

Your guide to the
**BIRDS OF THE
MACEDON RANGES**



**Macedon
Ranges**
Shire Council

BIRDS OF THE MACEDON RANGES

Acknowledgement of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the Wurundjeri, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung, their rich culture and their spiritual connection to Country. We also acknowledge the contribution and interests of Aboriginal people and organisations in the management of land and natural resources.

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PURPOSE

This booklet is a guide to the native and introduced birds of the Macedon Ranges. It is intended for beginners. This guide contains only a small selection of the many hundreds of bird species that are found in the region and were selected through a careful screening process with many local expert bird watchers.

Instead of ordering species into traditional taxonomic groups, the birds are grouped into categories which we hope will aid beginners in their identification. Species that are similar to one another are also positioned side by side. The “fun facts” sections provide interesting facts about the birds. Additional information about birds can be found in the many field guides available, some of which are listed in the resource section.



Crimson Rosella

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Habitat types

The Macedon Ranges Shire contains a wide variety of habitat types that support distinct groups of flora and fauna.



Forest



Wet forest

Forest refers to plant communities with closely spaced trees. Wet forests occur at higher elevations in sheltered gullies.



Woodland

Woodland generally refers to plant communities and more dispersed trees scattered amongst open areas.



Grassland

Grasslands have a species rich understorey of shrubs, grasses and herbs. Grassland birds are often found in farmland, such as paddocks.



Wetlands

Wetlands include lakes, dams and water storage areas as well as in lower lying areas subject to seasonal inundation.



Urban

Urban parks and gardens.

Size of birds

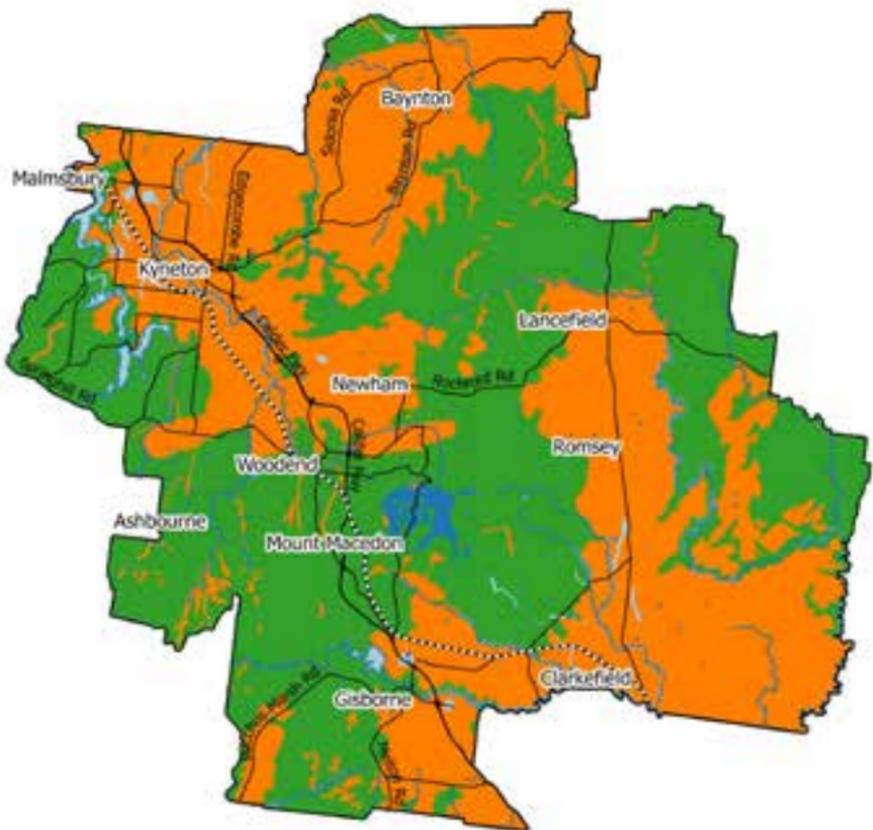
The size of birds is the measurement of the bill to tail.

Bird names

Bird names follow the latest standardised names – the BirdLife Australia Working List of Australian Birds (version 2) as per Menkhorst, P. Rogers, D. and R. Clarke (2017) The Australian Bird Guide.

HABITAT MAP

The habitat types in this map have descriptions on the previous pages. They encompass a range of ecological vegetation classes.



Legend

Vegetation types

- Woodland
- Dry Forest
- Wet Forest
- Wetland and River

KEY

Diet

The following icons are used throughout the booklet to indicate the diet of each species:



Fish



Eggs



Mammals



Nectar



Birds



Fruit



Plants



Carrion



Algae



Shellfish



Insects



Frogs



Seeds



Reptiles

Migratory birds

The Macedon Ranges has resident birds all year round, some that arrive every spring to breed:

SUMMER MIGRANT

and others whose movements are variable:

PARTIAL MIGRANT

Threatened species

Some bird species are listed as threatened. These species are marked in the guide with



CHESTNUT TEAL

Anas castanea

35-50cm



The male Chestnut Teal has a round, glossy green head, chestnut brown breast and dark brown upper body feathers. Females are duller, mottled grey and brown. Both sexes have a deep red eye and blue-grey bills. The wings have a dark iridescent green to purple panel underwing.

FUN FACTS:

My mate and I will stay together for life. We make a nest in tree hollows.

Call: F: falling laugh.
M: "pip".

**Habitat****Diet**

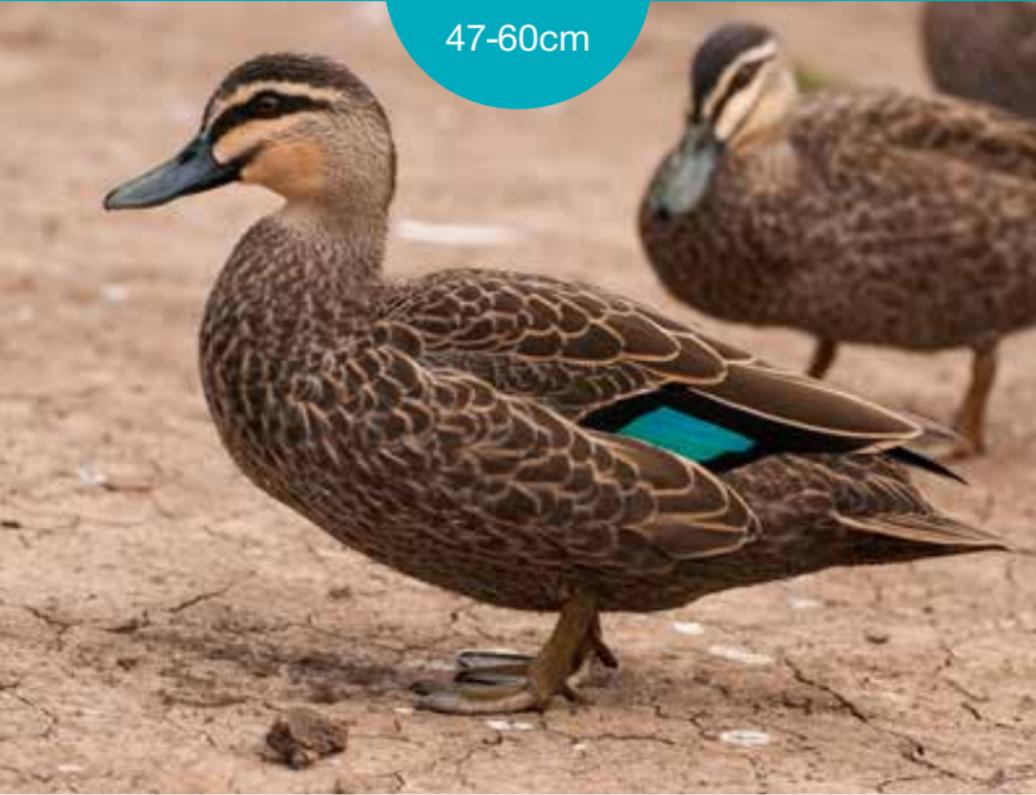
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK

Anas superciliosa

47-60cm



The Pacific Black Duck is mostly a mottled brown colour with distinctive dark brown stripes across the face and chin. The upper wing displays an iridescent green-purple panel most obvious when in flight. This duck feeds primarily on aquatic vegetation and insects. They nest in tree hollows, in the undergrowth or repurpose nests from other water birds.

FUN FACTS:

When I fly, you can see that under my wings is mid brown. You can tell me from Chestnut Teal as they have dark underwings. Look carefully when you hear ducks flying past.

Call: M: loud "rhaab-rhaab".
F: typical quacks.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

AUSTRALIAN WOOD DUCK

Chenonetta jubata

47-48cm



The Australian Wood Duck is a highly adaptable duck with a light brown head, dark bill, and a beautifully speckled breast. The wings are grey with white and black stripes. The male has a darker head and has a tuft of feathers at the back of the head. The female has a lighter head with two white eye stripes. The male has black under-tail coverts and the female has white.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen wandering across roads with my ducklings in spring and early summer. I nest in hollows, lined with down, high up in trees. My ducklings have to leap out of tree hollows when they are tiny to scurry to the safety of the water. You might also know me as a Maned Duck.

Call: nasal “nowk”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A **S O N** D

Breeding season

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE

Tachybaptus novaehollandiae

23-25cm



The Australasian Grebe is the smallest of the Grebe family. When breeding, the plumage on both male and female birds changes from dull grey-brown above and silver-grey below to dark on top with a glossy black head and deep chestnut neck stripe. The patch of skin at the base of the bill changes from white to pale yellow. Hatchlings are delightfully downy and striped.

FUN FACTS:

When I hatch from our floating nest of vegetation, I can swim almost immediately and follow my parents for eight weeks. I am more likely to dive away from danger. I have been known to eat my own feathers and also feed them to my young to teach them how to swallow fish bones.

Call: sharp trilling chitter, a little like a baby lamb.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

EURASIAN COOT

Fulica atra

35-39cm



The Eurasian Coot has a distinctive white bill and face shield with red eyes. The Eurasian Coot hatchling has a little red face and juveniles are lighter in colour. They have flaps on their feet to assist with swimming and build bowl-shaped nests of dead vegetation that are floating or perched on logs surrounded by water. The Eurasian Coot is similar in appearance to the Dusky Moorhen.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen running across water and can dive to seven metres, staying underwater for up to 15 seconds. I am incredibly aggressive when breeding and have been known to eat my own young if food is scarce.

Call: “krek”, “kiek-kiek-kiek”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

DUSKY MOORHEN

Gallinula tenebrosa

35-42cm



This medium size water bird is dull grey-black of the body with a bright orange-red face shield and bill with a bright yellow tip. A white under-tail is often seen as the Moorhen wags its tail. Distinguished by size and colour from Purple Swamphen and Eurasian Coot. Juvenile birds are duller and browner with a greenish face shield and bill. Shallow reed and grass nests are made over water, among reeds or floating out in open water.

FUN FACTS:

I prefer to spend time either swimming or foraging in the reeds, rushes and water lilies at the water's edge. My female friends may lay eggs in the same nest.

Call: loud screeching “krok”, “krek” or “kruk”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

AUSTRALASIAN SWAMPHEN

Porphyrio melanotus

44-48cm



A large, vibrant purple and black rail, both the male and female Australasian Swamphen maintains the same plumage all year round. It has a large, solid orange-red beak and face shield. When moving away, this Swamphen will often wag its tail displaying white tail feathers. The Swamphen builds a large cup-shaped nest of reeds and grasses that is well hidden.

FUN FACTS:

I am aggressive towards other birds and will attack and eat ducklings. I use my strong legs and large feet to hold onto my food when I'm eating.

Call: screeching "kiark-kiark".



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

AUSTRALIAN REED-WARBLER

Acrocephalus australis

15-18cm



The Australian Reed-Warbler (previously known as the Clamorous Reed-Warbler) is a migratory bird who arrives in spring and heads north in late summer and early autumn. It is an olive-brown bird with a long beak and buff eyebrow that stops just at the back edge of the eye. Paler underparts may have buff colouring. They have a long tail with a rounded tip. Nests are a deep neat cup with reed stems interwoven to provide structure.

FUN FACTS:

I am notoriously difficult to spot but if you listen closely, you'll hear my song, which will help you find me. Then watch as I hop amongst reeds and fly low over the water.

Call: loud and rich song “kwitchy-kwitchey”, “kwarty-kwarty-warty”.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A **S O N D**

Breeding season

WHITE-FACED HERON

Egretta novaehollandiae

66-68cm



The White-faced Heron is a slender blue-grey water bird with a white face and dark brown-grey bill. They are often called Grey Herons or Blue Cranes. Their long legs are yellow in colour. When in flight, the neck is retracted and it flies in a slow, bouncing pattern. Young White-faced Herons have only white on their chins and tend to have reddish bellies. They may breed out of season dependent on rainfall.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen stalking in water, waiting and watching for movement or actively disturbing prey.

Call: harsh croaky call including when in flight.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

WHITE-NECKED HERON

Ardea pacifica

76-106cm



This large heron has a long slender white neck and head and a shorter bill than most herons. There are two lines of black spots that run down the neck. The wings and back are glossy black. When breeding, the wings will develop maroon plumage. The neck spots on juveniles are more pronounced. Legs are dark grey.

FUN FACTS:

I am a communal breeder and you will often find me nesting with spoonbills, egrets and cormorants. My large nest is found in living trees above or near water.

Call: harsh, deep croaks.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A **S O N D**

Breeding season

MASKED LAPWING

Vanellus miles

30-37cm



These large ground-dwelling plovers are called “lapwings” due to the way they fly. The southern species found in the Macedon Ranges has a black crown that continues down the side of their neck, a white front and underbelly. They have brown wings with a black tipped yellow spur it will use to attack (also known as Spur-winged Plovers). Large yellow wattles cover the face.

FUN FACTS:

My nest can be found on the ground in school playgrounds or parklands and I am particularly aggressive when defending my nest and young. I am known to mimic a broken wing to lure humans and other predators away from my nest.

Call: “karrek-karrak-karrak”, “kek-kekkekekeke”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

STRAW-NECKED IBIS

Threskiornis spinicollis

60-70cm



The Straw-necked Ibis is easily recognisable with black wings and back and a white body. Its wings have an iridescent metallic purple, green and bronze sheen. Flocks will fly in a V formation or straight lines. These nomadic birds build large cup-shaped nests in colonies. Distinguished from the Australian White Ibis which has a white body and wings and black head.

FUN FACTS:

I will travel thousands of kilometres between inland and coastal regions depending on local conditions. Colloquially, I am known as "farmer's friend" because I eat grasshoppers and locusts that may be considered a pest.

Call: low raspy croaks.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

AUSTRALIAN WHITE IBIS

Threskiornis molucca

65-75cm



A white ibis with a naked, black head and neck, and long, downward curved bill. The base of the tail feathers is black. Adult birds have a white tuft of feathers under the neck. When breeding, the skin underwing becomes scarlet. Juveniles have black neck feathers. They fly in a V formation and nest in colonies making large cup-shaped nests.

FUN FACTS:

I am colloquially known as the "bin chicken" due to my penchant for scavenging around rubbish tips and city parks in Sydney and parts of Melbourne.

Call: deep, grunting "uurrk".



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT

Phalacrocorax melanoleucos

55-65cm



This very common cormorant is the smallest and often found alone when inland. It is white underneath and black on top. The bill is yellow and shorter than that of the larger Pied Cormorant. In adults, the white on the face extends above the eye but does not in juveniles.

FUN FACTS:

I have been known to use a thermal lift to soar high above the earth and I tend to nest in small colonies. I build a bulky stick nest in trees overhanging the water.

Call: "keh-keh-keh", "uk-uk-uk".

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE

Aquila audax

85-105cm

WINGSPAN

230cm



Often seen soaring with fingered upswept wings in thermals overhead, reaching altitudes of up to 2000m. Easily distinguished by size and the wedge-shaped tail. The adults are dark brown birds, the juveniles are a lighter red-brown on their heads, back and top of wings and become darker with age.

FUN FACTS:

My Latin name means "daring eagle" and I have been known to be able to carry prey up to 50 per cent of my body weight. I will mate with one partner for life and make huge stick nests in trees. I will defend my territory aggressively but also have a home range that overlaps with other eagles.

Call: loud yelps and squeals.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE

Haliaeetus leucogaster

75-85cm

WINGSPAN

200cm



Surprising as it may seem, White-bellied Sea-eagles are known to occur around the large water bodies in the Macedon Ranges where they prey on fish, birds and mammals. This eagle has crisp white plumage on the head, breast and legs, contrasted by dark grey wings. The White-bellied Sea-eagle has a wedge-shaped tail but it is shorter than that of the similar Wedge-tailed eagle.

FUN FACTS:

I can be seen hovering around the large lakes in the Macedon Ranges, including Rosslyne Reservoir near Gisborne and Malmsbury Reservoir.

Call: a goose like “Ank-ank-arkaka-ank-akakakaka”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

BROWN FALCON

Falco berigora

40-50cm



This very common medium sized falcon can vary greatly in colour from a light sandy brown, light or dark red, brown and almost black. Their heads are dark on top and they have distinctive dark marks behind and below their eyes. They have a distinct rounded tail. Their long legs are adept for running and hopping on the ground in pursuit of prey.

FUN FACTS:

I can be seen sitting in an upright fashion on fence posts, wires and telephone poles. In flight, my wings are raised, and I hover unsteadily. I use abandoned stick nests from other large birds.

Call: noisy cackles and screeches (similar to a laying hen).



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

NANKEEN KESTREL

Falco cenchroides

30-35cm



This small falcon is very common across Australia. They have a white belly, pale rufous wings and back. Males have grey heads and females have pale rufous heads, with juveniles resembling the female. Dark teardrops are present under the eyes. Nankeen Kestrels are often seen perching on fence posts, wires and buildings or hovering elegantly over grasslands searching for prey.

FUN FACTS:

When hovering, my wings are horizontal, and you can see a black band near the tip of my tail. I use tree hollows, caves and ledges on buildings to build my stick nests.

Call: high pitched varied chattering “kikikikiki”.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

PEREGRINE FALCON

Falco peregrinus

35-50cm



A large, powerfully built raptor, the Peregrine Falcon has a dark hooded head, white neck, barred belly and blue-grey wings. They have a yellow eye ring and bill which is tipped black. When in flight, it glides with flat wings.

FUN FACTS:

The Peregrine Falcon is the fastest bird in the world, clocking speeds of at least 320km/h. The fastest ever recorded peregrine reached 389km/h. Peregrinus means wandering. I will often nest in cliffs or rocky outcrops or in tree hollows. A pair has nested at Hanging Rock for many years.

Call: F: hoarse call.

M: higher pitched “kek-kek-kek-kek-kek-kek”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

BROWN GOSHAWK

Accipiter fasciatus

40-55cm



With piercing yellow eyes, the Brown Goshawk has a grey head and wings, and a barred rufous and white belly. Long barred tail, dark at the top, gradually getting lighter, with a round tip. Juveniles are darker and mottled in colour. As with all birds of prey, males are smaller than females. Very similar to the closely related Collared Sparrowhawk.

FUN FACTS:

I will often sit in the canopy for some time while the smaller birds forget that I am there, all the while biding my time to pounce. I use my long legs and clawed toes to reach out and strike. I occasionally stalk or run along the ground after insects. I build a stick nest in tall trees and often use the same nest year after year.

Call: rapid high pitched chatter “keek-keek-keek; kik-kik-ki-ki-kikik”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J **A S O N D**

Breeding season

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE

Elanus axillaris

35cm



These pale grey birds of prey are often seen effortlessly hovering overhead with their wings in a V shape as they hunt. They have a clean white head, body, tail and underwing with black shoulders and wing tips. Their striking red eyes are highlighted by a strong black line that extends above and behind the eye. Juveniles are sandy fawn on the head and chest with darker spotted wings. Their wingspan ranges from 80cm to 100cm.

FUN FACTS:

I will form a monogamous pair and build a messy shallow nest of sticks, green leaves, bark, and fur on a tall tree or power pole. When courting, my mate and I perform an aerial acrobatics display.

Call: plaintive “seip”, “chek-chek-chek”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

POWERFUL OWL

Ninox strenua

58– 67cm



The largest of the owl species in Australia, the Powerful Owl roosts by day in large leafy trees and hunts by night. They have very large hawk-like yellow eyes and a grey mottled V-shaped feather pattern. Powerful Owls require old growth trees as they nest in hollows.

FUN FACTS:

One sign that I might be living in your area are the remains of possum tails that are discarded during feeding. Powerful Owls are found in many areas of the Macedon Ranges particularly around Mount Macedon, Cobaw Forest and Wombat Forest.

Call: M: low carrying “whooooooo-who”
F: higher pitched “who-who”.



Habitat



Diet

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

BARKING OWL

Ninox connivens

39-44cm



Found throughout Australia, it is thought there are only around 50 breeding pairs remaining in Victoria. Barking Owls have bright yellow eyes. Their feather pattern is streaky rather than V-shaped in the Powerful Owl. They have white spots on their grey backs. A pair will nest in an open tree hollow of an old growth eucalypt. Pairs of this rare bird have been recorded in Newham, Lauriston, Baringo and around the Cobaw State Forest.

FUN FACTS:

I prefer to hunt just after dusk and before dawn and I fly in complete silence. When I roost in a tree during the day, you may notice me because smaller birds may be harassing me.

Call: dog-like “wook-wook”.

**Habitat****Diet****Breeding season**

SOUTHERN BOOBOOK

Ninox boobook

30-35cm



This owl has dark brown feathers that are different from the grey feathers of the Barking Owl. The Southern Boobook is the smallest and most common owl in Australia. The plumage is streaked and spotted white. The well defined, dark facial discs around the yellow-green eyes contrast with surrounding pale borders.

FUN FACTS:

I am commonly seen on Mount Macedon, where I like to nest in hollows of trees and can be seen perched up high.

Call: "boo-book".

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

EASTERN BARN OWL

Tyto delicatula

29-38cm



Barn Owls are the most widely distributed owl in the world. The white heart-shaped facial disc and dark eyes make it easy to identify. This owl is slim and grey-brown on the back with little black tear shaped markings. Underparts are white with thin dark brown streaks. The heart-shaped facial disc and asymmetrical ears assist the barn owl to locate food by concentrating noises.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen fleetingly in headlights at night as my white face is strikingly illuminated. I will nest and roost in tree hollows, caves and buildings.

Call: screeching “skeeeeer”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

TAWNY FROGMOUTH

Podargus strigoides

35-50cm



One of Australia's most beloved and widespread birds, the Tawny Frogmouth is not an owl. It is a nocturnal bird that hunts prey using its powerful beak, whereas owls hunt with their large talons. The Tawny Frogmouth's plumage resembles that of a grey or rufous tree trunk depending on the phase of plumage the bird is in. They have bright yellow eyes.

FUN FACTS:

I make a loose nest of sticks in a horizontal fork of a tree and the male bird sits on the nest during the day. When roosting or alarmed, I will often raise my beak to appear part of the tree.

Call: muffled, repetitive "ooo-oom-oom-oom-oom".



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

HORSFIELD'S BRONZE-CUCKOO

Chalcites basalis

16cm



This common cuckoo is olive-brown on top with a bronze-green sheen on its back and wings. The head is brown with a white eyebrow and dark eye stripe. The juvenile is duller with no barring on the chest.

FUN FACTS:

I will use the dome-shaped nests of fairy-wrens and thornbills as well as the cup-shaped nests of robins, honeyeaters and chats. You may see me perched on a fence post calling day or night. This will often cause other birds to call in alarm. Bronze-cuckoos are the smallest cuckoos in the world.

Call: sharp descending whistle “tsieew, tsieew, tsieew”.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

SHINING BRONZE-CUCKOO

Chalcites lucidus

13-18cm



The Shining Bronze-Cuckoo is often heard before it is seen as it is a shy bird that prefers the canopy. It is iridescent green with white underparts complete with dark bars that extend up to the neck. Juvenile birds are duller. Distinguished from the similar Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo by its lack of distinctive eye stripe, and the fact that the bars on its chest are much darker and more complete.

FUN FACTS:

I prefer to lay my eggs in the nests of small birds such as thornbills, gerygones and fairy-wrens. I really love to eat caterpillars and will squeeze the insides out of the caterpillar as I don't like to eat the hairy skin.

Call: repetitive rising "pweee-pweee-pweee" or high pitched "wheee-wheee-wheee".



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

FAN-TAILED CUCKOO

Cacomantis flabelliformis

24-28cm



This dark grey and rufous cuckoo have a yellow eye ring and a wedge-shaped black and white barred tail. The juvenile is dull dark brown with brown barring on the chest. Their distinctive calls are commonly heard in forests and woodlands during the spring and early summer breeding season; they are also occasionally heard at other times of the year.

FUN FACTS:

I tend to stay on one branch for extended periods calling and looking for prey. I will catch my prey in flight or on the ground and then return to my branch to consume it. I lay my eggs in the nests of flycatchers, fairy-wrens, scrubwrens and thornbills and let them raise my chicks.

Call: mournful trill, repeated. Also, slow, rising, quiet “get-wooooooork”.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

PALLID CUCKOO

Cacomantis pallidus

31 cm



This large, long, bar-tailed cuckoo can appear falcon-like in flight. It is a grey bird, darker on top with a yellow eye-ring and dark eye stripe. The female can be either grey or rufous. The rufous morph female is mottled with brown and displays a barred chest. The juvenile is pied with a heavy dark brown and white mottled pattern.

FUN FACTS:

I love to eat hairy caterpillars which I usually pick up from the ground. I lay my eggs in cup-shaped nests of the Willie Wagtail, honeyeaters, woodswallows, whistlers and flycatchers.

Call: M: in spring, males advertise with a rising “quip-peer-peer-peer-peepeer-peepeer”.
F: “queeeep”.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

FAIRY MARTIN

Petrochelidon ariel

12cm



The tiny Fairy Martin is a bird most commonly seen in flight. It has a rufous crown and white underparts. It has a glossy blue back and the wings and tail are brown. It has a white rump and a short tail which distinguishes it from the Welcome Swallow which has a long forked tail. When observing from below in flight, underparts are white, with brown-grey wings. Juveniles are slightly duller.

FUN FACTS:

You may encounter my large bottle-shaped mud nests tucked under rock overhangs, culverts, bridges, shallow caves, large pipes and abandoned buildings. You will find a large colony at Black Hill Reserve.

Call: “churr-churr”, along with soft twittering song.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J **J A S O N D**

Breeding season

TREE MARTIN

Petrochelidon nigricans

13cm



A small, swallow-like bird that is similar in appearance to the Fairy Martin – except it has a “dirty” white face and rump and lacks the rufous colour around the head. The tail is slightly forked when flying but is shorter than the long-forked tail of the Welcome Swallow.

FUN FACTS:

My name comes from my habit of using tree hollows for my nests. I am often in mixed species flocks with Fairy Martins and Welcome Swallows.

Call: the Tree Martin’s call is a twittering sound. They often twitter constantly.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

DUSKY WOODSWALLOW

Artamus cyanopterus

18cm



The Dusky Woodswallow is often seen flying in flocks of 10 to 30 birds and will aggressively chase other woodswallows or larger birds away from their territory. The adult birds are a deep smoky brown to grey, with white-edged dark blue grey wings. The tail is black with a distinct white tip, the bill is a grey-blue with a black tip. Juveniles are a mottled brown with dark wings and brown beak.

FUN FACTS:

I am a very social bird and will nest in colonies. I make a rough bowl-shaped nest of twigs, neatly lined inside and often wedged behind a loose piece of bark. I may also nest in hollows of trees, stumps or posts.

Call: sharp, vibrant “tzeit-tzeit”, gentler “zut-zut”. Also partakes in mimicry.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT

PARTIAL MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

WELCOME SWALLOW

Hirundo neoxena

14-15cm



An agile aerial bird, the Welcome Swallow is well known with its glossy blue-black back and rump and its deeply forked tail. It has pale grey underparts and a rufous forehead and throat. Juveniles are buffy white, instead of rufous on the throat, and have shorter tail streamers.

FUN FACTS:

I build a cup-shaped mud nest, often found under verandas, homesteads, outside country fish and chip shops, in shearing sheds and under bridges. I also nest in tree hollows and under overhanging cliffs. My name, "Welcome" Swallow, comes from sailors who knew that the sight of me meant that land was not far away.

Call: metallic chattering "tseip-tseeeip".



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT

PARTIAL MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

AUSTRALIAN RAVEN

Corvus coronoides

52cm



This raven is the largest corvid (ravens and crows) in Australia. It is a glossy black bird with a white eye, distinguished by its prominent throat hackles. The hackles are usually extended when the bird is calling. Young birds have dark eyes and shorter hackles.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen on my own or in pairs and I benefit from all the rubbish people accumulate and throw out. I build a large messy stick nest in the forks of trees.

Call: a slow falling wail “aairk, aark, aarh, aargargh”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J **J A S** O N D

Breeding season

LITTLE RAVEN

Corvus mellori

50cm



A slightly smaller corvid than the Australian Raven, this glossy black bird is often seen in large flocks and is an agile flier. The Little Raven has white eyes and a relatively long tail. This is the most common raven species in the Macedon Ranges.

FUN FACTS:

I behave differently to the Australian Raven, who is often solitary, although we share a habitat. I build a bulky stick nest usually less than 10 metres from the ground.

Call: quick, guttural “nark, nark, nark”.

**Habitat****Diet****Breeding season**

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE

Cracticus tibicen

34-44cm



This large, territorial, pied (black and white) bird is ubiquitous with the Australian landscape. In the Macedon Ranges, the adult male Magpie is white-backed, the females have grey backs. Magpies are highly social and live in groups of up to 24 birds. Magpies generally feed on the ground.

FUN FACTS:

My melodic, piping song is well known, as is our territorial fervour. Beware the swooping magpie in spring. I make an untidy cup shaped nest of sticks.

Call: loud, melodic flute-like song.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

WHITE-WINGED CHOUGH

Corcorax melanorhamphos

45cm



This large black bird with a curved beak and red eye is a highly social animal often seen in large family flocks on the side of the road. White wing patches are displayed in flight, which distinguishes them from the ravens, whose wings are completely black.

FUN FACTS:

I am only one of two species of mud-nest builders in Australia. Look up, you might see my mud nest. I stay in a medium to large social flock during the breeding season. My eyes change from brown to orange and then to red as I get older. I have been known to kidnap young choughs from other flocks to help raise the chicks in my flock.

Call: mournful, piping calls “t-i-e-e-eew”, raspy alarm “chz-z-zark”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

PIED CURRAWONG

Strepera graculina

41-51 cm



The Pied Currawong has become a noticeable year round resident in the Macedon Ranges as the species has shifted its' migratory patterns and is now residing at lower altitudes in non-winter months. It is a sleek black bird with white mid-wing, mid-tail and tip of the tail, along with a large hooked bill and a golden eye. This currawong can often be seen in large flocks.

FUN FACTS:

I often visit people's homes and can become quite tame. I build messy, shallow nests of sticks, nestled in tree forks high in the outer canopy of trees. I love to sing, and am noisy in the morning, in the evening before roosting, and just before it rains. Sometimes I am known as the rainbird.

Call: slow, mellow "kurrok, kurrowk" often at dusk.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

GREY CURRAWONG

Strepera versicolor

45-53cm



In the Macedon Ranges, this currawong is dark grey, with broad white tail bands and tip and white under-tail. Their bill is straight and slender with no hook. As with all currawongs, eyes are yellow. Distinguished from other large black birds by its clinking call.

FUN FACTS:

I am less common than the Pied currawong and you usually only see one of me. I build a high, large, messy shallow bowl of sticks.

Call: high pitched, sharp “cling, cling”.



Habitat



Diet

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

MAGPIE-LARK

Grallina cyanoleuca

27cm



This medium sized black and white bird is often confused with the Australian magpie due to its colouring, but it is much smaller. Adult birds have a thin, pale bill and white eyes. The male bird has a black face and throat with a white eyebrow, while the female has a white face and upper throat. Juveniles have a dark bill and black head and white throat.

FUN FACTS:

I feed mostly on the ground and, together with my mate, build a mud, bowl shaped nest, lined with feathers and grasses about 20 metres up a tree. I am very protective of my nest and territory. You will often see us sitting and calling in pairs, in a duet.

Call: “pee-wee, pee-wee, pee-wee”, “cluiip-cluiip”.



Habitat



Diet

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

STRIATED THORNBILL

Acanthiza lineata

10cm



This common thornbill may be identified by the whitish and dark streaks on its rufous brown forehead, and coarse white streaking near its ears. Striated Thornbills have a whitish face, an olive back, rump and tail. The similar Brown Thornbills have a plain rufous forehead and red eyes.

FUN FACTS:

I like to feed in eucalyptus trees in areas of high rainfall, often in small flocks. You may also find other little brown birds feeding with me. I build small oval, domed nests from fine strips of bark, mosses, and spider web, high up in trees. My nests are often visited by the parasitic Bronze-Cuckoos.

Call: soft, persistent, insect-like “tzzt, tzzt, tzzit, tzzit, tzt, tzt, tzzit, tzt...”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

BROWN THORNBILL

Acanthiza pusilla

10cm



This olive-brown to grey thornbill has a dark red eye, rufous crown and rump. Underparts are pale with striations that are less pronounced than the Striated Thornbill.

FUN FACTS:

Typically found feeding in pairs, often in the lower areas of the forest, in wattles or bracken. I build a messy domed nest with a partly hooded side entrance of dry grass, bark strips and ferns, held together with cobwebs.

Call: song is deep, rich and musical, “tsip-tsip- pee-ore-pee-ore”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

BUFF-RUMPED THORNBILL

Acanthiza reguloides

10 cm



Buff-rumped Thornbills are an olive-brown bird, with a yellow wash on the breast and a white eye. They have a buff coloured rump and forehead. Often seen with Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Buff-rumped lacks the black and white crown and the bright yellow rump.

FUN FACTS:

Although I breed in pairs, I form groups known as clans. A clan will defend their group territory against members of other breeding groups. I may nest in a bark crevice or even on the ground under a grass tussock on a bank in fallen branches.

Call: Their call is a musical, rapidly repeated song with two clear whistle notes.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A **S O N D**

Breeding season

YELLOW-RUMPED THORNBILL

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa

10-12cm



This thornbill has a bright yellow rump which makes it easy to identify, particularly as the flock takes flight. Olive-grey body with black, white-spotted head and white eyebrows. Black tail tip, pale underparts.

FUN FACTS:

I am the largest thornbill and you are likely to see me in small flocks flitting about on the ground, often near roadsides. I build bulky dome nests made from dry grass and bark strips held together with spider egg sacs. I sometimes build my nest in the base of a large bird of prey nests such as a Brown Goshawk or Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Call: cheerful, high pitched tinkling song “chip-chip-chippity-cheepity”.

**Habitat****Diet**

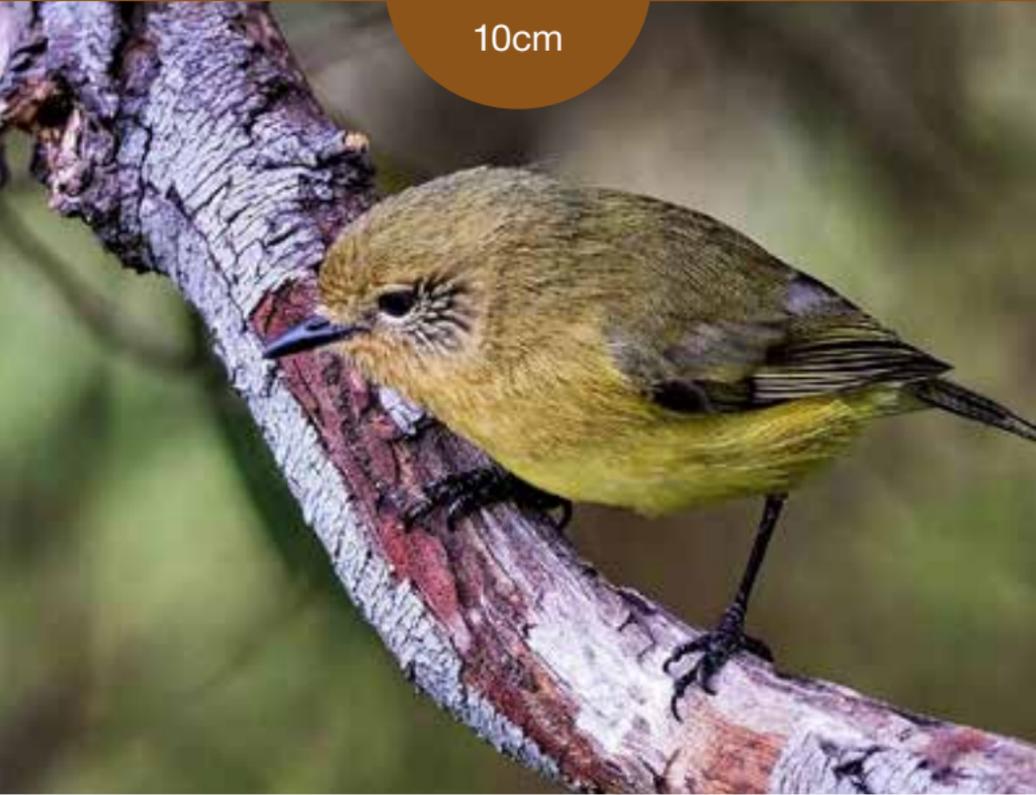
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Breeding season

YELLOW THORNBILL

Acanthiza nana

10cm



A busy little bird with pale yellow underparts and grey-olive green head and back. The eye is dark in colour, and there is bold white-brown streaking just around the eye.

FUN FACTS:

I feed mainly in the canopy of native trees such as acacia, paperbark and casuarina (she-oaks). My Latin name means “dwarf thornbush dweller” and I was previously known as the Little Thornbill. Also colloquially known as “yellow dicky”. I make small dome nests similar to other thornbills.

Call: harsh, scratchy “chzip, chzzip, chzip, chzeep chzip”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

WEEBILL

Smicrornis brevirostris

8-9cm



A Weebill is an olive-brown bird with pale underparts tending to yellow near the tail. Its head is a dull grey-brown with a pale eyebrow over a white eye. Unlike thornbills, weebills have a short stubby beak that is light in colour.

FUN FACTS:

The smallest Australian bird, I prefer to hunt for insects high up in trees and will sometimes hover briefly to snatch insects from the outer leaves. I make dome-shaped nests with a side entrance hidden high in the canopy. I use spider webs, egg sacs and brown caterpillar casings to make my nest smooth and soft.

Call: strong, distinctive “wee-bill”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A **S O N D**

Breeding season

WHITE-BROWED SCRUBWREN

Sericornis frontalis

11-14cm



This inquisitive little brown bird with a light grey belly has striking white eyebrows, cheek stripe, and cream-yellow eyes. They have a white line above the eye and another below the eye. Males and females are similar, but the females are slightly duller, particularly on the face.

FUN FACTS:

I prefer to look for food in dense grasses and shrubs near the ground. When I fly in my family group you can see the rufous coloured rump and tail. I build dome-shaped nests, well hidden in vegetation, or even in flowerpots or garden sheds.

Call: clear, high-pitched "ch-weip, ch-weip, ch-weip".



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

SUPERB FAIRY-WREN

Malurus cyaneus

14cm



The easily identifiable and much-loved Superb Fairy-wren is a common feature in many backyards, feeding on the ground or in low foliage. The breeding male's bright blue and black head and blue tail contrast markedly to the non-breeding male's brown plumage. Females, known as "jenny wrens", are also brown and have red-brown bills and eyes while the non-breeding males have black bills and eyes.

FUN FACTS:

You will often see me in family groups, with one breeding male and multiple females and juveniles flitting about in the dense undergrowth. I make dome nests hidden in grass clumps or low shrubs.

Call: thin musical trills "trrit" or "tree".



Habitat



Diet

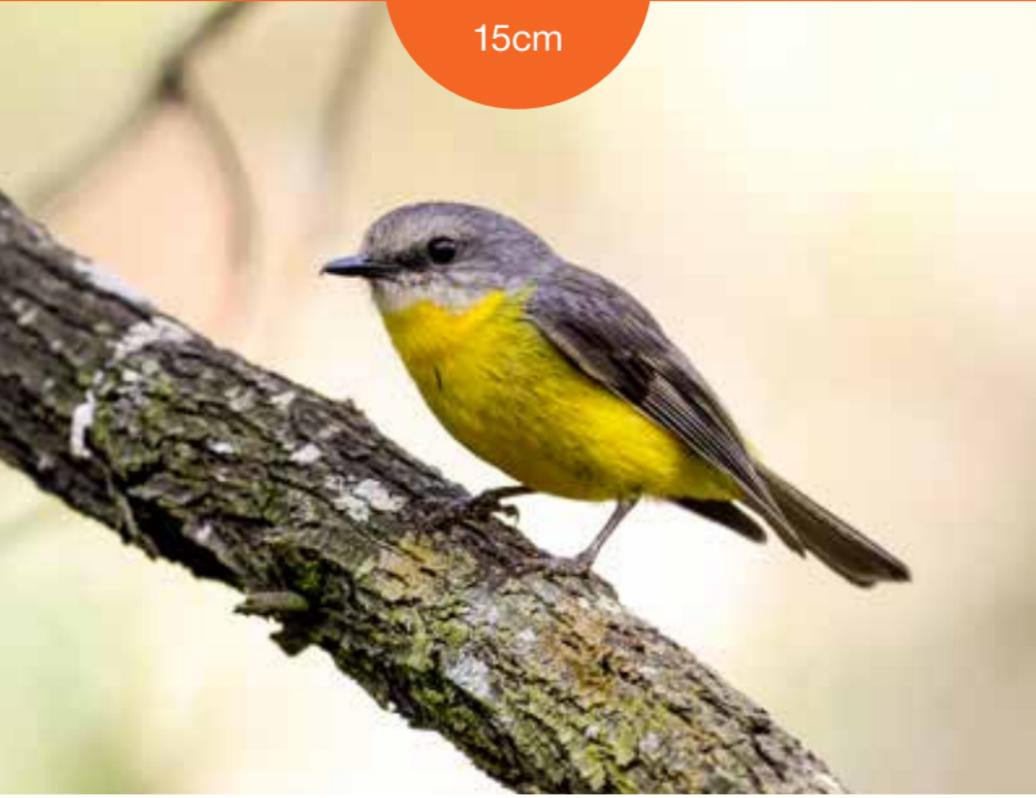
J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

EASTERN YELLOW ROBIN

Eopsaltria australis

15cm



This robin, with a bright yellow breast and rump and grey head, is very common in the Macedon Ranges. The Eastern Yellow Robin has an easily identifiable series of piping calls. Juveniles are brown with white streaks.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen on a branch or tree trunk, alone or in pairs, watching and waiting to pounce on ground-dwelling prey. When breeding, I make an open cup nest in the fork of a tree. I decorate the nest with distinctive narrow rectangular pieces of lichen and bark hanging in a fringe around the nest.

Call: vocal and strong piping whistle, as well as “tew-tew” alarm.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

SCARLET ROBIN

Petroica boodang

13cm



The Scarlet Robin male has a vibrant scarlet colour breast above a white belly. At the front of his black head, is a large white spot. The female bird is grey-brown with a duller orange-red chest and a smaller white spot at the front of the head. Juveniles are similar to females without a scarlet chest and mottled.

FUN FACTS:

I form a life-long bond with my mate and will defend my territory year after year. A compact open cup nest is made in a suitable tree fork. I forage mainly on the ground, using branches as perches to scan the leaf litter for insects.

Call: high warbling trill, “tirrit-tirrrit-tirrit”.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

FLAME ROBIN

Petroica phoenicea

13cm



The male Flame Robin has a bright orange breast that extends under the beak. His back and head are grey and his wings black with a white stripe. Females and young male birds are duller versions of the male. Both sexes have a small white spot above the black bill.

FUN FACTS:

My mate and I breed at higher altitudes in mountain forests during the breeding season. We then return to lower altitudes, to congregate in sheep paddocks. You'll find me taking prey from the ground, pouncing from exposed lookouts, then returning to a perch to eat.

Call: a piping trill "chrip chrip chrip".



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

GREY SHRIKE-THRUSH

Colluricincla harmonica

25cm



The Grey Shrike-thrush is a medium size grey bird with a rufous back and thick black bill. The male has a grey crown and white throat and patch in front of the eye. The female has a lighter coloured bill. The Grey Shrike-thrush searches for food on the ground, generally around fallen logs, and on the limbs and trunks of trees.

FUN FACTS:

As my scientific name implies, I am an accomplished songbird, and some consider my songs to be the most beautiful in Australia. I have a rich variety of whistles, calls, mellow melodies and bubbly songs. I can hit piercingly high notes and perform duets with my mate.

Call: variable “quorra-quorra-quorra, WHIEET-CHIEW”,
“wheat-wheat-quor-quor- WHIEET-CHIEW”.

**Habitat****Diet**

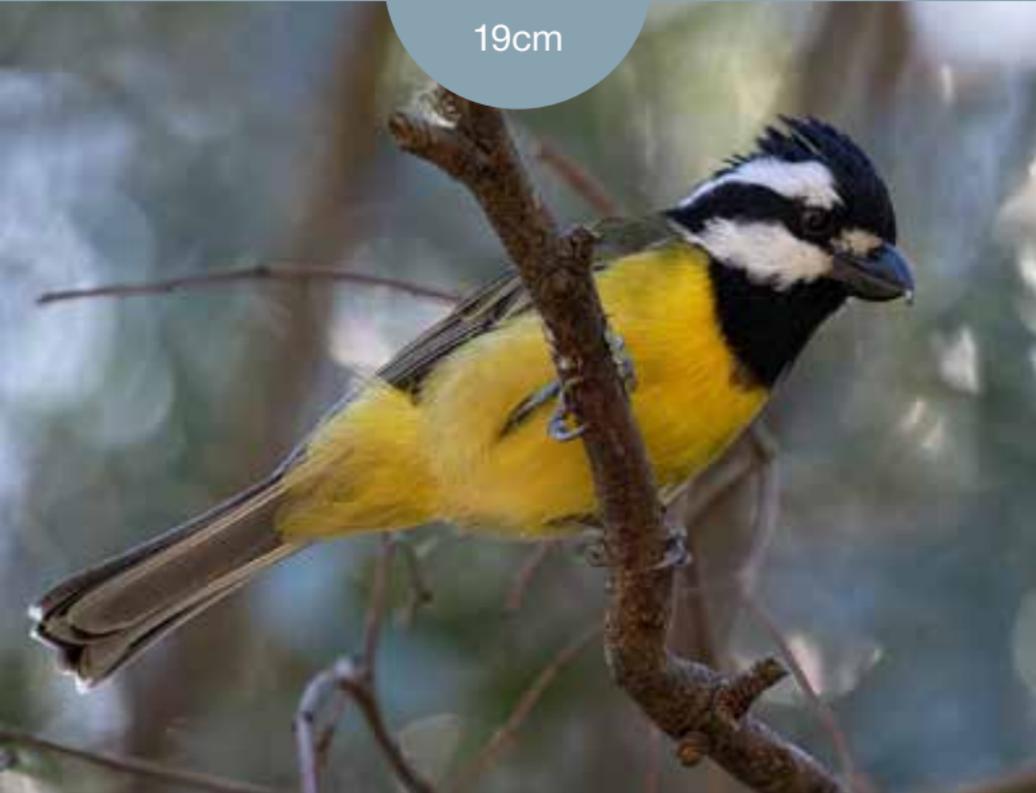
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Breeding season

CRESTED SHRIKE-TIT

Falcunculus frontatus

19cm



The Crested Shrike-tit has a stunning black and white striped head and a bright yellow breast. The back is an olive-green colour and the bill is black. It has a small black crest that can be raised or flattened at will. The male has a black throat, and in females it is olive green.

FUN FACTS:

I feed high in the canopy and sometimes alert people to my presence as I tear pieces of bark from trees searching for insects and spiders. I use my feet to hold prey onto branches before I eat it – usually with my left foot. I am often seen with Golden Whistlers and you need to look carefully to confirm my identity.

Call: a slightly ascending “whiert, whi-whit, wheeir-whiert, whi-whit, wheei”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

RUFIOUS WHISTLER

Pachycephala rufiventris

16-18cm



The stocky, medium sized Rufous Whistler is a grey bird with a rufous breast. The male has a white chin with a striking black breast band that extends up over the eye. The female and juvenile are similar in colour, with grey-brown wings and tail and an olive-grey back. They also have a white chin with strong streaks on underparts.

FUN FACTS:

My calls can be confused with that of the Golden Whistler and Grey Shrike-thrush. If you hear the sound of a “whip bird”, it’s either me or the Golden Whistler.

Call: variable. Strong whip-crack “eeee-CHIEW” repetitive, persistent ringing “cheWIT-chWIT-chWIT”, or “joey-joey-joey”.

**Habitat****SUMMER MIGRANT****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

GOLDEN WHISTLER

Pachycephala pectoralis

15-17cm



The male Golden Whistler is a striking bird with a bright yellow belly and nape, black hood and breast band, and white throat. Wings are olive-green tipped yellow with a black tail. Females are markedly duller with grey-brown feathers which are darker on top and no distinguishing features. Juveniles are briefly rufous before becoming brown-grey, like a female, but with rufous panels on their wings.

FUN FACTS:

You will often find me perched high in the canopy. My beautiful song is often louder and clearer than the Rufous Whistler. I build bowl-shaped nests from twigs, grass and bark.

Call: loud, persistent ringing “whit-whit-whit-whiet-whiet-wheet-quWHIT!” shorter “chwit-chwit-CHEW-WIT!”.

**Habitat****SUMMER MIGRANT****PARTIAL MIGRANT****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

YELLOW-FACED HONEYEATER

Caligavis chrysops

15-17.5cm



The Yellow-faced Honeyeater is a medium sized, honeyeater with yellow and black facial stripes. It is a grey-brown bird with blue-grey eyes and finely streaked underparts.

FUN FACTS:

I migrate north for winter and often travel in huge flocks with the White-naped Honeyeater. I am rarely seen on the ground, preferring to forage in the canopy and amongst mistletoe. I build a small, fragile cup nest of green materials such as moss.

Call: happy ringing “chwikup, chwikup, whit, whit, whit”.



Habitat

PARTIAL MIGRANT



Diet

J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D

Breeding season

WHITE-EARED HONEYEATER

Nesoptilotis leucotis

16.5-21.5cm



A medium sized olive-green honeyeater with a large white ear patch, surrounded by a black face, chin and throat. They have brighter underparts with a grey, streaked crown. The young are duller and browner. The White-eared Honeyeater is usually seen alone or in pairs and is quite noisy and conspicuous.

FUN FACTS:

I prefer trees with peeling bark and often feed on my own as a treecreeper might. I build strong, deep cup nests close to the ground in shrubs and line them with hairs plucked from kangaroos, possums, farm animals and even people. So watch out!

Call: sad, slightly metallic “choku-whit, choku-whit”, “chwok, chwok”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER

Melithreptus lunatus

10.5-15.5cm



The White-naped Honeyeater is a medium sized, olive-grey honeyeater that feeds in the highest eucalypt trees. It has a distinctive black head with a white band across the back of its neck (nape) that stops just before the red eye skin. The bill is short and sharp, and the belly is white. Juveniles do not have a black head. Check the Black-chinned Honeyeater and Brown-headed Honeyeater for differentiation.

FUN FACTS:

I am a partly migratory bird and may congregate in flocks of hundreds to thousands of birds, often with Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, to head north in autumn and return south in spring.

Call: musical “wherrt-wherrt”, contact “szerrk”, repetitive “tew-tew-tew”.



Habitat

PARTIAL MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

BROWN-HEADED HONEYEATER*Melithreptus brevirostris*

11.5-14cm



This small honeyeater has a brown head, a short slender bill, and a white nape, extending behind the neck from one eye to the other. The back is olive-brown with a pale brown or buff belly. The Brown-headed Honeyeater has an acrobatic flight and is always on the move.

FUN FACTS:

I prefer foraging in groups of up to 15 birds for insects, nectar and pollen in the tall canopy. A group of us will support a breeding couple and everyone will pitch in to incubate the eggs and feed the young. Nests are small, deep cups of thin bark strips, grass and hair held together with spider web.

Call: scratchy “chwik-chwik-chwik”, “chak-chak-chak”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER

Phylidonyris novaehollandiae

16-20cm



This striking honeyeater is a common feature in gardens. The white eye, yellow wing patch, and black and white striped belly make it easy to identify. The juvenile bird is browner in colour, with a grey eye.

FUN FACTS:

I am particularly partial to Banksia nectar which gives me lots of energy, so I am rarely still. We form groups of up to 12 adult male birds and conduct “corroborees” where we dance and display noisily. We breed all year round depending on the availability of nectar and build a decent cup nest in dense foliage.

Call: abrupt, metallic “tjik” or “chwik”; long “tsee” when in flight.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

EASTERN SPINEBILL

Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris

13-16cm



This long-billed honeyeater has a black head, cinnamon throat and a distinctive white and black crescent on its chest. It has a cinnamon back and belly, with contrasting black wings and tail. The eyes are a distinctive red. Female Eastern Spinebills have grey crowns.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen in gardens flitting or perching on plants such as Grevilleas, Callistemon and Heaths that enable my long, curved bill to probe the tubular flower for nectar. Like other honeyeaters, I am an important pollinator of plants in the Proteaceae family. If you watch quietly while I am feeding you might notice patches of pollen on my forehead.

Call: rapid piping “chip,chip,chip” or “cheer-whit cheerwhit”.



Habitat



Diet

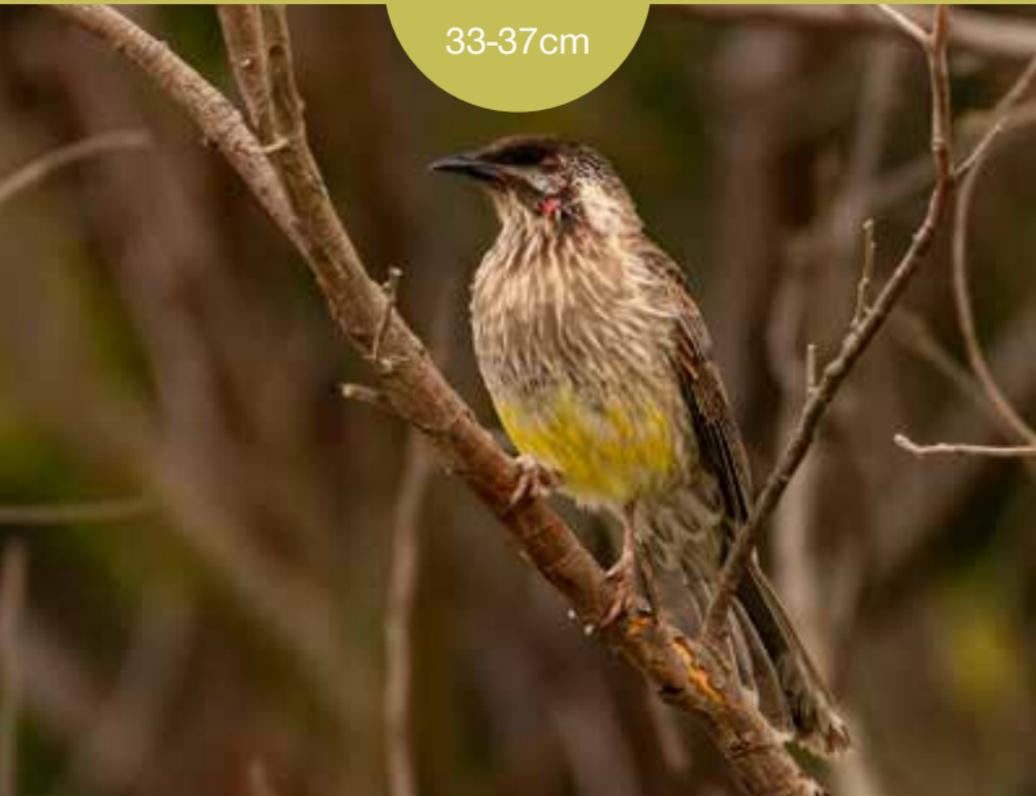
J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

RED WATTLEBIRD

Anthochaera carunculata

33-37cm



This large, slender and dominating bird has distinctive, hanging pink-red wattles. It is grey-brown with white streaks and a very long tail. The face of the Red Wattlebird is off white, their eyes are red, their belly yellow and legs pink. When in flight, the white on their wing tips and tail are obvious.

FUN FACTS:

I am the second largest honeyeater in Australia, the Tasmanian Yellow Wattlebird being the largest. You will often hear me calling in small groups, although I also forage on my own. When breeding, I make large cup nests of twigs and bark high in a tree fork.

Call: M: harsh, metallic “hraak, hraka- yak”, “graarrkk”.

F: mellow “kieuw, kieuw, kieuw”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

GREY FANTAIL

Rhipidura albiscapa

15-17cm



This bird is incredibly inquisitive and busy, rarely staying still during the day. The tail is constantly moving and displaying. It has a grey back and head with white eyebrows. The Grey Fantail has white bars on the wings and tail edges with a pale underbelly. Similar species include the Willie Wagtail and the Rufous Fantail.

FUN FACTS:

With my mate, we build a nest, incubate and tend to our young. Our nest is well built, usually on a horizontal branch and looks like a wine glass. If you spot me flitting about in a tree, you might notice me following as you walk by.

Call: loud, often repetitive/chattering squeaky and scratchy sounds ending on a higher note.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

WILLIE WAGTAIL*Rhipidura leucophrys*

19-22cm



A common black bird with white underbelly and eyebrows that wags its' long tail and body from side to side incessantly as it feeds on the ground. The Willie Wagtail prefers an open habitat and will aggressively defend its nest.

FUN FACTS:

We weave beautiful and neat cup-shaped nests, using a horizontal branch for structure and support. We will often use this nest over many years or take it apart and use the materials to build a new one. Oddly, I have been known to sing at night and have been considered a bad omen by some Indigenous groups.

Call: a strong and melodic song which alternates between high and low notes. "whichity-wheit".

**Habitat****Diet****Breeding season**

RESTLESS FLYCATCHER

Myiagra inquieta

19-21.5cm



A bird of woodland and farmlands, this flycatcher can be easily confused with a Willie Wagtail, with glossy blue-black uppers and white below. The distinctive crest on its' head is often raised as it sits on posts wagging its tail side to side. It is completely white underneath which makes it easy to distinguish from the Willie Wagtail (which has a black throat). Forest areas have another flycatcher – the Satin Flycatcher.

FUN FACTS:

You will see me searching for prey in flight. I am rarely still as my name suggests and I have been known as the “scissor-grinder” because of one of my more unusual calls, which I tend to make whilst hovering.

Call: musical “toowhee-toowhee-toowhee”; metallic grinding “kzzzzzrrrk”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

STRIATED PARDALOTE

Pardalotus striatus

9-11.5cm



This little bird has a distinctive repetitive call which indicates its presence long before it is seen. They have a black stout beak, yellow directly above, white eyebrows and a yellow throat. The olive-grey back meets black wings, crown and tail. The Striated Pardalotes' belly is pale, with yellow flanks and the wings have white strips and red or yellow detail.

FUN FACTS:

I have complex migratory patterns, with some birds migrating across the Bass Strait to Tasmania, or up the East Coast, and others staying behind. When breeding, we form groups of up to six birds and nest on tree hollows. You can often see us defending our hollow or flying in and out regularly. My old name was Tree Diamond.

Call: double or triple "chip chip". Loud and repetitive.



Habitat

PARTIAL MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

SPOTTED PARDALOTE

Pardalotus punctatus

8-10cm



The male has a bright yellow throat and under-tail with a black crown, wings and tail all covered in white spots of various sizes and in rows. The back is grey, eyebrows white, belly pale and the small stumpy bill black. The rump is chestnut to bright red. The female is similar except with yellow spots on the crown and a buff throat.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen flitting about in the canopy in small groups. I build nests in tunnels in the ground, creek banks, roadside cuttings, even piles of dirt for the garden. I may also nest in cracks in houses or tree hollows. I have been seen in the rafters in High Street Woodend and may occasionally fly into windows.

Call: loud piercing call in 2-3 single note "D-dee" calls. Also, a trilling call.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

BROWN TREECREEPER

Climacteris picumnus

14-18cm



This treecreeper is a light brown bird with a darkly streaked belly and a buff coloured eyebrow. The female displays rufous feathers just below the throat, whereas the males are black. The Brown Treecreeper is distinguished from the more common White-throated Treecreeper by its absence of a bright white throat, and call.

FUN FACTS:

You will often see me foraging on the ground which is different from the other treecreepers. When in a tree, I will spiral up the side of a tree, checking under bark cracks for food. I will use a tree hollow for a nest and line it with grasses. I am one of Macedon Ranges Shire Council's biodiversity indicator species.

Call: clear, high-pitched "whit, whit, whit".



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

WHITE-THROATED TREECREEPER

Cormobates leucophaeus

14-16.5cm



Often identified by its insistent alarm-like call, this treecreeper is grey-brown in colour with a white throat, striped belly and barred tail. When in flight, a red wing bar can be seen. The female is distinguished by a neat rufous spot below the ear.

FUN FACTS:

My very large feet allow me to sleep while perched hanging on a tree trunk. I like to sleep in large open hollows at the base of trees. I build a nest in a tree cavity and line it with fur, bark and hair.

Call: loud, clear, continuous piping. Also more musical sounds.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

VARIED SITTELLA

Daphoenositta chrysoptera

10-11cm



This plump bird is easily identified by its short tail and high pitched twittering. Of the five subspecies of Varied Sittella, the one found in the Macedon Ranges has yellow bills, eye rings and feet. They are streaked below, with a sooty-grey head and dusky back with orange wing bars.

FUN FACTS:

Unlike treecreepers, I prefer to work my way down a tree, particularly stringybarks and other rough barked trees. I make deep open cone-shaped cup nests of bark and spiders webs camouflaged in a fork of a tree.

Call: rapid, sharp chattering “tchwit-tchwit-tchwit-tchweit”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

OLIVE-BACKED ORIOLE

Oriolus sagittatus

25-28cm



The Olive-backed Oriole is a slender brilliant olive-green colour with a streaky black back and cream streaky underbelly. Both male and female birds have a red beak and eyes. The female is slightly duller in colour and the brown chest streaks extend under the chin. Often heard before it is seen, the distinctive call is helpful for identification as this oriole is well camouflaged in the canopy as it forages for food.

FUN FACTS:

I am usually only in the Macedon Ranges during spring and summer as I migrate from Northern Australia to breed. I make a cup nest that is attached to the rim to a branch in the canopy.

Call: mimicry, distinctive “orry-orry-orriole”.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

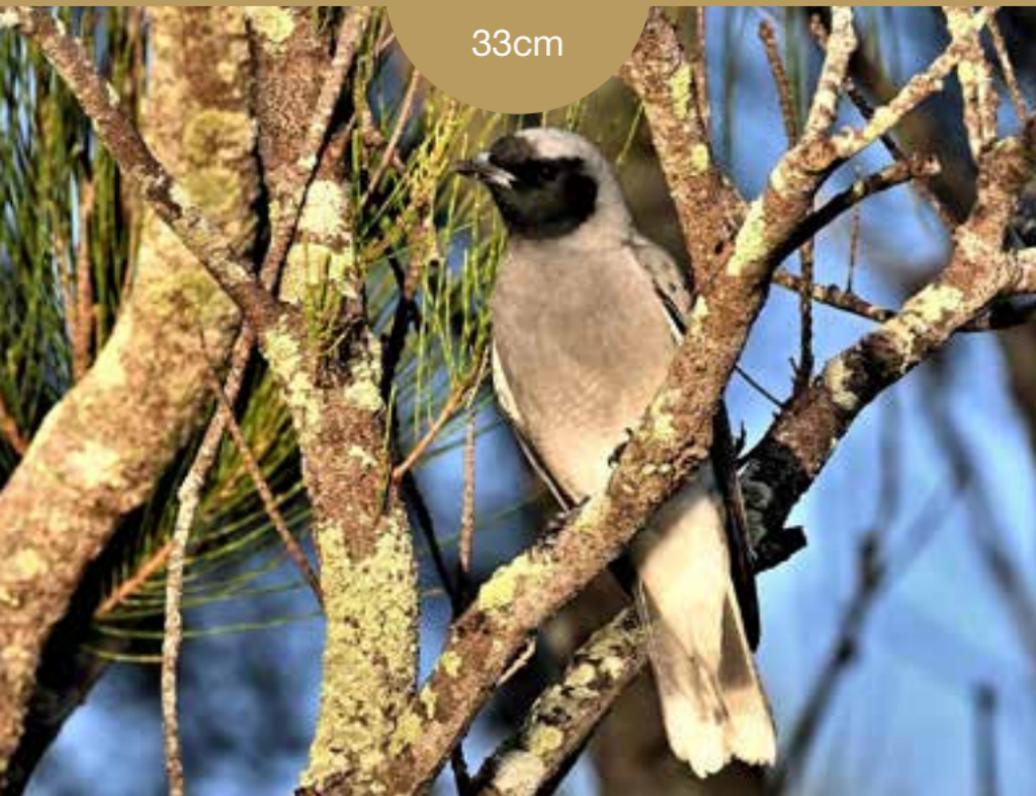
J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE

Coracina novaehollandiae

33cm



The Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike is found in pairs, family groups or on its own. When mature, these gorgeous birds have a deep grey body and a striking black face mask. Juveniles have a smaller black face streak extending just behind the eyes. The dark wing tips overhang conspicuously and their underbelly is white.

FUN FACTS:

I am a common bird and am sometimes known as the "Blue Jay". I have an undulating flight pattern as I only beat my wings two or three times before gliding. Upon landing, I will shuffle my wings giving rise to another colloquial name, "shuffle wing". I build a very small stick-based nest, held together with cobwebs.

Call: loud, sharp, metallic "churrier".



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

SILVEREYE

Zosterops lateralis

12cm



This olive-green coloured bird has a distinctive white ring around its eyes. There are several subspecies of Silvereyes, with colour variations such as rufous coloured flanks or plain, green back or grey. Silvereyes visiting the Macedon ranges may be the Tasmanian subspecies or the subspecies from further north up the east coast.

FUN FACTS:

I can be found by myself, in pairs and small or large flocks especially when migrating. I love to feed in commercial orchards, so if you want to see this lively little bird in your backyard, plant lots of fruit trees. I will defend the small territory around my neatly woven cup nest of grasses, hair and spiders web.

Call: loud, chatty “tseeep”, warbling song.



Habitat

PARTIAL MIGRANT



Diet

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

RED-BROWED FINCH

Neochmia temporalis

11-12cm



This common little finch is often seen in small flocks of around 10 birds foraging on the ground. The distinctive red eyebrow, beak and rump are easy identifiers on this grey and olive-green bird. When disturbed, the flock generally moves together, either to another patch on the ground or sometimes into shrubs.

FUN FACTS:

I make an untidy horizontal bottled-shaped nest in a dense shrub or a small tree. I am commonly kept as an aviary bird but I much prefer to be wild. Because I like open grassy areas surrounded by dense shrubs, you may find me in weedy areas along railway tracks and creek lines, where seeding grasses escape the lawn mower.

Call: very high squeak “tsee, tset”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

YELLOW-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO

Calyptorhynchus funereus

60-69cm



This black cockatoo is often seen in pairs or small flocks and is identified by its bright yellow tail panels and cheek patch, slow, rhythmic wing beats and persistent mournful calling. Males have a red eye ring, while females have a grey eye ring.

FUN FACTS:

I nest high up in deep tree hollows that are lined with woodchips. I need gum trees to be at least 200 years old to form hollows big enough for me. Typically only one or two of our chicks will survive after an incubation period of 28 days. Fledglings will stay with us for up to six months.

Call: distinctive wailing “why-eeela, weee-la”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO

Cacatua galerita

48-55cm



This common cockatoo is distinguished by its white colour, large size, raucous call and expressive, bright yellow crest. The yellow underwing is seen when in flight. Females are similar to males, however, have a red-brown eye.

FUN FACTS:

I am comfortable around humans and can be found in large flocks in towns, often feeding on the ground or roosting in trees. My crest is most active when breeding, and we will set up a nest in a tree hollow and both incubate the eggs. Our young stay with us as a family for life.

Call: raucous screech “airrrrik, aarrk, ahrk, aieirr, aieirieik!”.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

LONG-BILLED CORELLA

Cacatua tenuirostris

38-40cm



This white cockatoo is often found in large, noisy flocks, feeding on the ground in parklands. The Long-billed Corella has a very long beak, with blue around the eyes and patches of pink around the face and chest. A short crest is present but is not always on show. Similar species include the Little Corella and Sulphur Crested Cockatoo.

FUN FACTS:

I mate for life with my partner and we build nests and incubate the eggs together in eucalypt hollows and cliff faces. I am often seen feeding in grassy areas where I browse for Onion Weed.

Call: loud, high pitched, quavering screech.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

GALAH

Eolophus roseicapilla

35cm



This smaller cockatoo has a pink body and head, with grey wings and a pale pink crown. Galahs can be seen in large flocks screeching and flying erratically, roosting together or feeding on the ground. Galahs have benefited greatly from the clearing of land for agriculture, vastly extending their habitat across all of Australia.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen roosting with my life partner high up in trees. I make nests in tree hollows lined with leaves and the young stay with us until three months old.

Call: high pitched, metallic “chirrink-chirrink”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

AUSTRALIAN KING PARROT

Alisterus scapularis

40-45cm



The brilliant green and reddish-orange King Parrot is a large parrot with a blue-green tail. King Parrots are often found in pairs or small flocks. The males have a red head, and the females have a green head and breast.

FUN FACTS:

I am fairly bold if I am used to humans and will venture on to your patio, looking for seeds. I prefer to fly below the tree line so you don't often see me flying above the canopy. I will choose an extremely deep hollow in a tall eucalyptus tree to nest in. The eggs are incubated as far as 10m below the opening.

Call: loud "carrak carrak" in flight, shrill whistle from male.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

CRIMSON ROSELLA

Platycercus elegans

35-38cm



This brightly coloured, red and blue rosella is very common and often found in pairs or family groupings with multiple young. Juvenile birds are green on their wings and underbelly and can be confused with King Parrots

FUN FACTS:

Despite being so brightly coloured, I can still camouflage well in trees. I am often seen in gardens. I build a nest high in a tree hollow. My bell-like calls can sometimes be confused with that of the Bell Miner which does not occur in this region.

Call: brassy, chatter “k-tee-tip”.



Habitat



Diet



Breeding season

EASTERN ROSELLA

Platycercus eximius

28-33cm



This colourful rosella has a bright red head, green tail, yellow belly and blue, yellow and black mottled wings.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen in gardens and on lawns. I am more often seen in cleared areas compared to the Crimson Rosella which enjoys forests. We mate for life, with my female partner choosing and establishing a nesting site such as a tree hollow or nest box.

Call: gentle, high-pitched chattering “whit-whit-whit”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

GANG-GANG COCKATOO

Callocephalon fimbriatum

35cm



The Gang-gang is a gorgeous, stocky, grey bird with a short tail. The male bird displays a bright scarlet head with a wispy crest, and the female's head is grey. Her underparts are barred red to yellow. Juveniles also display some red on their head and crest. Found paired or in small family groups when breeding. They will congregate in larger flocks when not breeding.

FUN FACTS:

My name "Gang Gang" likely comes from a New South Wales Aboriginal language. I am typically found high in trees and prefer to breed at higher mountain altitudes. My nests are also up high, between 12 to 27 metres above ground in eucalyptus hollows.

Call: generally silent, with a quiet creaking rasp "gr-raer-iriek".



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

RED-RUMPED PARROT

Psephotus haematonotus

24-30cm



A colourful bird, primarily brilliant green with patches of yellow and blue, that has a distinctive red rump when in flight. It has mosaic-like cheek feathers. The female is a duller olive-green.

FUN FACTS:

You will often see me beside the side of the road in pairs or small groups, feeding on the ground. Riddells Creek is a good place to look. I will mate for life and the female will choose and prepare the nesting site, either a hollow or nesting box.

Call: trilling metallic call “chwie-chwiep”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

SACRED KINGFISHER

Todiramphus sanctus

21cm



The Sacred Kingfisher is a medium sized green and blue migratory kingfisher. The males have a green crown and back with blue wings and tail. Both sexes have a buff coloured underbelly with a black band under the eye. The female is greener on the wings.

FUN FACTS:

I spend most of the year on my own, pairing only to breed and nest. We make our nests in tree hollows or riverbanks. I often repeatedly call during the breeding season to defend my territory.

Call: incessant and loud advertising “kik kik kik kik” or “kek kek kek kek”.



Habitat

SUMMER MIGRANT



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

LAUGHING KOOKABURRA

Dacelo novaeguineae

40-48cm



This well known and loved bird is Australia's largest kingfisher. The adult kookaburras have very large bills. Laughing Kookaburras have white underparts, brown wings with light blue mottled pattern.

FUN FACTS:

You will often see me sitting on telephone wires, washing lines and low tree branches, watching for prey on the ground. I will then pounce and either eat prey whole or bash larger prey against the ground or a tree before consuming. I nest in tree hollows. I mate for life and take so long to rear my chicks that I rarely have more than one clutch each season. The cackle of us laughing is what we do to mark out our territory to other kookaburra families.

Call: infectious "laughing" call "kok-kak KAK-KAK-KAK-KOK-KAK-KAK kook-kok, kok, kok".

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

CRESTED PIGEON

Ocyphaps lophotes

31-36cm



This pigeon has a distinctive upright crest atop its grey head. Their eye rings are a striking red and the bird itself is grey-brown with brown, boldly streaked wings above the iridescent feature patch. The tip of the tail is white. The Crested Pigeon's wings produce a whistling sound when it takes off.

FUN FACTS:

I am a highly sociable bird and am adept at colonising cities and suburbs. I used to be found only in arid parts of Australia but now I am common in most large cities. I need to drink water every day so you will often find me in groups around water sources.

Call: musical "whoo-whoo-whoo".



Habitat



Diet

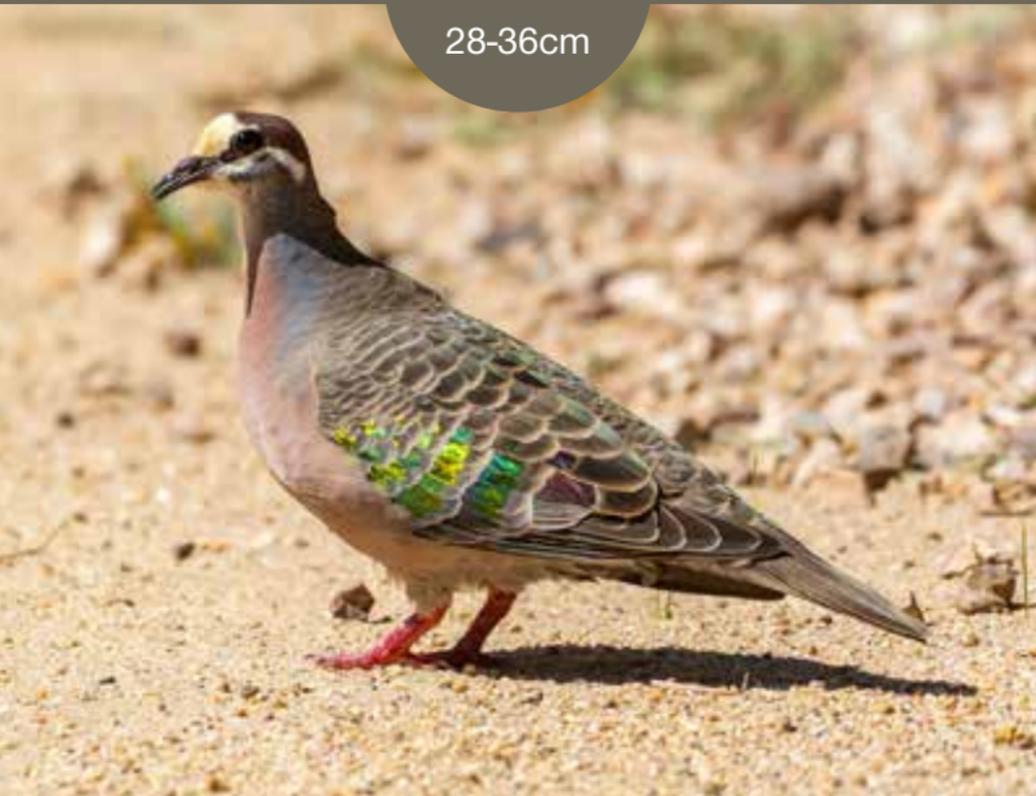
J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

COMMON BRONZEWING

Phaps chalcoptera

28-36cm



Often seen alone or in pairs, the Common Bronzewing has a brown back with a buff forehead and grey chin and white lines above and below the eye. The female's forehead is grey. A distinguishing feature is the spotted iridescent wings. Bronzewings fly very quickly and when startled, their wings make a loud flapping noise. Brush Bronzewings also occur in the Macedon region but are less common.

FUN FACTS:

People often mistake my call for an owl, however, I tend to call during the day. When breeding, I build a rough platform nest of twigs in trees. I feed on the ground, where I love to eat wattle seeds.

Call: mournful, soft "whooo", or "whoo-hoo-hoo".

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

COMMON STARLING

Sturnus vulgaris

20-21cm



The Common Starling varies its plumage over the year, at first glossy blue-black and covered in white spots, then as the feathers wear the spots disappear. This introduced bird can form large, synchronised and acrobatic flocks that fly in tight formation. When roosting they are incredibly noisy.

FUN FACTS:

I am a pugnacious bird and will displace native birds and even possums from nest hollows. I am known to be increasing my spread across Australia.

Call: whistled “chwee” or high “tizz-tzz”.

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

COMMON BLACKBIRD

Turdus merula

25-26cm



Introduced to Melbourne in the 1850s, early settlers were very keen to ensure that Blackbirds were a key feature of the Australian landscape. The male is all black with an orange bill, whilst the female is brown.

FUN FACTS:

I am very common in urban environments, parks and gardens. I am sometimes found in bushland settings along creek lines. I build a nest out of grass, twigs and bark, cemented with mud.

Call: melodic call.

**Habitat****Diet**

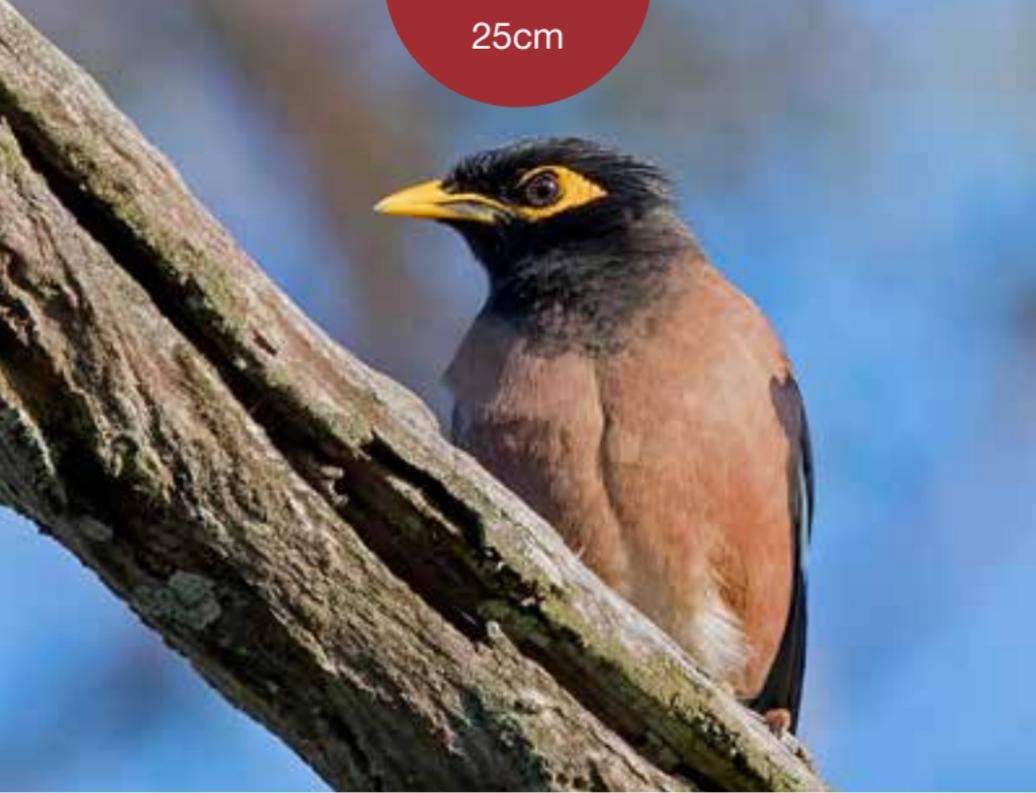
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Breeding season

COMMON (INDIAN) MYNA

Acridotheres tristis

25cm



This bold and noisy brown bird with a black head and distinctive yellow bill and eye patch competes with native birds by using nest hollows and sometimes eating the eggs and young of native birds. I may be confused with the native honeyeater, the Noisy Miner, which is very grey instead of brown.

FUN FACTS:

Mynas assist farmers in Asia by preying on agricultural pests, however, upon introduction to Australia I became a nuisance bird in urban and disturbed habitats. I am sometimes referred to as the Indian myna. I can eat European Wasps! I crush the abdomen first, then the head before swallowing whole.

Call: "carrarrk, carrarrk".

**Habitat****Diet**

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Breeding season

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH

Carduelis carduelis

12 cm



The European Goldfinch was introduced in the 19th century. It is the only finch here in Australia with a black and white head and red face. The black and yellow wings are obvious in flight.

FUN FACTS:

I am often seen in large flocks in paddocks feeding on grass seeds and introduced thistles. I am sometimes seen flying with other birds, such as sparrows.

Call: canary-like “tswit-tswiet”.



Habitat



Diet

J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D

Breeding season

SPOTTED DOVE

Streptopelia chinensis

30-33cm



The Spotted Dove is a brown bird with pale underparts. The pale head is collared by a black neckband with small white dots. Nests are loose stick platforms where eggs are often visible from underneath and often fall out of the nest.

FUN FACTS:

Introduced to Australia in the 1860s, I like to hang around houses and my nests are sometimes found amongst rose bushes.

Call: high, musical “cook-oo-ook, coo-coo-crooo”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

HOUSE SPARROW

Passer domesticus

15cm



The male House Sparrow has a grey cap and black bib, which is more pronounced during the breeding season. The female is a dull brown with a conspicuous pale eyebrow. The young birds look much like the females.

FUN FACTS:

Introduced in Australia in the 1860s from Europe, I am now recorded on all continents except Antarctica. I was deliberately released in Kyneton in 1863, and by 1890 my numbers were so great I was declared a pest. I am highly sociable and occur in groups. I often nest in the eaves of houses.

Call: monotonous “chirrup” and “chissik”.



Habitat



Diet

J F M A M J J A S O N D

Breeding season

Resources

Menkhorst, P. Rogers, D. and R. Clarke (2017) The Australian Bird Guide

Simpson and Day, (2004) Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, 7th Edition

Slater, P. (2019) The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds. 2nd Edition

Fraser, I., Gray, J. (2019) Australian Bird Names: Origins and Meanings

The Michael Morcombe eGuide to Australian Birds (2011)

The Pizzey and Knight Birds of Australia app

Online

Facebook page: Victorian Birders

Facebook page: Macedon Ranges Fungi, Flora and Fauna

Facebook: BirdLife Australia and BirdLife Castlemaine District Facebook page

Apps

The Michael Morcombe eGuide to Australian Birds (Android and Apple)

Birddata, Birdlife Australia (Android and Apple)

Merlin Bird ID, The Cornell Lab (Android and Apple)





Further information

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

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PO Box 151, Kyneton, 3444
(03) 5422 0333

Landcare

Landcarevic.org.au

Data recording

Natureshare

natureshare.org.au

Atlas of Living Australia

ala.org.au

Victorian Biodiversity Atlas

environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity

Birdlife Castlemaine District

The Birdlife Castlemaine District group hosts a variety of bird watching activities each month throughout the region. This new Birdlife group covers a variety of areas in central Victoria including the northern parts of the Macedon Ranges.

Birdlife Castlemaine District can be contacted at castlemaine@birdlife.org.au



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