia striata*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 19-21cm. Small grey dove with heavily barred wings, back and nape, and white throat. Upper parts grey/brown with barred broken black lines, lower breast and belly white with pink tinge. Blue eye-ring, blue/grey bill with deep pink and black horizontal striped legs and feet. Undulating flight shows the rufous underwing and grey flight feathers. Call a three note 'doodle-doo' or 'mollie-mok'.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Eats seeds of a variety of seeding grasses and herbs. They feed at roadsides, dusty places and areas that have been burnt.

### BREEDING:

Nest is a frail platform of sticks placed in a horizontal fork of a thick limb, or in a clump of twigs in a low tree, bush, or palm. Both parents incubate the eggs and look after the young.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Well grassed woodlands with nearby water supply, farmland areas, roadsides, parks, gardens, backyards.



## Tawny Frogmouth

*Podargus strigoides*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 33-50cm. Grey/brown mottled or marbled plumage, wide flat hooked bill and spiky brow. Yellow eyes are often only seen through narrow slits. The bird will roost during the day on a broken branch, using its grey/brown plumage as an effective camouflage, looking like the bark of the tree.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds at night and will drop quickly from its perch to collect large insects, frogs, ground birds and small mammals.

### BREEDING:

August-December or after rain. The nest is a very flimsy structure built on a horizontal fork in trees. One-to-three eggs are laid. Males incubate during the day, then the female takes her turn at night.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Roosting during the day often close to the tree trunk, singly or in small family groups in eucalypt forest and woodlands.

### THREATS:

Human disturbance during nesting can easily displace the eggs or dislodge the young from the nest.





## Whistling Kite

*Haliastur sphenurus*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 50-60cm. Identified in flight by the long pale rounded tail, black and fawn patterned under-wings and its shrill whistling call. At rest the bare stone-coloured legs, fawn with brown streaked body and lighter head are noticeable. Juvenile birds are more streaked and heavily spotted.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on fish, lizards, rabbits and carrion often picked up from road kills. They will harass other birds for an easy meal.

### BREEDING:

At anytime though mainly February-September. The nest is built on a large platform of sticks in the forks of tall eucalypts or melaleuca trees near water. Often used for many years. One-to-three eggs, most of the incubation is done by the female.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Often seen soaring over open woodlands, lakes and tree-lined watercourses and road edges, feeding on carrion. Its presence made known by its whistling call.

### THREATS:

The loss of suitable tall nesting trees and the laying of poisoned bait.



## Wedge-tailed Eagle

*Aquila audax*

### DESCRIPTION:

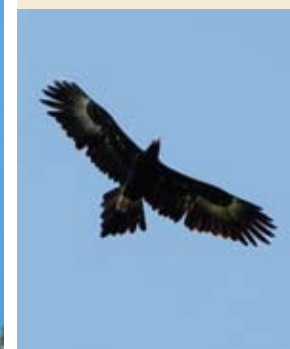
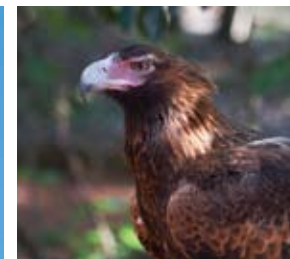
Size male 90cm, female 100cm with a wingspan up to 2.5 metres. The largest Australian bird of prey, coloured dark brown and black. Has powerful, fully feathered legs and long diamond-shaped tail. Flies with long slow wing beats or soars and circles high on upswept wings, showing fingered wing tips.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds mainly on rabbits, wallabies or carrion, especially road kills.

### BREEDING:

Acrobatic displays start the breeding season from June-August. Enormous stick nests are used over years, and are repaired by both sexes. The female does most of the incubating, the male bringing food and fresh leaves for nest lining. Usually two chicks are born but often only one survives, fed by both parents. Young fledge in 70-90 days. In drought years birds may not breed.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Hunting over open country, forested areas near farmland, arid scrub, mountains and wetlands.

### THREATS:

Previously hunted and shot, now protected in all states.



### Little Corella

*Cacatua sanguinea*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 35-39cm. A white cockatoo with a short crest (this is often folded and not noticeable). Blue/grey bare skin around the eye that extends beneath the eye. Small white coloured bill and a pale pink flush between the bill and the dark brown eye. Underwing and tail washed pale yellow. Legs grey.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on the ground, taking many varied grass seeds and roots. Corellas also gather in large flocks high in the trees to strip foliage, berries and fruit while keeping in contact with sharp screeches.

#### BREEDING:

May-October or following rain. Nests in tree hollows or occasionally in termite mounds. Three or four eggs are laid. Both parents incubate the eggs.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Commonly found in parks, gardens, pastoral properties, dams and tree-lined watercourses. They are noisy birds and are often heard before being seen.

#### THREATS:

Loss of nesting trees and illegal trapping.



### Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

*Cacatua galerita*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 44-51cm. Well-known large white cockatoo with upswept yellow crest, yellow wash on the face, underwings and under tail. Blackish bill and dark grey legs. Call is a loud raucous screech. In flight, broad rounded wings with an irregular flap and glide pattern. Found in pairs to large noisy flocks.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Mainly feeds on the ground, foraging for seeds and rootlets. Also making up their diet are insects and larvae, as well as berries and flowers of various trees and shrubs.

#### BREEDING:

May-September. In courtship, male bobs head with crest raised. Nests in a large deep hollow, often in eucalypt. Two-to-three white eggs, incubated by male and female. The young stay with the adults for several months.



#### LANGUAGE NAME:

Kinooroo (pronounced- Ginuru)

#### MEANING:

Feathers used for ceremonial purposes.

#### STORY:

This bird is used in ceremonial activities for its purity. Also connects back to ancestral spirit. *Gundilygar*, the most powerful white spirit in this region.

#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Diverse habitat, many types of wooded scrub, open country, grasslands, watercourses, towns and gardens.

#### THREATS:

Loss of hollow nesting sites by clearing old eucalypts.





## Red-winged Parrot

*Aprosmictus erythropterus*

Vulnerable

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 30-33cm. Large and distinctive bright lime green parrot. Bill red, legs grey, tail tipped yellow. Male, black back, red patches on the wings which are a darker green than the body. Female is a duller green all over with a smaller patch of red on the wing. Flies erratically with deep, irregular wing beats. Usually in pairs or small flocks.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Seldom far from water. Feeds on fruits, flowers, nectar, seeds and insects in trees and low shrubs. Occasionally feed on the ground.

### BREEDING:

March-July. Nest usually high in deep hollows of live eucalypts, three-to-six eggs. The female incubates the eggs, the male feeds her during this time. After hatching, both parents feed the young which often stay with them for several months.



### LANGUAGE NAME:

Mungundula (pronounced-Moon-Goon-Doolah)

### MEANING:

Feathers used for cultural costumes/ceremonies. Also good food source.

### STORY:

The Red-winged Parrot has colours that blend in with the rainforest.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Usually open woodland, tree-lined watercourses, casuarinas, native cypress scrubs.



## Pale-headed Rosella

*Platycercus adscitus*

### DESCRIPTION:

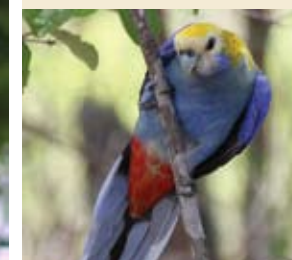
Size 28-32cm. Obvious pale yellow almost white head, with white and blue cheek patches. The back is bright yellow with black flecks, blue wings and tail. The underbelly is mainly blue, with red under the tail. Females are slightly duller. Immatures often have small splashes of red on their heads or breast.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Can be seen feeding on the ground in pairs or small groups, also in trees and shrubs. Eats seeds and fruits of grasses, shrubs and trees as well as flowers, insects and their larvae.

### BREEDING:

February-June. Nests high in the hollows of either dead or living tree trunks/limbs, usually in eucalyptus or occasionally hollow stumps and posts. The female incubates the eggs and after hatching the male helps with feeding the young.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Lightly timbered woodland with grassy understorey, tree-lined watercourses, agricultural lands and often flushed from roadsides.



### Channel-billed Cuckoo

*Scythrops novaehollandiae*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 58-65cm. Migratory, arriving August-October departing March-April. A large cuckoo with a huge prominent down-curved, light coloured bill. Head neck and underparts light grey, back and wings darker grey with black tips on the feathers. Eye and eye ring red. Identified in flight as the 'flying cross', often high overhead with raucous calls. Juveniles are a buffy colour with mottled wings.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on fruit, berries and insects, generally high in the tree-tops.

#### BREEDING:

A parasitic nester in that it lays its eggs in other birds nests and allows the other bird to hatch the eggs and raise the chicks. The open nests of magpies, currawongs, ravens and crows, are the favoured choice in which to lay one egg, although sometimes two-to-five have been recorded.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Usually seen in tree-tops in open forests and woodlands, especially along water courses and areas where native fig trees are abundant.



### Pallid Cuckoo

*Cacomantis pallidus*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 28cm-33cm. A long slender cuckoo, upper parts brownish/grey, under parts light grey, tail barred white, yellow eye ring, white on the upper edge of the wing and a white spot on the nape (back of the head). Juveniles are heavily mottled and streaked dark brown and white.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on hairy caterpillars and insects, mainly taken on the ground.

#### BREEDING:

A parasitic nester in that it lays one egg in another bird's nests and allows the other bird to hatch the egg and raise the chick. The chick then pushes the other eggs or young chicks from the nest. The open nests of honeyeaters and flycatchers are the preferred targets.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Prefers open country where it perches on high, dead branches. The long looping flight brings it to attention.

#### THREATS:

Habitat loss that affects its food source and the nesting habits of host species that it uses for breeding.





## Brush Cuckoo

*Cacomantis variolosus*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 22-26cm. Head is grey with a pale eye ring and short curved black bill. Back pale grey/brown, breast and underparts pale buff. Pale grey/brown square tail, tipped with white. Under tail is brown with dull white barring. Legs are grey. Immature, mottled brown with brown barred underparts. Call is six-to-seven mournful descending notes, rising and becoming more insistent, calling day and night in warmer months.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Sits quietly and motionless, darting out to take caterpillars and insects from vegetation or on the ground.

### BREEDING:

A parasitic nester in that it lays one egg in other bird's nests and allows the other bird to hatch the egg and raise the chick. It prefers the nests of flycatchers or the brown-backed honeyeater.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Prefers the dense closed canopy of woodlands, watercourses and scrubby roadsides. Although it sits motionless and often silent, it may attract attention by its loud calls.



## Southern Boobook

*Ninox novaeseelandiae*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 25-35cm. Has dark brown 'goggle-like' rims around grey/green eyes and a masked face. Grey/brown plumage spotted white, the breast has spotted vertical barring, and legs are fully feathered. They live in pairs, and roost during daytime in dense tree foliage, their presence often given away by mobbing by other birds. The common name 'mopoke' closely resembles their repetitive call.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Usually feeds the first two hours after dusk and again shortly before sunrise. Small birds and mammals, night moths and beetles are their main food.

### BREEDING:

The male constructs a nest in a deep hollow in a dead or living tree, making a bed of wood chips, leaves and small twigs. Two-to-four eggs are incubated by the female while the male brings her food. The young are reared by both adults.



### LANGUAGE NAME:

Mook Mook

### MEANING:

This bird provides a cultural sign for families.

### STORY:

When the Southern Boobook sings out various sounds it can provide a warning to family members. A short pitch will signal to family that 'spirits' are near and a long pitch will notify that there will be a death in the family.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Open country with stands of trees, timbered watercourses. Towns and suburbs with abundant trees. More often heard than seen.



## Laughing Kookaburra

*Dacelo novaguineae*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 40-47cm. Largest of Australia's kingfishers. Back and wings brown with mottled pale blue on shoulders. White tipped tail, rump and tail chestnut, barred black, central rump blue. Underparts and collar white. Massive bill, black above, yellowish below. Crown white with distinctive dark patch through eye. Call is a famed 'laugh', merry chuckling rising to raucous laughter with several birds often joining in. Family groups occupy the same territory year round.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Sits still on a perch watching, and then glides down to ground taking insects, reptiles and mammals. Sometimes robs nests of small birds and takes nestlings.

### BREEDING:

August-January. The unlined nest is in a tree hollow. Can also be a tunnel in arboreal termite nest, two-to-four eggs. Both parents and others in family group incubate eggs and feed the young.



### LANGUAGE NAME:

Bingunburra (pronounced – Bin-Gun-Burra)

### MEANING:

Guardian

### STORY:

The Kookaburra is a guardian bird, and travels as a protector.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Open forest and woodlands, timbered watercourses, parks and gardens.

### THREATS:

Loss of suitable nesting sites by clearing and urban spread.



## Dollarbird

*Eurystomus orientalis*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 27-30cm. Head, neck and back are brown, with a deep blue patch on the throat. The rest of the body is brown with a turquoise wash. The deep blue underwings have a conspicuous round silvery-blue patch, said to resemble a silver dollar, which is visible during flight. Bill and feet are red. Immatures are duller and have a dark bill. Call is a chattering, raspy cackle.

### FEEDING HABITS:

It perches on the high branches of dead trees or any prominent position from where it can launch itself. Performs acrobatic displays while catching flying insects such as cicadas, moths and beetles.

### BREEDING:

Breeds in Australia after migrating into the region for the wet season from areas such as Papua New Guinea. Nests in tree hollows, three-to-five eggs.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Open woodland, parks and wetlands. Can be seen sitting singly and conspicuously on powerlines or high bare limbs.

### THREATS:

Loss of tree hollows used for nesting.





### Brown Treecreeper

*Climacteris picumnus*

#### DESCRIPTION:

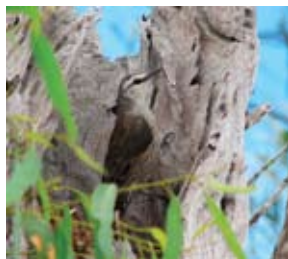
Size 16-18cm. Upper parts light to mid grey/brown, throat creamy/buff, long pale buff eyebrow, dark line through the eye. Underparts streaked finely with black, grey, brown and pale buff. Under tail, buff/white with broken black bars. Eye brown, feet and bill dusky grey. The male has a cluster of short black streaks in the centre of the upper breast while the females are rufous. In flight the pale buff wing band is noticeable.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Mainly ants, but also beetles, bugs and larvae, found by pecking and probing cracks, crevices, and peeling bark. Often forages on the ground over fallen branches/logs and through leaf litter and debris.

#### BREEDING:

May-November. Nests deep in a hollow limb or trunk. Fence posts are sometimes used. Nest is a cup of dried grasses, bark and dung, lined with fur, feathers or plant down. The female incubates two-to-three eggs.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Eucalypt woodland, timbered paddocks and drier open forest areas.



### Variegated Fairy-wren

*Malurus lamberti*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 11-14.5cm. One of the most common fairy-wrens of the inland. Male has bright blue head, paler around the ear patch. Black throat and breast, with white underbelly. Chestnut shoulder on brown wing. Blue tail with fine white tip. Female has a plain grey/brown back with off white throat and underbelly. Thin chestnut eye ring with strip to similar coloured bill. Call is a high pitched squeaky chatter.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Usually found in pairs or small family groups, feeding mainly on insects, grubs, grasshoppers and termites.

#### BREEDING:

July-February, also other months after good rain. Nest is a coarse, dense grass dome with side entrance, lined with feathers and down, generally within one metre of the ground, in grass or small dense shrubs. Three-to-four eggs are laid then incubated by the female.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Common in inland woodlands where there are patches of dense cover with shrubs and long grass, parks and gardens.



## Weebill

*Smicrornis brevirostris*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 8.5-9.5cm. Locally nomadic. Australia's smallest bird. Greenish back, with a pale eyebrow and white eye. Pale brown, short, thick bill. Whitish/yellow throat, bright yellow under parts. Difficult to see in the high canopy, as pairs and small parties move through the foliage foraging. Sharp buzzing contact calls, and a lively 'wee-bill' call alert you to their presence.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds mainly on insects, larvae and 'lerps'. Social, vocal, often in company with other small birds such as thornbills and pardalotes.

### BREEDING:

May-December. The female builds a compact, well-concealed round or pear-shaped dome nest with a side opening, using grass and leaves bound with cobwebs, lined with plant down or feathers, attached to slender leafy outer branches. Two-to-three eggs are incubated by the female. Two broods are often raised each year.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Common in dry open eucalypt woodlands, open forest and mallee.

### THREATS:

Fire, clearing of eucalypt forest.



## White-throated Gerygone

*Gerygone albogularis*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 10-11cm. Grey/brown head, back and tail, with olive tone to back. Small white spots each side of forehead behind the bill. Red eye. Clearly defined white throat with yellow underparts. Large white spots at tip of tail, not easily seen when tail folded. Immature underparts are pale yellow lacking white throat patch. White forehead spots very faint or not visible. Call is a beautiful, high, clear whistling note that descend in an undulating cascade, often described as a 'falling leaf'.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Usually high in tree tops, foraging actively in outer foliage taking insects.

### BREEDING:

September-January. Domed nest with a verandah over the side entrance and long tapering tail. Made with bark strips and other fibres held together with cobweb. Hanging in the outer foliage of trees or saplings, attached to a slender twig. The female does most of the incubating.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Woodlands, open forests, scrub and trees along watercourses.

### THREATS:

Destruction of habitat.





### Striated Pardalote

*Pardalotous striatus*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 9-11.5cm. Very small short-tailed bird. Grey/olive back, crown plain black or sometimes streaked black and white, blunt black bill. Large white eyebrow that starts with a yellow mark, wings black with thin white stripe which begins with yellow or red spot. Underparts whitish with variable amounts of yellow/cinnamon on throat, breast and flanks.

Call is a crisp 'chip-chip-chip' repeated at regular intervals, often for long periods.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Mostly feed high in the outer canopy, taking lerps and many different insects found amongst leaves, bark and flowers, often in eucalypts. Occasionally seen feeding on the ground.

#### BREEDING:

June-January. Both sexes excavate tunnels, digging into earth/creek banks 40-90cm. Bark and soft grass line the nesting chamber at the end. Three-to-four eggs are laid. These are tended to by both parents. Some nests may be in small tree hollows.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Various habitats: Eucalypt forests, woodlands and arid scrubland.

#### THREATS:

Destruction of habitat.



### Singing Honeyeater

*Lichenostomus virescens*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 18-22cm. A very active medium sized fawn/grey honeyeater. A thick black stripe runs through the eye and part way down the neck. A thin yellow line is underneath the eye. The dark bill is slightly curved. The body is off-white with dark streaking. Has a loud whistling call and can be quite aggressive towards other species.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds in isolated areas on nectar, also on insects and spiders from flowering trees and shrubs. Occasionally feeds on the fruit found among the leaves and branches of trees. Often found singly or in pairs, and occasionally in small groups.

#### BREEDING:

July-February or after rain. Two-to-three eggs are laid. The nest is an untidy cup of grass lightly bound with cobweb, hidden in dense shrubs or small trees. Sometimes found fostering the young pallid cuckoo.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Mostly inland on shrubs, thickets, watercourses, parks and gardens.

#### THREATS:

Loss of suitable feeding habitat.



## White-plumed Honeyeater

*Lichenostomus penicillatus*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 15-17cm. Pale olive/grey body, paler underparts with breast washed yellow. Yellow head, with brown/black line above the well-defined white neck plume. Bill and eye black for adult, but yellow base to bill for immature. Noisy, gregarious and very aggressive, regularly attacks birds larger than itself. Call is a repeated whistling 'chi-ick-oo-wee'.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on nectar and various insects in small loose flocks or singly. Honeyeaters are important pollinators and seed dispersers.

### BREEDING:

July-January or any month after rain in arid regions. Nest is a deep cup of grass, bark and cobwebs, lined with soft bark and plant down. Suspended from a small fork in the outer leafy branches, and often overhanging water. Regularly fosters the young of pallid cuckoos.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Widespread dry country bird, often close to water. Frequenting woodlands, farm dams, mallee, parks, gardens and inland river eucalypts.





## Yellow-throated Miner

*Manorina flavigula*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 25-28cm. Sociable, noisy bird. Forehead, chin and side of neck are tinted yellow. Black mask extends from in front to beneath the eye. Eye dark with yellow patch behind. Back, head and tail grey/brown. Tail is tipped white, yellow tinges on wing feathers. Rump is white. Underparts, pale grey with darker scalloping on breast. Bill and legs, yellow. Immature has paler markings and throat has more yellow.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Takes insects from foliage, bark or on the ground and will also take nectar.

### BREEDING:

July-December and after rain in arid areas. Nests communally. Builds an untidy cup-shaped nest of twigs and grass, lined with wool, hair and feathers in a fork or outer leaves, often in a clump of mistletoe. Lays three-to-four eggs and may have two broods in one season.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Dry open woodland, grasslands, flowering shrubs, gardens – usually in small flocks. Can be locally nomadic.



### Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater

*Acanthagenys rufogularis*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 22-27cm. Nomadic. Adults have whitish stiff feathers behind the bill. Throat and breast are cinnamon/buff. Crown and back are grey/brown, scalloped with darker brown. Wing feathers are edged with white, the rump is off-white. Underparts are streaked dark grey/brown, the tail is dark with a white tip. Dark pink curved bill is tipped with black. Bare pink skin under the blue eye, and dark mask. Immature is a paler version of the adult with a brown eye. Call strong, repetitive and metallic.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeding in groups or alone, taking a varied diet of nectar, insects, small lizards and berries.

#### BREEDING:

July-January. Builds a flimsy deep cup of grass, leaves and cobwebs, lined with plant down or wool. It hangs by the rim in leafy shrubs, mistletoe and vines. Two-to-three eggs are laid, which the female incubates.



#### LANGUAGE NAME:

Unknown

#### MEANING:

Provides awareness of plentiful food source of honey is near.

#### STORY:

#### PLACES TO LOOK:

A variety of dry habitats, usually desert scrub, mulga and woodlands.



### Blue-faced Honeyeater

*Entomyzon cyanotis*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 24-30cm. Large and conspicuous honeyeater with striking blue skin around the yellow/white eye. The face and neck are black, with a narrow white band across the back of the head. The back, wings and tail are a golden olive green and the underparts are white with a grey/black throat and upper breast. Immatures have green facial skin. Call is very noisy and repetitive. Usually seen in pairs or small groups.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on insects and other invertebrates, fruit, pollen and nectar.

#### BREEDING:

July-January. Nests are often made in the abandoned nests of other birds. The old nests are just added to and relined. If a new nest is built it is a neat round cup of rough bark lined with shredded bark and grass. Both parents feed the young.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Found close to water in open forests, woodlands, farmlands, parks and gardens.





## Noisy Friarbird

*Philemon corniculatus*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 31-35cm. Bare, black head with angular knob on top of bill. Eye red, has long silver/white plumes on neck and breast. Upperparts fawn/brown, underparts paler. Tail has a prominent white tip. Immatures have less distinctive beak knob, washed yellow throat and coarse pale scallops on back and chest. Call is a raucous, loud, rollicking cackle.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on nectar, pollen, various insects and fruit. Form large noisy feeding flocks. Very aggressive and will harass other birds in their feeding territory.

### BREEDING:

July-February. Nest is a large, deep open cup of bark, grass and cobwebs in outer branches, camouflaged in thick foliage. Two-to-three eggs incubated by the female.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Parks, gardens, open forests, any flowering trees and shrubs in drier areas.

### THREATS:

Known to have been shot in orchards. Land clearing decreases habitat.



## Striped Honeyeater

*Plectorhyncha lanceolata*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 21-23cm. Head, face and upper body whitish, boldly streaked black. Back, wings and tail grey/brown, breast and throat white. Feathers are long, lanceolate, stiffly-pointed texture, especially noticeable at the neck where they overlap against darker plumage. Tail long, slightly forked, bill short, dagger-like blue-grey, feet also blue-grey. Immatures are duller.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on many food sources, including insects, seeds and fruits, as well as using its brush-tipped tongue to find the nectar of shallow flowers, like grevillea and eucalypts.

### BREEDING:

July-February. Often near grey butcherbird nests. The well-concealed nest is suspended from several parts of the rim to leafy twigs at the end of a drooping branch. It is a deep cup of dry grass, rootlets, plant-down and feathers. Three-to-four eggs are laid.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Drier inland scrubs and woodlands, to dense stands of casuarinas and paperbarks and gardens.

### THREATS:

Clearing of known habitats.



### Grey-crowned Babbler

*Pomatostomus temporis*

Vulnerable

#### DESCRIPTION:

Size 25-29cm. Light grey crown with a broad white eyebrow, yellow eye in black mask, long down-curved black bill. Throat and breast white. The body is shades of grey/brown, tail tipped white. Immatures have brown eyes for two years. Generally found in close family groups of up to 15 birds.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on insects, spiders and lizards, foraging on tree trunks and branches or on the ground, digging and probing amongst ground litter and tussock grasses.

#### BREEDING:

Builds and maintains several conspicuous football sized dome-shaped stick nests. Some are used as a dormitory for roosting each night. All nests are maintained year round, and old nests are often dismantled to build new ones. During incubation, the adult male and several helpers in the group feed the female. Young birds are fed by all other members within the group.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Open woodland, farmland and road verges.

#### THREATS:

Clearing of habitat.



### Varied Sittella

*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*

#### DESCRIPTION:

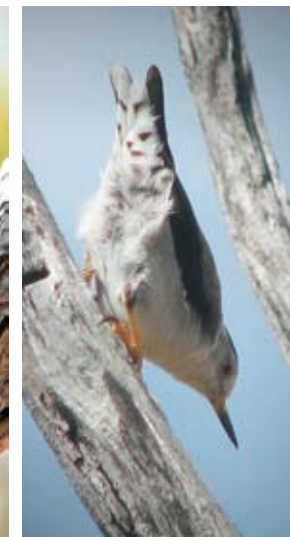
Size 10-13cm. Several races converge in this region. All have fine yellow bill with dark, slightly upturned tip. White/buff wing bar. Black and white bars under the short tail. Yellow ring around the eye, legs yellow. Back is light brown with darker streaks. Wings appear darker. Head may have a black cap or full dark hood; under parts can be streaked with brown or plain white. Often in flocks of up to twenty.

#### FEEDING HABITS:

Starting at the top of a tree, they work their way downward, head first, along the branches and trunk, probing under the bark, searching for insects and spiders.

#### BREEDING:

July-December. Nest is a camouflaged cup of bark and lichen, bound with cobwebs in an upright fork 10-20 metres above ground. Looking like a slight bump, they are very difficult to detect. Females incubate the eggs with other members helping attend the young.



#### PLACES TO LOOK:

Woodland, parks and farmland.





## White-winged Triller

*Lalage sueurii*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 16-19cm. Male in breeding plumage, crown to upper back black, no eyebrow. Wings black, with bold white edges. Grey rump, tail black with white tips. After breeding the males moult into their eclipse plumage looking very similar to the female, though the tail remains dark and the wings also retain a lot of the black. Female, mid-brown above, wings and tail darker, underparts buff/cream with slight mottled appearance. Immature, like the female but more mottled.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on or near the ground, taking a range of insects, seeds, and nectar.

### BREEDING:

September-January. Nest is a small shallow cup, made with grass, bark and rootlets bound together with cobweb, placed on a horizontal branch/fork. Both sexes share in the nest building and incubation.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Common migrant or resident in open woodland and along watercourses.

### THREATS:

Clearing of trees in nesting areas.



## Rufous Whistler

*Pachycephala rufiventris*

### DESCRIPTION:

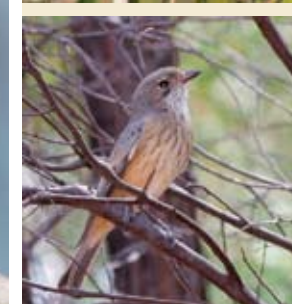
Size 16-17cm. A medium-sized bird with a short dark stubby bill and long narrow tail that has a slightly forked tip. The males are rich grey above with a white throat, circled by black feathers and rufous coloured breast and belly. Females are dull grey/brown above and buffy with vertical streaked underparts. Immatures are similar to females. Call is a variety of rich rapid ringing notes ending with a loud 'eee-chong'.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds mostly on insects and occasionally seeds, leaves and fruit. Rarely seen on the ground. Mostly found singly and sometimes in pairs.

### BREEDING:

September-February. The female builds a cup-shaped nest from twigs, grass and other materials and binds it to a tree fork with cobwebs. Both male and female incubate the eggs and feed the young.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Forests, gardens, farmland, open woodland, watercourses and in remnant bush.



## Grey Shrike-thrush

*Colluricincla harmonica*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 22-25cm. Softly coloured shades of grey with a long tail. Black bill. White patch between bill and dark eye, white throat. Olive/brown back. Female has faint streaking on throat and pale eye-ring. Immature has dark streaking on breast and belly and a tan eyebrow. Call, melodious ringing song, rich and varied, sweet and low. Sometimes a loud 'chirrup' when alarmed.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on insects, small reptiles and frogs, occasionally taking nestlings or eggs, fruit and seeds. Hunts for prey under bark, along branches, and in crevices. Often seen feeding on the ground and amongst fallen timber.

### BREEDING:

July-March. Enclosed nest is well concealed in any suitable available spot e.g., tree or stump, hollow or crevice, rock ledge, forest floor, dense tangled foliage near house.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Widespread. Diverse habitats, gardens, open forest, inland scrub, woodlands, golf courses and watercourses.

### THREATS:

Destruction of habitat. Urban spread.



## Grey Butcherbird

*Cracticus torquatus*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 24-30cm. Sexes similar with black head, white throat and narrow white partial collar. Grey back and shoulders. Underparts light grey/white, finely hooked blue-grey bill, tipped black. Immature, upperparts dusky brown, underparts lighter brown/cream. Call is beautiful rich and varied, or strident shrieks in aggression or defence.

### FEEDING HABITS:

This is a carnivorous species, insects being its main food, but will also take small birds, nestlings, reptiles and mice, and also a few fruits and seeds. Large items are carried back to a perch, and wedged in a fork with the bill.

### BREEDING:

July- December. Nest is an untidy collection of twigs, smoothly lined with soft grass. The female incubates the eggs while the male brings her food. Both parents feed the young. Full plumage is not gained until the second year.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Open forest, farmlands, gardens and scrub or roadsides where there are sufficient trees for cover.





## Pied Butcherbird

*Cracticus nigrogularis*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 32-36cm. Black and white bird with a hooked blue/grey bill. The adult has a white body and collar, a black head and hood going well down the breast, and a black tail. Immatures have brownish hoods and a mixture of greyish and buff/white body feathers. Call is a beautiful flute-like whistling.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds mainly on insects, lizards, mice and small birds. It will store food wedged in the fork of a tree or impaled on a broken branch.

### BREEDING:

May-November. The nest is usually in a vertical tree fork and is an untidy arrangement of twigs and sticks, lined with dried grasses. Two-to-five eggs are laid and then incubated by the female. Immature birds remain with the family group until fully mature.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Often found in pairs or small family groups in open woodlands, gardens, semi-arid scrub and tree-lined watercourses.

### THREATS:

Illegal shooting and poisoning.



## Australian Magpie

*Cracticus tibicen*

### DESCRIPTION:

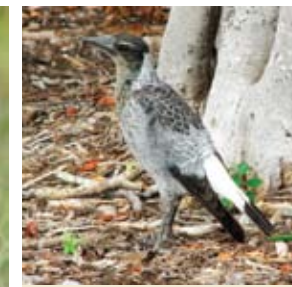
Size 38-44cm. Conspicuous black and white plumage that varies across its range. The nape, upper and under tail and wing bands are white, the remainder of the body is black. Grey/white bill with a black tip, and black legs. The females are duller. Adults have chestnut brown eyes. The immature is paler with a black eye. They live in family groups and have a lovely fluted carolling call.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Mainly feed on insects found on the ground amongst leaf litter, rocks or fallen logs.

### BREEDING:

June-December. Nest is made of sticks, plant stems, even wire, lined with wool, hair or grass and is built in the canopy of eucalypts and other suitable trees. The female builds the nest, lays up to six eggs and does the incubation alone. Magpies often attack people during the nesting season.



### LANGUAGE NAME:

Mundingburra — Not confirmed

### MEANING:

Strong spirited bird.

### STORY:

The Australian magpie is looked upon as a protector to its people.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Open areas with trees close by, golfcourses, woodlands, playing fields, parks and gardens.



## Grey Fantail

*Rhipidura albiscapa*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 14-17cm. This delightful and inquisitive small bird is constantly on the move. The black and white tail is broadly spread and flicked from side to side each time it lands, making it one of the easiest to identify. Small white eyebrow and cheek flash. Black cheek patch, black bill with noticeable whiskers, white throat and black breast band. The upperparts are grey/black, underparts variable white through to cinnamon. Immature are generally brownish. Call is a high pitched and squeaky.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Catches insects in flight, from amongst foliage, around tree trunks and in open scrub. Often seen feeding close to the ground.

### BREEDING:

July-December. Small round nest with long tail, made with finely shredded bark and grass, bound together with cobweb. Generally close to water. two-to-three eggs are laid. Both sexes build the nest, incubate the eggs and feed the young.



### LANGUAGE NAME:

Babaral  
(pronounced – Barba-Rool)

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Nomadic here from April-July. Parks, gardens, open woodland, inland scrub, golf courses.



## Willie Wagtail

*Rhipidura leucophrys*

### DESCRIPTION:

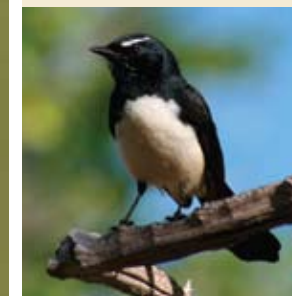
Size 19-22cm. Common and well-known black fantail. Eyebrow and underparts white. Head, back, and tail black, with brownish wings. Tail is wagged rather than fanned. Always restless, swings body from side to side, sudden flicks of the wings to flush insects. Call is variable from a harsh chatter when annoyed to a more general 'sweet pretty creature'.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on insects often caught in flight, or working frequently from branches of trees to fences or taken from the ground.

### BREEDING:

August-January or throughout the year in good times. Nest is a neat circular cup of grass and cobwebs on a horizontal branch, often over water but will also use any structure that is handy, e.g. clothes hoists, street lamps, buildings. Two-to-four eggs, both sexes build the nest, incubate the eggs and feed the young. The nest is defended vigorously.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Parks, gardens, farmland, open woodland and often around livestock.





## Torresian Crow

*Corvus orru*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 48-53cm. Large black bird, with green or purplish glossy plumage, white eye, black legs and bill, long square-tipped tail. Immature has dark eye and is duller black. Holds a permanent territory for roosting, feeding and nesting, defending against other crows and ravens. Has a 'dipping' flight and shuffles the wings in greeting or when alighting. High on a perch, they advertise their territory with loud, harsh, nasal 'ark ark' calls.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Scavengers: feeding mainly on the ground, on carcasses, insects, or grains such as maize and sorghum.

### BREEDING:

August-September. They build a large stick nest, grass lined, in the leafy canopy of a tall tree. Two-to-three eggs are laid, and incubated by the female who is fed by the male. Young may remain with the parents for several months before being driven out to find new territory.



### LANGUAGE NAME:

Agan

### MEANING:

Guardian of Sacred Sites.

### STORY:

The Torresian crow symbolises the Gate-Keeper of sacred areas and sites. Can signal signs of approval and disapproval of entrance to significant areas.

### PLACES TO LOOK:

Open forests, woodlands, farms, rubbish dumps, along tree-lined rivers and road kills.



## Apostlebird

*Struthidea cinerea*

### DESCRIPTION:

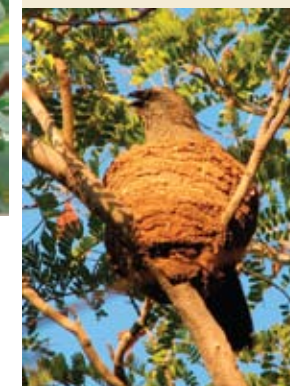
Size 29-33cm. Body dull grey/brown with paler streaks on breast and head, wings darker, tail dusky black. Legs black. Bill is dark and stubby, eye dark. Immature are similar to adults but with shorter tail and fluffier plumage. Sociable, seen in family groups up to 20 on the ground or in low trees. Fly with slow wing beats interspersed with gliding. Call is a noisy incessant harsh chattering. At any disturbance the flock will all take up warning calls.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeding as a group, searching for seeds and insects on open ground.

### BREEDING:

August-March. Large deep mud bowl lined with grass on a horizontal branch. The family group attends the nest building and chick feeding. More than one female may lay eggs in the nest.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Open forests and scrub, on the ground, low trees - never far from water. Often flushes from roadsides.



## Jacky Winter

*Microeca fascinans*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 12-14cm. Plain but attractive little flycatcher. Upperparts grey-brown, slight white eyebrow, slender dark stripe through eye. Underparts white through to grey. Wings dark brown. Outer tail feathers white. Sings loudly from high perch, clear melodious series of whistles, sometimes described as 'jacky, jacky, jacky, winter, winter, winter'.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Feeds on a varied diet of insects. Darts from an exposed perch to catch insects, often in very acrobatic flight, also hovers over grass to flush insects.

### BREEDING:

July-December. Tiny cup nest made of bark and fine twigs tightly bound with cobweb, on a horizontal branch or fork, often in dead trees. Both sexes build the nest, incubate the eggs and feed the young.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Rural areas. Open woodlands, scrublands and farm paddocks with dead trees or stumps.

### THREATS:

Destruction of habitat. Removal of dead trees or limbs. Urban spread.



## Mistletoebird

*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 10-11cm. Male has glossy blue-black head, back and tail. Bright red throat, chest and under-tail. White belly with a central dark streak. Female is grey/brown above, cream throat and belly, pale red under-tail.

### FEEDING HABITS:

Highly adapted to a diet of mistletoe berries which pass quickly through the digestive system and the seeds are excreted onto branches. The seeds will hopefully germinate into a new food plant. They also catch insects, mainly to provide food for the young.

### BREEDING:

The female builds a silky, pear-shaped nest with a slit-like entrance made from matted plant down and cobweb, suspended from a twig in the outer foliage of a tree. The female incubates the eggs, and then both sexes feed the young.



### PLACES TO LOOK:

Found in a wide variety of habitats wherever the mistletoe plant is found. Mistletoebirds are very small and they feed high in the trees so they are very hard to find.





## Gouldian Finch

*Erythrura gouldiae*

Endangered

### DESCRIPTION:

Size 14cm. A small but striking and colourful finch that has a black or crimson face, green upper body and wings with a blue rump and black tail. The chest is lilac and the abdomen is yellow. The juveniles are dull grey-brown with pink legs.

### CURRENT STATUS and THREATS:

Once believed to be one of the most common finches in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region, the Gouldian Finch has undergone a significant population decline and contraction of their known range. They are now only recorded in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Changes in native vegetation through inappropriate fire regimes and the grazing impact of stock are the most likely factors contributing to their ongoing decline. Last record in Queensland was in 2004 on the Einasleigh Uplands and before that in Mareeba. In 2002, the Gouldian Finch Reintroduction Programme, at the Mareeba Wetlands Reserve began releasing birds raised in a captive breeding programme into the wild, seeking to re-establish a local population. (Reference: *Draft Recovery Plan for the Gouldian Finch 2005-2010; Background Information*. WWF Australia 2005).



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